



FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report 2021

Period covered: 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021



1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	Global
Country (ies):	Co-financing collects lessons from primarily: Africa (Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ethiopia, South Africa, Morocco), Asia (India), Latin América (Brazil)
Project Title:	Avaclim: Agroecology, ensuring food security and sustainable livelihoods while mitigating climate change and restoring land in dryland regions
FAO Project Symbol:	GCP/GLO/927/GFF
GEF ID:	9993
GEF Focal Area(s):	CCM 2 – Programme 4 LD 4 – Programme 5
Project Executing Partners:	Centre for Actions and International Realisations (CARI)
Project Duration:	36 months
Project coordinates: (Ctrl+Click here)	/

Milestone Dates:

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	6-Sep-2019
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD :	01-Oct-19
Proposed Project Implementation End Date/NTE¹:	31-Mar-23
Revised project implementation end date (if applicable)²	N/A
Actual Implementation End Date³:	N/A

Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	USD 1,137,215
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¹ As per FPMIS

² In case of a project extension.

³ Actual date at which project implementation ends - only for projects that have ended.

Total Co-financing amount as included in GEF CEO Endorsement Request/ProDoc⁴:	USD 8,148,245
Total GEF grant disbursement as of June 30, 2021 (USD m):	USD 975,242
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2021⁵	EUR 2,222,102

Review and Evaluation

Date of Most Recent Project Steering Committee Meeting:	21-May-2021
Expected Mid-term Review date⁶:	Jun-2021
Actual Mid-term review date:	Oct-2021
Mid-term review or evaluation due in coming fiscal year (July 2021 – June 2022)⁷:	Yes
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date:	Mar-2023
Terminal evaluation due in coming fiscal year (July 2021 – June 2022):	No
Tracking tools/ Core indicators required⁸	

Ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):	S
Overall implementation progress rating:	S
Overall risk rating:	L

⁴ This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO document/Project Document.

⁵ Please see last section of this report where you are asked to provide updated co-financing estimates. Use the total from this Section and insert here.

⁶ The MTR should take place about halfpoint between EOD and NTE – this is the expected date

⁷ Please note that the FAO GEF Coordination Unit should be contacted six months prior to the expected MTR date

⁸ Please note that the Tracking Tools are required at mid-term and closure for all GEF-4 and GEF-5 projects. Tracking tools are not mandatory for Medium Sized projects = < 2M USD at mid-term, but only at project completion. The new GEF-7 results indicators (core and sub-indicators) will be applied to all projects and programs approved on or after July 1, 2018. Also projects and programs approved from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018 (GEF-6) must apply core indicators and sub-indicators at mid-term and/or completion

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Status

Implementation Status (1 st PIR, 2 nd PIR, etc. Final PIR):	1 st PIR
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Project Contacts

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Manager / Coordinator	Sara Moyret, CARI	agroecologie@cariassociation.org
Lead Technical Officer	Martial Bernoux, FAO	Martial.Bernoux@fao.org
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2. Progress Towards Achieving Project Objectives and Outcome (DO)

(All inputs in this section should be cumulative from project start, not annual)

Project objective and Outcomes (as indicated at CEO Endorsement)	Description of indicator(s) ⁹	Baseline level	Mid-term target ¹⁰	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2021	Progress rating ¹¹
Objective(s): Project Objective: Policy-makers and stakeholders are able to prioritise and implement agroecological systems in drylands as a means to sustain productivity of agroecosystems in support of food security, agricultural livelihoods, and reduce environmental degradation and GHG emissions.						
Component 1: Building partnerships for experience sharing and capacity building of agroecology practitioners at the landscape and local levels with international connections among the project participants						
Outcome 1: <i>Actionable knowledge on agroecology implementation is assumed and adopted by agroecology practitioners across the drylands</i>	i) Number of practitioners involved in the Community of Practice	Agroecology initiatives are implemented in isolation in the targeted countries because of limited opportunities for knowledge sharing.	i) 2000 participants to events and users of the collaborative tools, including 40% of women		1005 participants in events and users of the collaborative tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 270 participants in the events organized until 30 of June 2021. This refers to: 6 national workshops, 2 Brazilian advocacy workshops, the launching workshop and the international scientific workshop. - 747 users of Avaclim website since the beginning of 2021. The website was open in August 2020 but tracking was only activated on January 2021. The average of the women participation is of 45,4 %: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The participation rate of women in workshops is of 40,2%¹². 	S

⁹ This is taken from the approved results framework of the project. Please add cells when required in order to use one cell for each indicator and one rating for each indicator.

¹⁰ Some indicators may not identify mid-term targets at the design stage (refer to approved results framework) therefore this column should only be filled when relevant.

¹¹ Use GEF Secretariat required six-point scale system: **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**, **Satisfactory (S)**, **Marginally Satisfactory (MS)**, **Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU)**, **Unsatisfactory (U)**, and **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)**.

¹² Senegal: 32% / Morocco: 46% / Burkina Faso: 26% / Brazil: 40,9% / South Africa: 50% / Ethiopia: 39% / Inception workshop: 53% / International scientific workshop: 35%

				2021 Project Implementation Report		
	ii) Number of agroecological initiatives shared		ii) At least 35 agroecology initiatives are shared (each initiative can have one, several or a combination of innovations)	- We can estimate that the number of women using the website is of 378 persons (50,6%). This estimate was made by taking the average number of women in each visitor's country. ¹³ 46 factsheets have been characterized. The initiatives are very different, some focus on a farmers' organization, on activities implemented at the communal level, on farms and farmers' networks. You can find the presentation of the initiatives in the project website: https://avaclim.org/fiches-initiatives/		
Component 2: Assessment of existing initiatives for evidence-based decision-making at the national, local and landscape levels						
Outcome 2: Knowledge and understanding of the impacts of agroecological systems and success factors of agroecological initiatives are consolidated through a scientifically harmonized protocol	i) Number of functional and accessible tools for multidimensional assessment of agroecology initiatives developed	Because of limited availability of validated knowledge on the impacts and success factors of agroecology, agroecology remains often a theoretical and ideological option.	i) one functional and accessible tool for multidimensional assessment of agroecology initiatives drafted	i) one functional and accessible tool for multidimensional assessment of agroecology initiatives developed and validated	The prototype for multidimensional assessment is finalized and is being used and adapted in the 16 initiatives of 8 countries (including France). The tool will therefore be fully available by the end of the year.	S
	ii) Number of initiatives assessed		ii) at least 7 initiatives assessed	ii) at least 14 initiatives assessed	Because of the health crisis, none of the initiatives have been fully evaluated yet. All countries are in the process of finalizing the protocol for assessing the evaluation and some are already implementing the first steps in their two initiatives. The full evaluation of 14 initiatives will be carried out by the end of 2021.	

¹³ Users origins: 29% France (217) / 8,8% Burkina Faso (66) / 8,3% Senegal (62) / 6,8% Morocco (51) / 6,4% South Africa (48) / 6,2% Italy (46) / 4,3% India (32) / 4% Brasil (30) / 3,1% USA (23) / 2,2% Switzerland (16) / 20,9% World (156) . The project website does not make a gender separation, but the data can be retrieved from the statistical proportion of women in each country : 51,6 % France (112) / 50,1% Burkina Faso (33) / 51,1 % Senegal (32) / 50,6 % Morocco (26) / 50,7 % South Africa (24) / 51,3% Italy (24) / 48,0 % India (15) / 50,1 % Brazil (15) / 50,5% USA (12) / 50,4 % Switzerland (8) / 49,6 % World (77). We can consider that the total number of women that consulted the project website is of 378 (50,6%).

2021 Project Implementation Report

	iii) Number of knowledge products developed		iii) at least one knowledge product developed	iii) at least 8 knowledge products developed	As for the knowledge products, we have produced a Vademecum , the scientific workshop report and action sheets (and complementary tools and guidelines) presenting the operational way to implement the evaluation process. It is expected to produce a methodological guide to deepen this presentation.	
Component 3: Advocacy for informed decision-making						
Outcome 3: Evidence-based decision-making on agroecology is strengthened and systematized at international, national, local and landscape levels	i) Number of advocacy opportunities created (including meetings, communication tools, radio emission)	There is no transformation of knowledge on the effects of the quantitative effects of agroecology into messages for decision-makers at the national or at the local levels in the targeted country.	i) the advocacy strategy is being drafted	i) at least 9 events, and 10 advocacy documents and tools	The international advocacy strategy is finalized and national strategies are being finalized with partners. The work of identifying events is underway. An international policy review has been produced. It presents the international policy environment on agroecology.	HS
	ii) Number of international organisation (e.g. UNCCD, UNFCCC, WB, ADB, FAO) within which the relevant department(s) endorse the advocacy messages generated under the project		ii) none	ii) at least 3 international organisations have endorsed advocacy messages	International organizations are increasingly defending the positive effects of agroecology. The results of the project and its advocacy message will certainly enrich and increase their arguments. For the moment none has done so as the messages are currently being drafted.	
Component 4: Communication, learning, knowledge management and adaptive management						
Outcome 4: Knowledge on the impact and the success factors of agroecology made publicly available	i) Number of M&E systems developed and implemented	The availability of communication tools on evidence-based information on the benefits of agroecology is very low.	i) one M&E system developed and under implementation	i) one M&E system developed and implemented	One M&E strategy has been produced and validated by the steering committee. This document is accompanied by an activity monitoring table and a procedures manual.	S
	ii) Number of evidence-based communication tools and events on the benefits of agroecology developed and disseminated		ii) at least 1 printed tool (one article in addition to all project presentation tools), 2 digital tools (project website and first digital newsletter)	ii) at least 4 printed tools, 4 digital tools, 8 documentaries , 8 press conferences; and participation	A brochure presenting the project has been produced and printed for specific events. Two news notes (one on advocacy activities and the other on the link between the pandemic and agroecology) have been written and shared through the Avacim website , which is also regularly updated with other project's news. Even if we regularly share news on the project website, we have not yet a regular newsletter (there are 92 subscribers).	

			to at least 4 scientific conferences		
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Action plan to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings – MU make suggestion and BU check

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?
Outcome 2: <i>Knowledge and understanding of the impacts of agroecological systems and success factors of agroecological initiatives are consolidated through a scientifically harmonized protocol</i>	<p>A. The 2 months doctoral student's mission in Senegal will accelerate the evaluation process in the other countries thanks to a first test and adaptation of the methodology. From her experience, she will be able to inform the other implementing partners of the corrective measures to be taken to avoid certain difficulties.</p> <p>B. A mission to India would be very useful to advance this activity in that country.</p> <p>C. A pairing system composed of a focal point in our partner NGO and a referent from the scientific consortium (in charge of component 2) has been set up to ensure a continuous follow-up of the evaluation in each country. This also allows for the homogeneity of methodologies and therefore the interpretation of results.</p> <p>D. Unable to send trainees north, funds were allocated to partner NGOs to recruit an additional human resource at the national level to implement the evaluation. (cfr. COVID-19 adaptation note)</p>	<p>A. Doctoral student: CARI & IRD</p> <p>B. Avaclim coordinator: CARI</p> <p>C. Component 2 members and focal point of the implementing partners with each of their associated scientific team members</p> <p>D. Implementing partner</p>	<p>A. Ongoing mission, ends in the end of June</p> <p>B. As soon as possible</p> <p>C. Ongoing activities</p> <p>D. By September 2021</p>

3. Progress in Generating Project Outputs (Implementation Progress, IP)

(Please indicate progress achieved during this FY (June 2020 – June 2021) as planned in the Annual Work Plan)

Outputs ¹⁴	Expected completion date ¹⁵	Achievements at each PIR ¹⁶	Implement. status (cumulative)	Comments. Describe any variance ¹⁷ or any challenge in delivering outputs
		1 st PIR		
Component 1: Building partnerships for experience sharing and capacity building of agroecology practitioners at the landscape and local levels with international connections among the project participants				
Output 1.1 An agroecology global database with i) successful agroecological innovations in dryland areas, and ii) quantitative, qualitative and spatial data on projects stored in databases	(i) Q2-Q4 Y1 (ii) Q4 Y1	(i) 46 initiatives are being characterized (instead of 35 initially planned) (ii) 35 factsheets were entered into the CARI database and 1 in the FAO one (5 from Ethiopia and 6 from Morocco are pending)	60%	(i) Within the set timeframe, some countries have produced more factsheets than expected due to the great interest of the initiative holders (Morocco: 11 in total). Some of the factsheets have not yet been completed or validated due to contractual issues . Indeed, some partners needed to deepen their knowledge on the initiatives but could not carry out field activities. At no additional cost, 5 AE initiatives in France have been characterized. (ii) The publication of all the factsheets in the FAO database (AE knowledge Platform) is in progress (see here) : all products have been shared with the FAO communication division. It took a long time to find common ground.
Output 1.2 Capacity development through knowledge exchange events to disseminate	(i) Q3-Q4 Y1	<i>Additional information to the defined indicators:</i> (i) 6 national seminars were organized	50%	(i) The majority of the workshops were organized between November and December 2020 , except for Ethiopia which had to wait until April 2021. India's workshop is still pending and will be

¹⁴ Outputs as described in the project logframe or in any updated project revision. In case of project revision resulted from a mid-term review please modify the output accordingly or leave the cells in blank and add the new outputs in the table explaining the variance in the comments section.

¹⁵ As per latest work plan (latest project revision); for example: Quarter 1, Year 3 (Q1 y3)

¹⁶ Please use the same unity of measures of the project indicators, as much as possible. Please be extremely synthetic (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

¹⁷ Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

agroecological innovations in participating countries	(ii) Q1-Q3 Y2	(ii) No international exchanges visits were held yet.		organized as soon as the COVID-19 situation allows it. The delay for both countries is related contractual issues and to the COVID-19 pandemic. (ii) The steering committee agreed to change the international exchange visits into national visits (more information in chapter 13). Indeed, the uncertainties linked to the pandemic require this change, which also corresponds to a need identified by the country partners.
Output 1.3 A dynamic community of practice on agroecology	Q4 Y1 to Q4 Y3	<p><i>Additional information to the defined indicators:</i></p> <p>7 national facilitation strategies are being written by each partner with the support of the leader of component 1 (except India since all activities are stopped due to the COVID-19 impact). Tools to support the CoP are also currently being developed (WhatsApp groups are used by various CoP).</p>	50%	(i) The work of the project focuses on supporting Communities of Practice at the country level. In many countries a CoP already exists and is strengthened by the project activities. The strategy in Senegal for our partner Enda Pronat is to support the local dynamics called DyTAEL (77 participants – 20 women) ¹⁸ and to feed the existing WhatsApp group and the Facebook page of the national platform (DyTAES) ¹⁹ . The members of the DyTAEL CoP are farmers from peasant communities, producers' organizations, deconcentrated technical services, local communities, research (ISRA) and NGOs working on the territory. In the other country where a national dynamic does not yet exist, the national coordinator manages the interactions with the CoP in that country and facilitates dialogue, sharing and sometimes common understanding of agroecology also through a WhatsApp group (in Morocco). A total of 1,201 agroecological practitioners, facilitators, scientists and staff of agroecological cooperatives and businesses participate in 7

¹⁸ Dynamique nationale pour une transition agro-écologique locale (*National dynamic for a local agro-ecological transition*).

¹⁹ Dynamique pour une Transition Agro-Ecologique au Sénégal (*Dynamics for an Agro-Ecological Transition in Senegal*). The DyTAES is a national platform for dialogue on agroecology and aims, in the field of agroecology, to support the State in its regalian mission of developing public policies. This DyTAES has published a note on "Contribution to national policies for an agroecological transition in Senegal", [here](#), only in French.

				<p>individual CoPs. These numbers are dynamic, and Avaclim anticipates that they will increase in the course of project implementation. 791 of the total of 1,201 participants are women.</p> <p>The implementation of the national workshop in India will be followed by the preparation of the strategy. The intention of the national CoP strategies that have been developed in each country is that they should be self-sustaining beyond the lifespan of the Avaclim project, which predicates that autonomy should be supported and developed.</p>
Component 2: Assessment of existing initiatives for evidence-based decision-making at the national, local and landscape levels				
Output 2.1 A multi-criteria assessment tool to measure the impacts of agroecological systems and success factors of agroecological initiatives developed and validated using a participative approach	<p>(i) Q2-Q3 Y1</p> <p>(ii) Q3-Q4 Y1</p> <p>(iii) Q1 Y2</p>	<p><i>i and ii. are additional information to the defined indicators:</i></p> <p>(i) A census of pre-existing M&E tools for agroecological initiatives and;</p> <p>(ii) The priority evaluation needs of the field partners were conducted by the doctoral student during the first year of the project.</p> <p>(iii) A first prototype has been presented to all partners at the international scientific workshop during which participants were able to contribute to its improvement through amendments and proposals. An adaptation phase was initiated during this event. The guideline for data collection protocol was completed after this workshop.</p>	90%	<p>(i) This activity has been fully implemented.</p> <p>(ii) The international scientific workshop was held between the 2 and 5 February 2021, in line with the timeframe. The co-design aspect concerned above all the Senegalese (test ground for the doctoral student). The other countries intervened to adapt the proposed prototype.</p> <p>(iii) After the field trip, improvements will be made by testing the prototype. The result will therefore be called a “functional and accessible tool”.</p>
Output 2.2 Training sessions and user-guide to use and disseminate the multi-criteria assessment tool	(i) and (ii) Q2-Q3 Y2	<p><i>Additional information to the defined indicators:</i></p> <p>(i) Country meetings (videoconference call in small groups) are being held between the evaluation implementing partners (scientists</p>	20%	<p>(i) /</p> <p>(ii) As trainees from the North cannot be sent safely to partner countries (except for the trainee from Senegal who is currently in the field), the budget that was intended for them was allocated</p>

2021 Project Implementation Report

		and NGO) and the consortium (leading the component 2) to discuss and adapt the evaluation indicators and methodology in each country. (ii) The NGO partners, supported by the consortium of scientists, are currently training trainees (or other resource persons) in the use of the multi-criteria assessment tool.		to the contracting of local human resources (cfr. Point 13, adaptations to COVID-19 pandemic). This activity is taking place in line with the workshop plan.
Output 2.3 Country-based and global evidence-based references on impacts and success factors of agroecology	(i) Q2-Q3 Y2 (ii) Q3-Q4 Y2	(i) The selection of two initiatives to be evaluated per country was made during the international workshop and the finalization of this step was done few months after this event. (ii) Data collection protocol for the evaluation of the 2 initiatives is either being finalised or just implemented in the field , depending on the very heterogeneous progress of the countries.	57%	(i) Two initiatives to evaluate have been chosen in all countries. (ii) Delays in the national workshops had an impact on Component 2 activities. The design of the prototype is in progress in all countries. The first steps of the prototype are currently being tested only in Senegal.
Component 3: Advocacy for informed decision-making				
Output 3.1 A common but differentiated advocacy strategy developed by CSOs	(i) Q3-Q4 Y1 (ii) Q4 Y1 to Q1 Y2	(i) 8 advocacy opportunities created <i>Additional information to the defined indicators:</i> (ii) The targets for advocacy have been defined (in time) internationally with the help of Both ENDS and nationally with the participation of the country partners. (ii) A joint advocacy strategy (international and 7 national strategies) document is being finalized.	70%	(i) See the events in the footnote ²⁰ (ii) Targets have been defined in the national strategies. (iii) Country's feedback to complete action plans are pending. The final document gathering the national and international strategies will be delivered according to the FAO deliverable deadline (LoA 30/07/2021). The first challenge is to finalise the action plan (and identify the advocacy events). Because of the health crisis, the date of completion is difficult to estimate. The second challenge is to deepen and

²⁰ - Debate with political and scientific leaders on the theme "Agroecology: for a smart agricultural transition", in January 2020 in France / - Event called "Les journées de l'agroécologie" on the topic of sustainable production and consumption systems, in January 2020 in Senegal / - One Planet Summit, in January 2021 in France / - Fair of agroecological and organic products, in March 2021 in Burkina Faso / - Farmers' seed fair organized by Copagen, in May 2021 in Burkina Faso / - Scientific symposium on sustainable land management, in May 2021 in Burkina Faso / - Alimenterre Festival on the theme "How to meet the challenge of consuming locally", in June 2021 in Senegal / - Virtual forum on family farming and agroecology, in June 2021 in Senegal

2021 Project Implementation Report

				contribute to the heterogeneous network and advocacy of each country partner.
Output 3.2 Dynamic network to establish the dialogue amongst different stakeholders on agroecology through the implementation of the advocacy strategy	(i) Q1-Q2 Y2 (ii) Q2 Y2	(i) A first draft of 10 advocacy messages has been written and is being finalized. (ii) Meetings with targeted national CSO and their network to implement the strategy are not yet organized.	30%	(i) Draft content development is underway and is expected to be delivered by 07/30/2021 (ii) As mentioned above, the action plan is in progress and will define which CSOs to connect with in the next phase (during the implementation of the strategy).
Component 4: Communication, learning, knowledge management and adaptive management				
Output 4.1 Project monitoring and evaluation for learning and adaptive management	Q3 Y1 to the end of the project	(i) An M&E manual (with linked monitoring tools, narrative reports, standardized and shared procedures etc.) has been developed with members of the project and is currently implemented in order to monitor partners activities and achievements and identify needs.	100%	(i) /
Output 4.2 Knowledge management and dissemination of project's products and lessons learned in an adapted format for a wider audience	Q2 Y1 to the end of the project	(i) 1 printed tool on project presentation and 1 digital tool on project news and products (the website). (ii) A general communication strategy and communication national action plans are being developed with partners. Some have returned their feedback, others are still filling it in. This work is in progress. (iii) The communication strategies implementation will follow the completion of their conception but communication tools (such as Talkspirit, Whatsapp, a brochure presenting the project, website, etc.) have been created. 1 transversal teaser and 7 films are in preparation.	60%	(i) A newsletter has not been developed; but news is regularly published on the project website, events on the benefits of agroecology are disseminated within our network and a summary of the reports will be presented with the results of the evaluations. (ii) Feedback from some partners is pending. The draft has been submitted to the FAO in September 2020 and the final version will be shared by July 2021. (iii) Guidelines to write up the movie ToR have been agreed upon with the SC. Other communication tools remain to be developed during the course of the project to strengthen the CoP. 7 movies in 7 countries will be prepared, together with a summary global video. This activity is planned in 2021 according to the project's timeframe.

4. Information on Progress, Outcomes and Challenges on Project Implementation

Please briefly summarize main progress achieving the outcomes (cumulative) and outputs (during this fiscal year):

The main outcome expected in this implementation period: “Actionable knowledge on agroecology implementation is assumed and adopted by agroecology practitioners across the drylands” (**Outcome 1**). With this regard, the project has been able to produce 46 factsheets describing at least 5 agroecological initiatives per country (mainly in drylands). Factsheets are uploaded into two databases: CARI and FAO (Agroecology Knowledge Hub). These factsheets have increased the availability of practical knowledge (observations on the results of agroecological initiatives) and gives an overview of the diversity of agroecological initiatives across the countries (Output 1.1). In parallel, 3 day workshops for exchange of experience on agroecological innovations were organized in 6 countries. The fact sheets were presented, discussed, improved. Participants were representatives of farmer community, NGOs, technical services, and government (Output 1.2). In addition, a dynamic national community of practice on agroecology was established in 6 of the 7 targeted countries to facilitate knowledge sharing. The facilitation strategy for each one of them encourages a long-term peer-to-peer learning process amongst their members. The strategy defines the tools, means and linkages to establish with existing networks to facilitate interactions and increase access to information. (Output 1.3).

The second project outcome started in this implementation period: “Knowledge and understanding of the impacts of agroecological systems and success factors of agroecological initiatives are consolidated through a scientifically harmonized protocol” (**Outcome 2**). The first year and a half of the project allowed the design of an agroecology multi-criteria assessment tool. Around thirty methodologies were analysed (some operational, others from research work) and a second in-depth comparative analysis of these seven selected methodologies was carried out. In addition, the needs for evaluation for each country was identified during the inception workshop in 2020. The international scientific workshop for the development of the tool and its protocol adapted to each country was organized from 2 to 5 February 2021. The first version of the evaluation prototype is now completed and is being prepared for implementation in 2021. The prototype will be continuously improved through feedback, particularly on the basis of the evaluations conducted in the initiatives of 2 countries: Senegal and France. To carry out this work, the scientific consortium designing the prototype works with national researchers and NGO partners. (Output 2.1).

In line with the general objective of the project, the advocacy outcome is the following: “Evidence-based decision-making on agroecology is strengthened and systematized at international, national, local and landscape levels” (**Outcome 3**). An international and 7 national strategies have been developed by the implementing partners. These strategies are based on the actor and institutional mapping and a review of the policy-making timelines. They define the specific targets for advocacy (within the national policy makers), number of actions that will aim to achieve each objective and implemented at the regional or national level. This work is supported by an international policy review to identify international actors that can influence the uptake of agroecology and

The project **outcome 4**: “Knowledge on the impact and the success factors of agroecology made publicly available”. One monitoring and evaluation manual defines the system to monitor and evaluate the activities and a procedures manual, the administrative responsibilities of the members and time frames to be followed ([Output 4.1](#)). National and international communication strategies have been designed. In the framework of this outcome, internal and external tools have been produced (e.g. project presentation brochure and slides), in particular to support partners in the realization of their national workshops ([Output 4.2](#)).

What are the major challenges the project has experienced during this reporting period?

The timeline for the national workshops was modified from the initial schedule. These moments of exchange could not be organized, according to the pre-established schedule, due to administrative issues delaying work with the partners (major delay was the signature of the agreements with the FAO). The last LoAs were signed at the beginning of 2021, one year after the official start of the project. Indeed, partners were able to adapt to the pandemic and conducted the workshops (virtually or not) as soon as the agreements were signed. The pandemic encouraged them to use other tools and methods. Only once the national workshops took place, the international scientific event could be meaningfully held, 6 months after the originally agreed date. Due to the difficulties to gather the members of the project from 7 countries in one place, the organization of this workshop has also been modified. This workshop will be held partly face-to-face (nationally) and partly virtually (like the plenary sessions).

Despite the changes made to address restrictions on mobility, the COVID-19 pandemic limited the exchange of knowledge among project partners, the organization of face-to-face meetings and follow-up or supervision missions. The international scientific workshop (with over 80 participants) was organised virtually, taking into account, the diversity of time zones. Follow-up was ensured, as much as possible, by multiple bilateral meetings with the national focal members, the research members of Component 2 and the CARI team. However, partners were sometimes unable to organise field activities during the pandemic.

The project shows a great disparity in the ownership of the approach and implementing methods by country. In Ethiopia, an agroecological initiative was initially defined as a technologically innovative method of cultivation adapted to the predominant crops in the country. In Brazil, our partner wishes to start the evaluation process in 4 initiatives (instead of 2). The presence of the doctoral student in Senegal will accelerate the evaluation and adaptation process in that country as the evaluation method will adapt according to her field observations. The involvement of the implementing partner in Senegal in advocacy national activities is also contributing to the achievement of the project objectives in this country. In addition, the project gathers partners from different background, in different part of the world. Indeed, civil society organizations work hand in hand with research institutions, both in France and in each of the implementing countries. This is a challenge because of

expectations and differences in the ways of thinking. This is mainly reflected in the timeframe needed to achieve the expected objectives, which is longer for the research partners.

Development Objective (DO) Ratings, Implementation Progress (IP) Ratings and Overall Assessment

Please note that the overall DO and IP ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported in the Section 2 and Section 3 of the PIR.

For DO, the ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of project results.

	FY2021 Development Objective rating²¹	FY2021 Implementation Progress rating²²	Comments/reasons²³ justifying the ratings for FY2021 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period
Project Manager / Coordinator	S	S	Despite the context, the activities planned have been undertaken through adaptations of means and tools. These adaptations were proposed by the project coordinator to the steering committee. Therefore, both activities and project's objective of change adapted to the specificities of the implementing countries (size, context, etc.) and the partners' priorities to ensure the implementation according to the existing possibilities. Therefore, thanks to the developed tools (generally virtual at the international level and in person at the national level) and the existing networks of the 20 project partners, the project is contributing to the uptake of agroecology in drylands.
Budget Holder	S	S	The global implementing partner has created good communication channels among project stakeholders. This excellent relationship among partners made possible to overcome the problems created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some activities are delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and some administrative issues; however, it is expected to achieve most of the project's major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Lead Technical Officer²⁴	S	S	Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts at all levels, the project is fully meeting its objectives/goals as foreseen. Most targets are already at 50% or more.

²¹ **Development/Global Environment Objectives Rating** – Assess how well the project is meeting its development objective/s or the global environment objective/s it set out to meet.

For more information on ratings, definitions please refer to Annex 1.

²² **Implementation Progress Rating** – Assess the progress of project implementation. For more information on ratings definitions please refer to Annex 1.

²³ Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence

²⁴ The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

FAO-GEF Funding Liaison Officer	S	S	<p>The partnership of this project is rich and innovative, with its research institutes and NGOs in a number of quite diverse countries and regions, the engagement of the GEF and FFEM as well as FAO. It is a pity though that the partnership is not fully exploring and exploiting the benefits of working with the UN system to up its outreach and visibility. This is particularly true for its communication and knowledge management components. Some unresolved issues (such as the fact that FAO is not mentioned on the AVACLIM project website as a project partner) need to be addressed in a timely manner to ensure maximum visibility of project activities and results and to expand its outreach. Also, this project is a global normative project in nature, and therefore developed to serve countries and areas throughout the world's drylands. It would be beneficial to the project and the project partnership to be more inclusive and outward looking, as investments to date have been focused on the demonstration countries only. For instance, the restrictions on mobility to contain the Covid-19 pandemic have not pushed the PMU to rethink its capacity development and scientific research work, promptly switching to virtual ways to conduct planned activities, allowing for a wider audience to be addressed and involved. This is somewhat a lost opportunity to broadening and deepening the partnership (using savings from scheduled but cancelled field missions/visits). Minor delays have been accumulated, but globally the work has progressed well, and the participatory, bottom-up spirit of the project is amendable. The proposed assessment tool is comprehensive and adaptable, is rooted in science and practice. It can be a powerful tool to collect evidence and approach decision-makers with a strong narrative.</p>
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5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

Under the responsibility of the LTO (PMU to draft)

This section of the PIR describes the progress made towards complying with the approved ESM plan, when appropriate. Note that only projects with **moderate** or **high** Environmental and Social Risk, approved from June 2015 should have submitted an ESM plan/table at CEO endorsement. This does not apply to **low** risk projects. Please add recommendations to improve the implementation of the ESM plan, when needed.

In case the project did not include an ESM Plan at CEO endorsement stage, please indicate if the initial Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid; if not, what is the new classification and explain.

Overall Project Risk classification (at project submission)	Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid²⁵. If not, what is the new classification and explain.
Low	The classification of environmental and social risks is still valid because the project activities have not fundamentally changed since the beginning of the project. Therefore, the project has not triggered, and is not expected to trigger, any of the social and environmental safeguards of the FAO.

<i>Please report if any grievance was received as per FAO and GEF ESS policies. If yes, please indicate how it is being/has been addressed.</i>

²⁵ **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is changing, the ESM Unit should be contacted and an updated Social and Environmental Management Plan addressing new risks should be prepared.

6. Risks

Risk ratings

RISK TABLE
<i>The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified in the course of project implementation. Please make sure that the table also includes the Environmental and Social Management Risks captured by the Environmental and social Management Risk Mitigations plans. The <u>Notes</u> column should be used to provide additional details concerning manifestation of the risk in your specific project, as relevant.</i>

	Risk	Risk rating ²⁶	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions ²⁷	Notes from the Project Task Force
1	Project partners do not agree on roles and responsibilities, and distribution of the grants	Impact: High Likelihood: Low	(i) Involvement of project partners in every step of the project design. (ii) Validation in the project proposal of role and budget distribution by all project stakeholders. (iii) During the project inception phase, in-depth discussions about the roles and responsibilities and timelines and delivery mechanisms.	(i) All partners were fully involved in all stages of the project design. (ii) Budget has been precisely described in the partnership agreement and presented in each Annual Working Plan and Budget . (iii) There have been a clear description and presentation of the roles and responsibilities of the partners. In addition to the clarifications made at the beginning of the project, other meetings were needed to clarify the role of the national scientific referent and the role of the Component 2 consortium in implementing and monitoring the evaluation of the agroecological initiatives.	BH: Good communication channels have been created among project stakeholders; thus, facilitating its implementation
2	Project partners (e.g. FFEM, IRD) do not cash the estimated co-financing (<i>impossibility to implement the entirety of complementary interventions</i>)	Impact: High Likelihood: Low	(i) Signature of the co-financing letters. (ii) Involvement of partners in each step of the project and they are aligned with the project's intervention logic and delivery mechanisms.	(i) All the co-financing letters were signed without any problems. (ii) The co-financing partners are always involved in the project, especially through frequent meetings, steering committees and continuous mail exchanges. FFEM also contributes more than expected in the expenditures of the project because of the delay in the LoA signature.	

²⁶ GEF Risk ratings: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High

²⁷ If a risk mitigation plan had been presented as part of the Environmental and Social management Plan or in previous PIR please report here on progress or results of its implementation.
For moderate and high risk projects, please Include a description of the ESMP monitoring activities undertaken in the relevant period".

	Risk	Risk rating ²⁶	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions ²⁷	Notes from the Project Task Force
3	Some of the partner NGOs at the national level are not able to initiate a country-wide, dynamic experience-sharing process on agroecology (Output 1.3 unsuccessful)	Impact: Medium Likelihood: Low	(i) Selection of partners with existing agroecology networks. (ii) Capacities development activities of national NGOs by CARI and EMG.	(i) Partners are all involved in at least one network defending agroecology . These include international networks (mainly Drynet) and national networks of farmers' organizations, specific movements for the promotion of agroecology, or institutional dialogue processes on agricultural and environmental policies. (ii) EMG with the support of the Avaclim coordinator, has supported partners in the preparation of the national workshops (agenda, participants review, facilitation book). They are currently supporting the national NGOs in the identification of the CoP members, the needed communication tools and events to strengthen exchanges.	BH: Some activities were delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic but measures were taken to overcome these issues
4	The political situation in one or more partnering countries does not allow the smooth and constructive roll-out of activities (negative impact on the availability and involvement of the national government stakeholders)	Impact: Low Likelihood: Medium	(i) Taking into account periods of political transitions in the planning of interventions (seminars and workshops). (ii) Rigorous planning of advocacy interventions. (iii) Our implementing partners are mostly NGOs that are generally less impacted by political instabilities.	(i) Interventions, international events and missions are agreed with NGOs partners. (ii) The pandemic is limiting the planning of advocacy activities in partner's countries. The project adapts to this new situation and continues to move forward while respecting national policies and events . (iii) All implementing partners are NGOs and therefore not directly impacted by political instabilities.	
5	Despite positive and significant results obtained at all levels on the effects of agroecology, stakeholder groups targeted by the awareness raising and advocacy campaigns do not show interest in this approach and/or do not take them into account (global project objective not achieved)	Impact: High Likelihood: Low	Advocacy strategies build on successes, failures and lessons learned from other advocacy interventions by CARI and his partners.	The national advocacy strategies have taken into account the experiences of CARI and its partners , including Both Ends, which has expertise in this area. Those are documents co-constructed with the NGO partners, which is therefore adapted to the realities and needs of the countries' stakeholders. At this stage, the key is to convince civil society actors who may or may not be part of the communities of practice. They will then hopefully be able to put pressure on the decision-makers.	

	Risk	Risk rating ²⁶	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions ²⁷	Notes from the Project Task Force
6	Prolonged droughts, heat waves or other extreme events occur and prevent the timely implementation of the data collection campaign <i>(unreliable results because of data gaps)</i>	Impact: Medium Likelihood: Low	(i) Evaluation, during the international workshops, of the climate sensitivities of the pre-selected indicators and measurement methods. This criterion will be taken into account when integrating the indicators into the assessment tool. (ii) Second verification of this sensitivity to local climate risks during the national workshop.	<i>The extreme event: COVID-19 pandemic</i> (i) and (ii) The indicators and their collection method were designed in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic period but the health restrictions that can prevent the implementation of the assessment are the responsibility of governments. It is not relevant to assess the influence of the pandemic on the selected indicators and criteria since the most problematic and global consequence could be the impossibility of carrying out the evaluation in the field (lockdown or evaluators/initiative holders' infection by the virus).	
7	Collaboration between the very diverse panel of project partners is unproductive because of barriers in languages, opinions or approaches <i>(inefficient knowledge sharing and collaborative work aiming to support drylands approach)</i>	Impact : Medium Likelihood : Medium	(i) NGOs play a role of facilitator between scientists and practitioners to ensure smooth and productive collaboration. (ii) Project objective will be reminded as often as required. (iii) Translators will be appointed as often as necessary. (iv) Maximisation of collaboration between French- and English-speaking countries throughout the project implementation phase.	(i) The partner NGO plays its role of facilitator between the scientists (national and of the scientific referents of the consortium) and the practitioners of agroecology. (ii) CARI team reminds to the Avaclim team as often as possible the global objective of the project to keep a common guideline. (iii) The team speaks English, and the scientific referent in Brazil speaks Portuguese. We appointed interpreters for workshop and translated working documents as much as possible (in Portuguese too) . (iv) A series of events are planned to bring together all these actors at the international level. Participatory communication, facilitation tools and international online seminars according to the time differences in each country are organised.	

	Risk	Risk rating ²⁶	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions ²⁷	Notes from the Project Task Force
8	COVID-19 crisis can prevent the smooth project activities implementation due to national health restrictions (lockdown, curfew) or evaluators and initiative holder's infection	Impact : Moderate Likelihood : Moderate	(i) Adapt all project activities (until the end of the project) to the current situation. (ii) To be as close as possible to the partners in order to know their needs, obstacles and difficulties related to the pandemic that they face. Provide a technical and logistical support.	(i) From the beginning of the pandemic, the coordination team adapted the ongoing activities in a proactive way . Measures were taken to avoid delays (extreme simplification of the methodology and collection method, very close monitoring of field partners for the evaluation, replacement of international exchange visits by distance workshops and audio-visual animation tools...). The co-design process requires a strong participative approach and several test phases in the field; as field missions in the 7 countries were limited, agroecological initiatives were selected to test the prototype. Then, we shifted to an action plan for the whole project activities. We decided to foresee the worst scenario until the end of the project to give ourselves room to manoeuvre while achieving global project objective. It resulted in a project adaptation note submitted to and validated by the steering committee (cfr. Point 13 COVID-19 adaptation measures). (ii) For the evaluation part, we set up a referent system involving a scientific consortium member linked to a focal point consisting of persons from the partner NGO and associated scientists. For the rest, we strengthen the relations and exchanges between partners and component leaders for a close follow-up.	

Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):

FY2021 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2021 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
Low	The existing and newly identified project external risks do not compromise the achievement of the project objectives.

7. Adjustments to Project Strategy – Only for projects that had the Mid-term review (or supervision mission)

Not applicable for the Avaclim project

8. Stakeholders Engagement

Please report on progress, challenges, and outcomes on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder engagement plan included at CEO Endorsement/Approval (when applicable))

CARI is ensuring the implementation of the project, through the project coordinator, and of the activities for Component 3 and Component 4. EMG is ensuring the implementation of all the components' activities in South Africa, and in parallel the coordination of the component 1 for the whole project's partners. IRD in coordinating the implementation of component 2 through the scientific consortium gathering other research partners (CIRAD and Montpellier Sup Agro).

Members of the scientific consortium have been working along with national researchers in the development and testing of the multi-criteria assessment tool and will be involved in discussing the results. The scientific community of the different countries involved in the Avaclim project had the opportunity to collaborate, develop, and validate the methodology.

Both ENDS is an NGO supporting the implementation of Component 3 (for the duration of the project), in particular at certain steps for which its expertise is an important added value of the project: for example, the realization of an international policy review on agroecology, the support to partners in the development of national advocacy strategies and of the international advocacy strategy of Avaclim.

The implementing partners in the seven countries are NGOs (Agrisud, ARFA, Caatinga, ENDA Pronat, GBS and ISD). They ensure the implementation of all components at the national level. The Norsys Foundation has been engaged in the implementation of all components at the national level in Morocco since January 2020, along with Agrisud.

All national NGO partners are already benefiting directly from access to evidence-based knowledge on agroecology benefits, success factors and implementation methods through the mutual sharing of field initiatives. The Avaclim project has given more visibility to field initiatives in which national NGO partners are involved. This through the fact sheets, their dissemination on the partners' websites, but also the dissemination of news on social networks. This visibility is also achieved through the presentation of the project at national workshops and the mutual sharing of results of field initiatives.

NGOs and community-based organizations were equally involved during the data collection phase and the whole scientific component. Events like the international scientific seminar (Feb-2021) and

advocacy workshops (2022) support the sharing of knowledge and a participatory decision-making process between institutions and components.

Although some of the national NGO partners sometimes find it difficult to follow the methodologies proposed by Avaclim's coordination or to implement the activities due to the context or administrative problems, they are all very involved in the project activities and show a strong commitment. This was observed from the beginning of the project, when partners agreed to work for the project while awaiting for the formal agreement being signed. The international events related to the implementation of the project (kick-off workshop, participatory mid-term evaluation) are key moments to gather and enhance this enthusiasm.

9. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable)

No specific members of the project have a gender expertise, but attention is paid to ensure that women are at the forefront of any activity. This by underlining their role in agroecology and in agriculture in general and how they are central to agroecological transition projects. We always check the gender equality on the activities carried out within the framework of the project (all reporting system asks for disaggregated data) and the importance of this approach is recalled before each activity preparation. It is particularly true for the improvement of women's participation as spokespersons for civil societies that the Avaclim project encourages. The results of the project are taken to the political level, at the country level, but also to donors and international institutions.

The Brazilian partners (both the NGO: CAATINGA and the scientific referent: UFRPE) have the most advanced gender expertise among the project implementing partners. It perfectly reflects their ranking on the Gender Inequality Index 2017, which is the second lowest amongst the implementing partners countries. They selected the initiatives to be characterised through criteria formulated by their Community of Practice (CoP), amongst which *"strengthen multiple narratives (women, youth, indigenous, LGBTQI+) and can incorporate issues such as coping with violence, fair division of labor, political participation, autonomy, empowerment"*. One of the initiatives is fully lead by peasant women in agroecology and one member of the scientific national group is specialised in eco-feminism, putting agroecology and rural issues at the centre of the discourse (UFRPE JUREMA Nucleus). This expertise translates into a very egalitarian gender approach in all activities implemented in Brazil and inspires the activities and partners of other projects. For instance, they inspired the inclusion of a specific indicator on the multi-criteria tool under construction. We are also planning to organize two specific events to share the specificity of agroecology application on the ground, one of which would focus on the Brazilian example.

In South Africa (ranked 90 out of 189 on the Gender Inequality Index 2017), our implementing partners NGO (EMG) is composed of 50% of women and their approach supports the inclusion of minorities. One initiative supported by EMG and presented through a factsheet is the Heiveld cooperative. In its practices, the Cooperative has encouraged and supported the active participation of women and young people, and this is reflected in the membership statistics, the management and the governance of the business.

Other countries do not generally have a gender approach as such but have related activities. For example, in Senegal, Enda Pronat conducted a [study](#) to understand how gender issues are articulated in its global strategy (the way men and women are involved and participate in the implementation of different activities etc.).

Many of the initiatives selected by our partners in Morocco (Agrisud International and Norsys Foundation) are led by women and their agricultural cooperatives. In addition, the directors and the on-site project coordinator of both partner organizations are women: it is the only partner whose direct contacts are exclusively women.

CARI tries to value when there are good examples, and to highlight them through the products expected in the framework of the project (in the initiative factsheet, we ask to value the initiatives lead by women).

10. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities / products (when applicable), as outlined in knowledge management approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval

The project has not a specific knowledge management plan. The project by itself focuses on generating knowledge from the exiting agroecology initiatives, at national and international level. So far, factsheets, national workshops, regular open calls amongst all project partners are activities supporting the sharing of these best practices. The upcoming activity of designing a facilitation strategy for each CoP includes the identification of specific communication tools and channels to use. In addition, the coordination team is preparing a factsheet booklet that will analyze the common ground and trends of the agroecological initiatives characterized. The booklet aims to show the worldwide diversity of practices, scales, initiative holders, themes (some of which are emerging like gender). With regards to the scientific work, the project focuses on the accessibility of information. The project therefore produces operational guidelines and functional tools for presenting the evaluation prototype as well as notes describing how agroecology and an evaluation is understood in the framework of the project.

The project has a global communication strategy designed in 2020 and 2021 that is being implemented in each of the seven countries. The international strategy defines the common targets based on the project objectives. It defines the messages to share with each project partners. For example, the fact that national partners should be given clear indications of the timeframe of the activity to be carried out and the tools and means available to achieve it. It highlights the events and media to share specific information (steering committee, follow-up meetings with component leaders etc.). National communication action plans precise the audience, their needs, the specific messages, and required tools to mobilize in order to target them. In the action plan in Burkina Faso, ARFA is

targeting elementary school with vegetables gardens, to include an environment education to their school program. There is therefore the possibility to tackle different targets within a same project umbrella strategy, which results in a great variety of concrete communication actions. As with the advocacy strategy, it is difficult to participate in events where it would be possible to communicate about the project, as they are often postponed, and their agendas are uncertain.

Thanks to the scientific evaluation of agroecological initiatives implemented within the framework of the Avaclim project in the village of Katop in Senegal, the experience of family farmers is contributing to the construction of a solid argument in favor of agroecology among politicians.

"I feel valued and strengthened in my choice of sustainable agriculture." Fatoumata Sow, farmer in Katop, Senegal. [Please find picture here](#). Photos can be broadcast with credits : ©Yoro Sow

During the field trip of the coordinator in Ethiopia (April 2021), a farmer also expressed her interest and gratitude for participating to this project: *"Thank you for coming, I have increased my knowledge on compost production at the national workshop and on the organisation of my system thanks to your questions."* Arbe Tafesse, Ethiopia. [Please find the fact sheet presenting this initiative here](#).

The website presents and gives access to all the products designed during the project : www.avaclim.org

Some of the communication tools and activities ensured within the communication component to present and spread the project progress :

=> [Leaflet presenting the project](#)

=> [Avaclim in India : news of the activity of the project in India](#)

=> [Avaclim in South Africa : news on the project activities in South Africa](#)

=> [Experience sharing workshop in Brazil : communication on the national workshop organised by Caatinga](#)

The project communication focal point is: Ms Stéphanie Dubois de Prisque - leader of the Avaclim Communication Component: communication@cariassociation.org

11. Indigenous Peoples Involvement

Are Indigenous Peoples involved in the project? How? Please briefly explain.

The direct involvement of indigenous communities in the implementation of the Avaclim project is not planned, as the project does not include any development intervention on the ground. However, an important part of the agroecological initiatives put forward the involvement of indigenous communities within the framework of the activities of the component 1 of the project. The traditional knowledge of these communities has been collected and valorised in the framework of these initiatives: soil fertility improvement, traditional pest management, production and conservation of traditional seeds, rainwater collecting systems, production of organic fertilizers and plant-based pesticides, etc. The same is also applicable to solutions to conflicts over access to natural resources and land ownership, which are common in the drylands concerned. The multi-criteria evaluation tool currently being tested includes a dimension regarding the conservation of cultures and traditions of community groups, which should be important factors for the success and sustainability of agroecology. Therefore, traditional knowledge results will be added to the social benefits analysis that comprehend the conservation of community groups' cultures and traditions.

12. Innovative Approaches

Please provide a brief description of an innovative²⁸ approach in the project / programme, describe the type (e.g. technological, financial, institutional, policy, business model) and explain why it stands out as an innovation.

A major innovation of the project lies in the very definition of agroecology amongst project partners. Agroecology is understood as a holistic (multidimensional) and territorially-anchored approach : “An *agroecological initiative* is an organized set of actions carried out by an individual, group or legal entity, characterized by a medium- to long-term approach aimed at intensifying and optimizing the ecological processes of all components of agriculture through approaches, methods, techniques and practices within the spectrum of agroecology and its transformative capacity, in spatial dimensions that go beyond individual plots, for the continuous transformation of interdependent ecological, economic and social elements to strengthen the resilience of the overall system”.

The bottom-up approach is always encouraged in development projects, though rarely happening in the field. In this project, agroecological initiatives are the key entry point of all the activities: mainly the scientific evaluation and the advocacy. Therefore, the priority is given to the community of practice rather than the promoter of innovative practices, starting from the national workshop, in which, farmers, cooperatives and initiatives holders are encouraged to present and share the knowledge developed from the implementation of these alternative approaches.

We choose prototyping the evaluation tool through a co-design method. What very often hinders the operationalization and relevance of many evaluation methods to the realities on the ground is the fact that they originate from top-down processes. Inspired by the participatory, bottom-up and context-specific nature of agroecology, the co-design approach seems to us to be relevant to meet the challenges of assessing the multi-dimensional impacts of agroecological transition initiatives. The key stage of co-design is indeed the testing of this prototype in the field, through its use by the various users. It is the users who then finalize the prototype by adapting it to the country. This

²⁸ Innovation is defined as *doing something new or different in a specific context that adds value*

contributes greatly to their appropriation of the methodology and its suitability to their needs and methods.

The project's approach of capitalising on existing agroecology initiatives across countries is innovative in itself. In this project, the effects of successful and autonomous initiatives are observed, shared and analysed. This pushes the boundaries of knowledge and analytical capacity of agroecology practitioners in different existing communities: research, community-based organisations, universities, NGOs, international organisations, etc. This is possible by focusing on the benefits and challenges encountered during the development of the initiative both in its social, economic and environmental dimensions.

13. Possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project

Please indicate any implication of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities and progress of the project. Highlight the adaptative measures taken to continue with the project implementation.

The implementation of Year 1 activities of the project was strongly impacted by COVID-19. Component 1 experienced a significant delay in travel and meetings with initiative holders. This was due to the restriction of movement and the slowdown of work for 3 months in many partners' countries (Morocco, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia etc.). The accumulation of delays in this component has had an impact on the others. As a result, there is a 6-month delay in all project activities, which seems difficult to catch up. Advocacy activities, scheduled to take place in 2022, are likely to take place mainly in the last half of the year. However, the main project outcomes are likely to be achieved. The MTR will take place in October 2021 (with a 4-month delay).

The restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow each partner to be optimally involved in the project, but they all adapted their methodology and activities according to the national / regional restriction measures. Concrete adaptations of the projects' activities have been suggested by the coordinator and validated by the steering committee in June 2021.

There is a trend to communicate mainly virtually because of the pandemic. There is a risk that this communication channel will overtake all the project's communication activities. With respect to partnerships, many partners based on their existing network to characterize the initiatives and define the Community of Practice. This has helped to improve their intervention methodology or to identify new partners at the national, regional and international levels to achieve the project results.

The project was coordinated remotely (only 2 field missions were organised : in South Africa - March 2020 and in Ethiopia - May 2021). This pandemic highlighted the importance of being regularly in the field to ensure a common understanding of the approaches and methodologies promoted in a project, especially in an international project bringing together a wide variety of cultures, personalities and backgrounds. This is crucial to understand the culture and way of working of the other and to adapt the support accordingly. On the other hand, we have found that the organization of an international virtual workshop can have similar effects to physical workshops in terms of sharing ongoing issues and strengthening motivation.

14. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing ²⁹	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2021	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or closure	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
French Government	Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM)	Public	1 100 000 €	333 319 €	0	1 100 000 €
Research Institute	Institut de Recherche et de Développement (IRD)	Public	280 000 €	97 353 €	0	280 000 €
Research Institute	SoCA Project (Beyond Climate, soil C sequestration to sustain family farming in the Tropics)	Public	779 800 €	500 000 €	0	779 800 €
Research Institute	SeCURE Soil Ecological function Restoration Project : to enhance agrosystem services in rainfed rice cropping systems in agroecological transition	Public	237 000 €	237 000 €	0	237 000 €

²⁹ Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Beneficiaries, Other.

Research Institute	DSCaTT Agricultural Intensification and Soil Carbon Sequestration in Tropical and Temperate Farming Systems Dynamic of Soil Carbon Sequestration in Agricultural Systems	Public	1 000 000 €	750 000 €	0	1 000 000 €
Non-Governmental Organization	Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales (CARI)	Private	70 560 €	25 000 €	0	70 560 €
United Nations	The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Public	700 000€	279 430 €	0	700 000 €
TOTAL			4 167 360 €	2,222,102€	0	4 167 360 €

The activities of the first year were mainly on GEF funding. In addition, because of Covid, the funds allocated by the FFEM for travel could not be used, the scientific workshop took place virtually, the field evaluations (thus the data collection and laboratory analyses) were delayed. The IRD will be more involved in the analysis and collection of data as well as the valorization of results for advocacy, activities planned for the second and third year of the project. The contribution of the CARI represents management costs, it is a percentage of the projected budget, so we allocate the percentage to the budget spent.

Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

Development/Global Environment Objectives Rating – Assess how well the project is meeting its development objective/s or the global environment objective/s it set out to meet. **DO Ratings definitions:** **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** - Project is expected to achieve or exceed **all** its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”); **Satisfactory (S)** - Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings); **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** - Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits); **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)** - Project is expected to achieve of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only **some** of its major global environmental objectives); **Unsatisfactory (U)** - Project is expected **not** to achieve **most** of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits); **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)** - The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, **any** of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.)

Implementation Progress Rating – Assess the progress of project implementation. **IP Ratings definitions:** **Highly Satisfactory (HS):** Implementation of all components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be resented as “good practice”. **Satisfactory (S):** Implementation of most components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action. **Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** Implementation of some components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action. **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** Implementation of some components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action. **Unsatisfactory (U):** Implementation of most components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan. **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** Implementation of none of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.