# Terminal Evaluation UNEP/GEF Project "Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management"

## GEF ID 8003 (September 2015 – June 2021)

Visit to Farm "El Mulato", project replication site, Mayabeque Province, Oct. 2022.

**Evaluation Office of the**
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Project *"Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management"*
GEF ID 8003
(April 2023)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UNEP by Ms. Téa García-Huidobro, as the main evaluator, with inputs from Dr. René Capote as the national facilitator.

The evaluation team would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and interviewed who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex IV.

The evaluation team would like to thank the project team and in particular Mr. Alfredo Martínez as the CPP Programme Director, Ms. Yulaidis Aguilar as the Technical Coordinator for Project 2, and Mr. Robert Erath as the UNEP-GEF Task Manager, for their contribution and collaboration throughout the evaluation process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Ms. Maritza García, President of the Environment Agency of Cuba, who took time to oversee the evaluation process. The evaluation team would also like to thank Ms. Janet Wildish, Evaluation Manager from the UNEP Evaluation Office, for her guidance and support.

The evaluation team hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this Terminal Evaluation will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, initiation of the next (and final) project under the CPP Programme, and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in Cuba and other countries and regions.

## BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Téa García-Huidobro, a biochemist, began her professional life as a researcher in molecular and cell biology. After obtaining a Masters in Environmental Technology (Imperial College, London, 1999), she worked for the Government of Chile on sustainable natural resource management and has dedicated herself to environmental issues, in particular biodiversity, ever since. In her time with the Chilean Government, she focused on public policies, regulations and tools for biodiversity conservation and institutional capacity development. She then joined the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Panama to manage a portfolio of Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded projects, for Latin American and Caribbean countries and globally. After this, she became the Regional Programme Coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), where she continued to drive the conservation and sustainable development agenda from IUCN's Regional Office in Costa Rica. In 2017, she became an international consultant, specialising in project drafting, reporting, compilation analyses and independent evaluations. After a period at IUCN headquarters in Switzerland, as Special Advisor to the Acting Director General, she returned to consulting and is now undertaking external evaluations for UNEP's Evaluation Office. Her current home-base is Costa Rica.

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## ABOUT THE EVALUATION

**Joint Evaluation:** No

**Report Language(s):** English.

**Evaluation Type:** Terminal Evaluation

**Brief Description:** This report is a Terminal Evaluation of a UNEP/GEF project "Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management", implemented between September 2015 and March 2021. The project's overall development goal was to address land degradation issues, with an emphasis on water resource management, in key agricultural areas of Cuba. The project was the second of five projects under an overarching Country Pilot Partnership Programme that shared the common goal: *"Cuba has the capacities and conditions for sustainably managing land in a manner that contributes to maintaining ecosystem productivity and functions".* The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

**Key words:** Sustainable Land Management; Land Degradation; Drought; Soil Conservation; Integrated Water Resource Management; Water Productivity; Water Use Efficiency; Environmental Monitoring; Ecosystem Management; Financial Incentives;[1]

**Primary data collection period:** September–November 2022

**Field mission dates:** 16–25 October 2022

[1] This data is used to aid the internet search of this report on the Evaluation Office of UNEP Website

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACPA | Cuban Association of Animal Production |
| ACTAF | Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians |
| AMA | Environment Agency |
| ANAP | National Association of Small Farmers |
| AZCUBA | Sugar Entrepreneurial Group |
| BANDEC | Bank of Credit and Commerce |
| CBC | Caribbean Biological Corridor |
| CCS | Credit and Services Cooperative |
| CCU | Central Coordination Unit (of the CPP Programme) |
| CEDEL | Centre for Local Development |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CGB | Cuban Ranger Corps |
| CITMA | Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment |
| CPA | Agricultural Production Cooperative |
| CPP | Country Pilot Partnership |
| EA | Expected Accomplishments (from UNEP's Mid-Term Strategy) |
| EIPHH | Havana Company for Hydraulic Research and Projects |
| ESEN | National Insurance Company of Cuba |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation |
| FMC | Federation of Cuban Women |
| GEARH | Business Group for Use of Hydraulic Resources |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| HYPR | Half-Yearly Progress Reports |
| IAgric | Institute of Agricultural Engineering Research |
| IES | Institute of Ecology and Systematics |
| IGT | Institute of Tropical Geography |
| INICA | Institute of Sugarcane Research |
| INRH | Institute of Water Resources |
| INSMET | Institute of Meteorology |
| IPF | Institute of Physical Planning |
| IS | Institute of Soil |
| IWRM | Integrated Water Resource Management |
| LADA | Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands |

| | |
|---|---|
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| ME | Ministry of Education |
| MES | Ministry of Higher Education |
| MINAG | Ministry of Agriculture |
| MINCEX | Ministry of Foreign Investment and Cooperation |
| MTR | Mid Term Review |
| NEA | National Executing Agency |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NPSCI | National Programme for Soil Conservation and Improvement |
| NSC | National Steering Committee |
| OP15 | Operational Programme 15 (of the GEF) |
| P1 to P5 | Project 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 of the CPP programme |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review(s) |
| PMU | Project Management Unit(s) |
| ProDoc | Project Document (UNEP) |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SLM | Sustainable Land Management |
| TOC | Theory of Change |
| TORs | Terms of Reference |
| UBPC | Basic Unit of Cooperative Production |
| UEB | Base Enterprise Unit |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNDP-CO | United Nations Development Programme – Country Office (Cuba) |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| WOCAT | World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies |

## PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1: Project Identification Table

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GEF Project ID:** | 8003 | | |
| **Implementing Agency:** | UNEP | **Executing Agencies:** | Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) |
| **Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):** | SDG 6 "Ensure the availability of water and its sustainable management and sanitation for all", with its specific goals 6.3.2, 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.5.1<br>SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote Sustainable use of terrestrial Ecosystems, sustainably manage Forests, combat desertification, and Halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss ", with its goals 15.3.1 | | |
| **GEF Core Indicator Targets (for projects approved prior to GEF-7)** | This project belongs to a GEF 3 programme in Cuba which precedes GEF Core Indicators, which are retrofitted only until GEF 6. | | |
| **Sub-programme:** | Healthy and Productive Ecosystems | **Expected Accomplishment(s):** | EA(b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making |
| **UNEP approval date:** | | **Programme of Work Output(s):** | PoW 2018-2019 |
| **GEF approval date:** | 04 May 2015 | **Project type:** | FSP |
| **GEF Operational Programme #:** | OP15 (GEF 3) | **Focal Area(s):** | Land Degradation |
| | | **GEF Strategic Priority:** | LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape |
| ***Expected* start date:** | mid-2015 | **Actual start date:** | 21 September 2015 |
| ***Planned* operational completion date:** | 30 Sept 2020 | **Actual operational completion date:** | 31 March 2021 |
| ***Planned* project budget at approval:** | USD 26,988,880 | **Actual total expenditures reported as of June 2021** | USD 44,775,616 |
| **GEF grant allocation:** | USD 2,444,500 | **GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021:** | USD 2,414,443.27 |
| **Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:** | USD 55,500 | **Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:** | USD 59,000 |
| ***Expected* Full-Size Project co-financing:** | USD 24,544,380 | **Secured Full-Size Project co-financing:** | USD 42,361,173 |
| **Date of first disbursement:** | 14 Jan 2016 | **Planned date of financial closure:** | Dec 2021 |
| **No. of formal project revisions:** | 7 (routine budget revisions) | **Date of last approved project revision:** | 12 April 2021 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No. of Steering Committee meetings:** | Yearly | **Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:** | Last: 6 May 2021 |
| **Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*** | Oct 2019 | **Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):** | 13 Oct 2019 |
| **Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*** | Oct-Dec 2021 | **Terminal Evaluation (actual date):** | Sep 2022-Feb 2023 |
| **Coverage - Country(ies):** | Cuba | **Coverage - Region(s):** | Latin America and Caribbean |
| **Dates of previous project phases:** | Cuba's Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) Programme<br>• **Project #1:** Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory Systems & Awareness Building/Sustainable Land Management in Severely Degraded Ecosystems – **Status: Finalized**<br>• **Project #5:** Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of Cuba CPP – **Status: Finalized (Started with Project #1)**<br>• **Project #2:** This project | **Status of future project phases:** | Cuba's Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) Programme<br>• **Project #3:** Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms / Sustainable Land Management in Dry land Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas– **Status: Nearing Completion**<br>• **Project #4:** Validation of SLM Models at Landscape Scale – **Status: Under review** by UNDP as lead agency, with UNEP co-implementing |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Project background

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) full-sized project for Cuba "*Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management*" (GEF ID 8003) finalised in 2021 and is now subject to a Terminal Evaluation. This evaluation seeks to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the project's outcomes and impacts (actual and potential), including the sustainability of its results.

2. This project is the second of five projects within Cuba's Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) Programme, funded by the GEF's third replenishment cycle (GEF-3) under its Operational Programme (OP) #15 for Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The CPP, titled "*Supporting Implementation of the Cuban National Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought*", is a USD 89.4 million programme (USD 10 million from the GEF and USD 79.4 million in co-financing) that was approved in 2008 (GEF ID 2437) and is still running. The CPP, which in Cuba is referred to as OP15 or CPP-OP15, has the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as lead GEF agency, in charge of Projects 1, 3 and 5, and UNEP as co-implementing agency, in charge of Project 2 (this project). Project 4, the last of the cohort, is due to start in 2023 implemented jointly by UNDP and UNEP.

### This evaluation

3. The project currently being evaluated, Project 2, was executed between September 2015 and March 2021 by Cuba's Environment Agency (AMA), delegated by the project's National Executing Agency (NEA), the Ministry for Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), with the close involvement of a number of key government institutions, in particular from the Ministry of Agriculture. The project had a national focus as well as direct actions in four demonstration regions (out of five CPP regions - see Figure 2) where provincial and private sector stakeholders played key roles.

4. As stated in the evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs), this Terminal Evaluation had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the teams at AMA, UNEP, UNDP and other national partners. The latter considers as much those with roles in the field, especially in relation to SLM and water resource management, as those involved in implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

5. This evaluation also sought to answer a series of questions stemming from an SLM portfolio review being carried out by UNEP. This external review involved a cohort of five UNEP-GEF projects executed in Cuba, Kenya, Madagascar, Serbia and Albania that were all undergoing Terminal Evaluations at similar times. It aims to highlight commonalities, priorities and comparative advantages for UNEP under the GEF's Land Degradation and SLM thematic area, particularly in view of developing and implementing future proposals.

## Key Findings & Conclusions

6. This is an outstanding project in terms of performance. It exhibited many strengths, demonstrated **high performance** in a number of key areas and gained an overall rating of "Highly Satisfactory". Its results span all the way from new policies, regulations and procedures, improved data management for SLM and a modernised hydrometric monitoring system, to increased yields, water use efficiency and crop diversity on farms, an enhanced educational offer in SLM, and a growing community of practice for SLM. The project's conception as one of five projects under a 10-year country programme was a unique set-up in Cuba that had a significant influence on the project's performance. This set-up created strong enabling conditions that undoubtedly contributed to its success in tackling land degradation and made sense in terms of the change processes needed to achieve SLM.

7. By building on its predecessor (Project 1), Project 2 permeated more readily into national plans and programmes, land use planning processes, farm-level practices, schools and post-graduate programmes, and the general perception of project beneficiaries. In doing so, the project also created enabling conditions for its successor, Project 4. In this project, **state support has been consistent, coherent, and integral.** Several SLM facets are being supported and stimulated directly by the Cuban state, with different competent authorities assisting with the technical, political, social, economic and financial aspects of SLM. Delivering SLM integrally is undoubtedly a best practice that has allowed the Cuban state to achieve significant results at scale.

8. The project's highest performance ratings were those for *Strategic Relevance*, *Effectiveness, Efficiency* and *Sustainability*, boosted by similarly high scores for *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation*, *Country ownership and Driven-ness*, *Communication and Public awareness* and *Preparedness and Readiness*. In fact, the project scored **"Highly Satisfactory" in the majority of evaluation criteria**. Findings point to a very successful project that achieved transformative changes both at the institutional and farm level. The way competent authorities, farmers, cooperatives and water managers work together to achieve SLM and conserve water resources was significantly improved by this project.

9. The project's performance is deeply influenced by its embedment in a wider programme and cannot be readily separated from the contributions made by other CPP Programme projects. This design as part of a continuum not only brought coherence to the project, but also added to its *Strategic Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness* and *Sustainability*. The project was able to achieve lasting, impactful and politically relevant results, in a shorter period of time (5 $^{1}/_{2}$ years) than one might otherwise expect.

10. In terms of *Strategic Relevance*, the project was fully aligned with UNEP's, GEF's and Cuba's environmental priorities and strategies. Encouraged by UNEP, capacity building and south-south cooperation were noteworthy features in this project. The project (and the CPP Programme) offered a convincing platform through which to implement Cuba's National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought. By design, the project was intended to be complementary with other relevant GEF and non-GEF interventions. In addition to other projects in the CPP Programme, timely and fruitful synergies were also created with other interventions (especially BASAL, Manglar Vivo and INFOGEO), that led to joint actions, mutual reinforcement and cost-savings. In addition, significant volumes of government co-financing were mobilised that almost doubled the project's initial co-financing commitment. Good levels of *Preparedness and*

*Readiness* were seen at project start-up, and during its execution, adaptive management helped to counteract workplan delays caused by unavoidable external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Altogether, this resulted in very high *Efficiency* levels.

11. The project demonstrated **outstanding *Effectiveness,*** in part thanks to its continuation of the work of Project 1. By building on pre-existing efforts, institutional arrangements and partnerships effectively, **the project overperformed on almost all of its Outcome targets** and delivered a suite of relevant, timely and science-based **Outputs that display high levels of user ownership**. These Outputs have contributed to institutional strengthening, coordination, biophysical monitoring, awareness raising, information and knowledge sharing, improved agricultural and water management practices and critically important achievements for farmers.

12. The project was extremely effective in **lifting barriers to SLM and integrated water resource management** (IWRM) -the special ingredient in this project-, while highlighting the integral nature and benefits of these management approaches. IWRM principles and practices were seamlessly combined with sustainable (or conservation) agriculture and improved farming practices to drive SLM and address the drivers of land degradation. One crucial factor behind this was the use of on-farm demonstrative SLM experiences as **'proof of concept'**. Making this work required extensionist support and technical assistance (including new equipment) and involved inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary teams. By seeing notable short-term results in crops, water availability, income and even resilience levels, the use of scientific evidence, data and new techniques was able to translate into behaviour change and shifts in perception on the part of producers.

13. The project therefore achieved its three Outcomes amply, by improving human and material capacities for SLM with an emphasis on water, meeting biophysical monitoring and information management needs, and propagating, through applied science and beyond initial selected sites, knowledge of how to increase water use efficiency, restore water and soil quality, improve yields and food security, and integrate conservation objectives and climate change factors into agricultural production. There are farmers who no longer see themselves as producers, but as "agro-ecosystem managers".

14. The project even generated **catalytic effects** (almost a snowball effect) with results beyond those initially planned, such as universities taking up SLM in their curricula, including an SLM Masters' degree, even outside of project intervention areas. There is no doubt that the project is highly likely to reach its intended impact, especially because results boast very high *Sustainability* levels due to the successful uptake of SLM and aspects of IWRM, at various scales and across sectors. High levels of socio-political sustainability (with evident interest in expanding the SLM community of practice and fully institutionalising the government's innovative and official SLM recognition scheme) were matched by significant institutional sustainability (with soil and water resource management now supported by new policies, laws, regulations and instruments). Financial sustainability was marked by increased access to economic incentives and financial products for SLM and by the extent to which government agencies and state companies continue to budget for SLM.

15. Another key strength in this project is the extent to which *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* were achieved. The inclusion of multiple sectors and the search for balanced solutions were integral to the project's design, and to effective SLM. Multi-stakeholder participation was indeed used to drive integrated land management approaches.

Farmers, producer groups and water managers were given due recognition as key project stakeholders and even as "SLM champions". The multi-stakeholder approach extended also to project management and technical assistance, as execution responsibilities for Project 2 were spread across several competent authorities. This resulted in a strong sense of teamwork, a multi-disciplinary outlook on SLM and a common understanding of the country's land degradation needs and challenges. This good practice was both effective and representative of the SLM institutionality, and showed how factors related to *Quality of Project Management and Supervision* had a positive influence on the project's impact.

16. The multi-stakeholder approach also served to increase *Country ownership and Driven-ness*. The diverse groups that this project effectively brought together (ministries, water and sugar companies, agricultural and forestry institutes, planning entities, universities, municipal governments, bank and insurance companies, producer groups and cooperatives) all remain engaged and committed to SLM and IWRM, resulting in a considerable degree of *country ownership and driven-ness*. *Communication and Public awareness* were also prominent in this project. The project dedicated important resources to outreach, sensitisation and awareness-raising activities. The gender-sensitive and inclusive manner in which the project encouraged public participation was conducive to dialogue and the exchange of ideas, rather than one-way knowledge transmission. Feedback channels were also established, in particular with farmers and producer groups.

17. The project's abundant strengths were accompanied by certain areas in need of improvement. These were minor issues relating to project *Monitoring and Reporting,* which is distinct from SLM monitoring, where improvements were notorious. Project indicator monitoring implied a learning curve for project teams. Even when indicator values were above target, their consistency varied depending on the project intervention area. Documentation that supported results (means of verification that corroborated Outputs and indicators) was available upon request, rather than systematically filed and accessible for evaluation purposes. Project information management therefore is an area that would benefit from further strengthening.

18. Often in unsuspecting or subtle ways, the project was *Responsive to Human rights and Gender equality*. Either directly or indirectly, the project addressed issues of human health, the role of women, and the right to a healthy environment. By practicing conservation /organic agriculture, becoming more involved with their local communities, and creating conditions that improved human wellbeing, some of the farmers who adopted SLM were able to attend to the needs of marginalized groups. There are stories from the field on how diversifying agricultural production increased food security and created new income streams for rural families in ways that benefitted women and youth, boosted the nutrition of marginalised children, and in some areas, even slowed the trend of migration away from rural areas.

19. Based on evaluation findings, the project scored **5.82 out of 6**, which demonstrates performance at a **'Highly Satisfactory'** level. A table of ratings against all evaluation criteria is included in the Conclusions section (see Table 13). This report also provides answers to 'Key Strategic Questions' that constitute a set of questions that stem from the UNEP SLM portfolio review (see Table 12) that comprises this project and four other UNEP-GEF projects. In Annex XI, a Spanish translation is provided of this Executive Summary and the evaluation's Recommendations (full text).

## Lessons Learned

20. Lesson 1: Sharing project management and execution responsibilities across a number of competent authorities is an effective means to both operationalise and institutionalise SLM.

21. Lesson 2: A long-term (>10-year) country partnership approach, based on a cohort of thematically distinct projects, can generate results that are beyond the reach of a stand-alone project or a short-term programme.

22. Lesson 3: The integration of gender issues by project teams has its own learning curve. To demonstrate gendered results, a good first step is to ensure that sex-disaggregated baselines are known and recorded, in such a way that any attribution by the intervention towards gender roles or groups (whether positive or negative), can be more readily measured.

23. Lesson 4: Project data management is a vital asset for effective M&E and needs to be prescribed and built in from the onset of a project.

## Recommendations

24. Recommendation 1: Prepare a Gender Strategy or Plan to guide and potentiate gender-related actions and gender reporting under P4.

25. Recommendation 2: There is a lot to be gained from strengthening M&E practice for the purpose of P4 and the closure of the CPP Programme. P4 should have a common framework in place for information management and more impactful reporting that also accounts for the contributions of P5.

    Good practice in information management for project M&E would entail: (i) A common understanding of project indicators for greater consistency in project reporting; (ii) Means of verification that are readily available for internal and external evaluation processes; (iii) Data collection and analyses for impact communication; (iv) Data spreadsheets for the main project sites containing basic and systematised information; (v) Use of common reporting formats by territorial teams to facilitate the flow of comparable, timely and reliable information.

    To integrate these improvements into P4, it is recommended that an M&E framework be prepared to bring these five elements together and organise the project's information management needs as a function of project (and Programme) M&E.

26. Recommendation 3: Seek ways to demonstrate how civil society organisations have mainstreamed SLM and sustainable water management and that these institutions are not only aware of the benefits of SLM but also actively promoting its practice.

27. Recommendation 4: Promote the CPP's international and internet visibility, based on knowledge sharing and dissemination of Cuba's approach to SLM.

28. Recommendation 5: To facilitate reporting to two GEF Agencies during P4 execution, these Agencies should consider the possibility and the means for the NEA to append Spanish content and accompanying documents to the project's periodic reports.

## I. INTRODUCTION

29. The GEF-funded Cuban project *"Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management"* was executed by Cuba's Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), delegated to the Environment Agency (AMA), and implemented by UNEP as the GEF Agency, based out of UNEP's Regional Office in Panama. The full project was approved by UNEP's Project Review Committee on 7 November 2014 and by the GEF on 4 May 2015. The execution agreement was countersigned by UNEP and AMA on 21 September 2015, and the first cash advance received in January 2016, making this the project's operational starting date.

30. Overseeing the project initially was UNEP's Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (GEF Biodiversity /Land Degradation Unit), now called the Ecosystem Management Division. The project responds to the 'Ecosystem Management' Sub-programme of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017, for which the relevant expected accomplishment (EA) is: Ecosystem Management – **EA (a)** *Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased*. This EA comprises a total of five Outputs; of these, the UNEP Project Document (ProDoc) pinpoints Output 3 as the result to which the project contributes most clearly. The evaluator considers that the project actually delivers against all other Outputs of **EA (a)** as well, as noted in chapter 5, section A.

31. The project was set to set to run over a 60-month period (until September 2020), for which the execution agreement would remain in force until December 2021 to cover all terminal reporting requirements. Its approved budget was **USD 26,988,880** consisting of a GEF grant of USD 2,444,500 from the GEF's third replenishment (GEF-3) and co-financing for USD 24,544,380 mostly from the Government of Cuba. The project is the second of five projects within a Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) Programme for Sustainable Land Management (SLM). These pilot programmes were rolled out under GEF-3's Operational Programme 15 for SLM (OP15). In Cuba, this Programme initiated in 2008 and is still running today, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the lead agency.

32. During GEF-3, Cuba had identified the need to adopt a SLM approach to help maintain productivity and ecosystem functions, under different degradation conditions. At the time, Cuba's National Environmental Strategy identified land degradation as one of the top five environmental problems in Cuba, with 76.8% of the productive land affected by processes leading to desertification, and the productivity of the lands classified as low to very low. This gave rise to the CPP SLM Programme with its five projects, to enable Cuba to make progress in implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and more specifically, its National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought. The CPP's purpose is for reduced land degradation to allow Cuba to achieve its goals for sustainable development and increased food security.

33. In this context, Cuba's water management policies and practices, initially based on relatively stable hydrological conditions, were found to be inadequate for addressing the rising impacts of land degradation and climate change. Changes in the productive organization of key sectors such as agriculture were increasing water demand and

requiring more than 50% of the country's available water. Climate variability was beginning to exceed the capacity and suitability of existing water management instruments. As the challenges of climate change, population growth and changes in patterns of consumption and production began to manifest as problems with desertification and drought, it was clear that it was time for Cuba to improve its water management for effective SLM. The need to develop the necessary capacities and conditions across a number of stakeholders gave rise to Project 2 (P2) - the current project - within the CPP umbrella programme.

**CPP-OP15:** Cuba's Country Pilot Partnership – SLM Operational Programme 15

- Project 1: (Years 1-5): Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory Systems & Awareness Building/Sustainable Land Management in Severely Degraded Ecosystems. → *Initiated in 2008. Finalized in 2015.*
- Project 2: (Years 3-7): Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems. Initiated 2015. → *Finalized in 2021.*
- Project 3: (Years 5-8): Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms / Sustainable Land Management in Dry land Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas. → *Initiated in 2019. Ongoing.*
- Project 4: (Years 7-10): Validation of SLM Models at Landscape Scale. → *Due to initiate in 2023.*
- Project 5: (Years 1-10): Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of Cuba CPP. Initiated 2008. → *Finalized in 2021.*

34. Mandated by CITMA, AMA has been the National Executing Agency (NEA) for all projects under the CPP Programme, four of which were designed to be implemented sequentially and a fifth as cross-cutting. Combined, these five projects would strengthen national capacities for SLM, including field demonstrations across five intervention areas located in three regions of Cuba: the southwestern lowlands of Pinar del Rio and the Havana-Matanzas plains in the Central region; north of Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus; and to the east, the coastline of Guantánamo-Maisí and the Cauto River Basin (see Figure 2).

35. P2 would focus specifically on four of the CPP's five intervention areas (Pinar del Rio, Havana-Matanzas plains, Cauto River Basin and Guantánamo), to develop and validate the application of integrated land management approaches, emphasizing water resource management. P2 was designed as a 5-year effort that would build upon the achievements of Project 1 (P1). For P2, AMA was assisted in financial management by the UNDP Country Office (UNDP-CO) and shared project management responsibilities with three other key government agencies: the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH) acting through the EIPHH, the Agricultural Engineering Research Institute (IAgric), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), specifically its Directorate of Soils and Fertilizers (MINAG-Soils).

36. The project underwent an independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2019, at the same time as the full CPP SLM Programme. The extent to which the project adopted the recommendations from the MTR is addressed in chapter III section E. The current Terminal Evaluation (TE), which concerns only P2, has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote

operational improvements, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the teams at UNEP, AMA and other national partners involved in SLM, water resource management and implementation of the UNCCD. This TE is timely, considering that Project 4 (P4) is set to initiate in early 2023, as the last of the CPP Programme cohort.

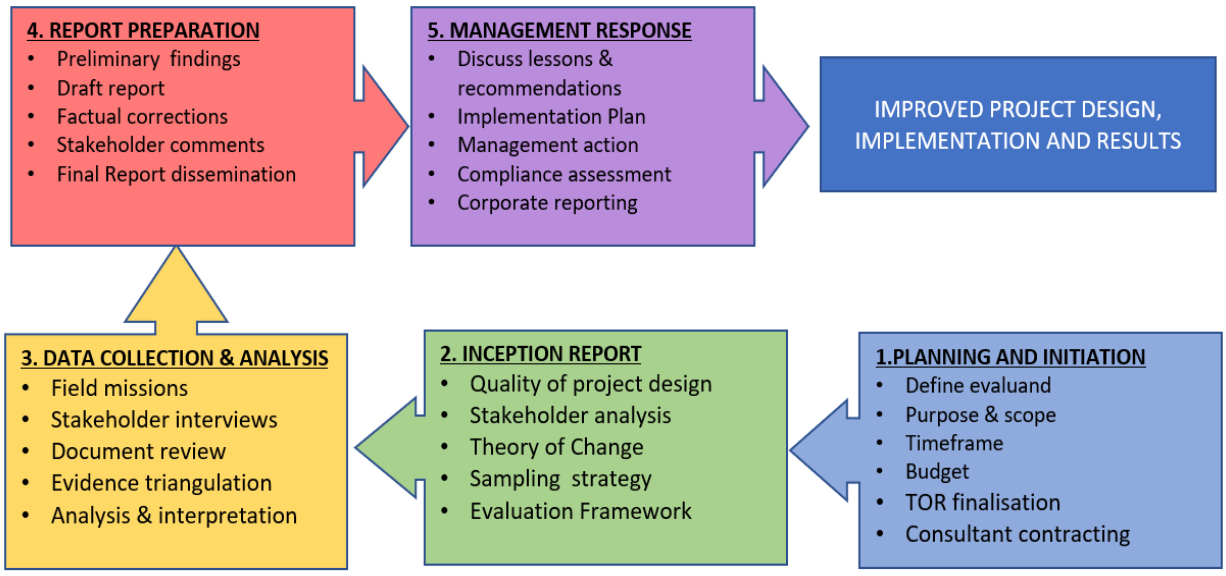
## II. EVALUATION METHODS

### Evaluation process and criteria

37. The overall evaluation process, as prescribed by the UNEP Evaluation Office, is shown in Figure 1. The process initiated with a planning phase to define the scope of the TE which first delivered an Inception Report (stage 2) and was followed by a data collection phase and the drafting and completion of this Final Report (stage 4). Thereafter, the project team will be charged with preparing a management response or implementation plan to address this TE's recommendations (stage 5).

38. Central to this evaluation was the analysis and reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change (TOC). Consultations during the TE inception phase helped to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project sought to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The reconstructed TOC was shared with the project team and the UNEP Evaluation Manager. The final version of the TOC is presented later in this report (Section Theory of Change at Evaluation) and has been used throughout the evaluation process.

Figure 1: UNEP Evaluation Process




39. This TE consists of an in-depth participatory assessment of the project's design, management, performance (relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), outcomes and impacts (actual and potential), and sustainability. As required in UNEP evaluations, the project is being evaluated against **nine criteria:** (1) Strategic Relevance, (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

40. For each criterion, the UNEP Evaluation Office has developed a **ratings matrix** containing detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level. This allows evaluation criteria to be rated on a six-point scale, as follows: Highly

Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). After considering all the evidence gathered, in relation to this matrix, the ratings against each criterion are weighted in order to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of Outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability.

41. In addition to evaluation criteria, the TE Terms of Reference (TORs) in Annex IX also establish a series of Key Strategic Questions and questions of interest for the GEF Portal, which the evaluation must respond to. The **Key Strategic Questions** stem from an ongoing review of UNEP's portfolio of SLM projects and have been designed to derive useful lessons from a cohort of SLM projects that are undergoing Terminal Evaluations at similar times. The issues being reviewed are identified throughout this report under the sub-heading *"UNEP SLM Portfolio Review"*.

42. As a GEF-funded project, specific findings from this evaluation are to be uploaded on the **GEF Portal**. This includes findings in relation to five topics of interest to the GEF, which are summarised in chapter V section I (as Factors affecting Performance and Crosscutting issues) and also included as an annex (Annex X). The 5 topics are: i) performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach; and v) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan. For the latter, the UNEP Evaluation Office template "Assessment of Planning and Management of Environmental and Social Safeguards" was used to identify relevant environmental and social safeguard risks and determine management responsiveness to these risks (if any) during project implementation.

## Data collection and sampling

43. The TE was carried out following Cuban protocols, and benefitted from strong logistical support and coordination by the CPP Programme Director and the project team, who planned and facilitated all interview contacts. Additionally, at the request of the Cuban government, a National Facilitator was assigned to accompany the TE process, especially during the country visit, provide inputs and act as a local counterpart in addition to the Cuban project team. Dr. René Capote, from the Institute of Ecology and Systematics (IES) affiliated to AMA, joined the TE process shortly before the country visit and accompanied the external evaluator on all site visits and meetings, took part in virtual interviews, and summarised information, as needed.

***Primary Data Sources:***

44. Data collection entailed desk-top analyses of project documentation and written and verbal contacts (both in person and virtual) with project stakeholders. A **country visit** took place between **16 and 25 October 2022** that included several visits in the capital city and in the field. Due to its proximity to the capital (i.e. logistical convenience) and the presence of both agricultural producers and water management entities, the Havana-Matanzas intervention area was chosen to witness farm-level changes and interview local partners and project beneficiaries in person. A further intervention area (Pinar del Rio Province) was initially intended to be included in this country visit but had to be

suspended just prior to travel, due to the impacts of Hurricane Ian (23 Sept. - 2 Oct. 2022) on western Cuba.

45. For primary data collection, the main stakeholders interviewed were key staff involved directly in project execution and implementation: the CPP Programme Director, the project team from AMA, staff from three government entities: INRH, IAgric and MINAG-Soils; UNEP technical, administrative and finance staff; and the UNDP-Country Office. In addition, representatives from other partner institutions (government agencies, institutes and State companies), especially members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) and direct project beneficiaries (e.g., farmers, territorial delegates) in intervention areas and demonstration sites, were also interviewed.

46. The interview agenda was arranged by the project team, concentrating only on the most critical stakeholder groups and beneficiaries, namely, government entities, farmers and water managers. The interview process included representatives from all four project intervention areas: Guantánamo-Maisí, Cauto River Basin, Pinar del Rio, and Havana-Matanza Plains, in this case centred in the Mayabeque Province. The full list of interviewees is provided in Annex IV and shows that a total of 60 persons were involved in the evaluation (including the National Facilitator), of whom 59 were interviewed: 5 from international organizations, 28 from central government and 26 as territorial actors. Of those met or interviewed, 37 were male (61.7%) and 23 were female (38.3%). Table 2 below shows the respondent sample.

| M = Male<br>F = Female | | # people (M/F) involved | # people (M/F) contacted | # respondents (M/F) | % response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Project team** (*those with management responsibilities - e.g. PMU)* | Implementing agency | 5 (3M / 2F) | 5 (3M / 2F) | 5 (3M / 2F) | 100% |
| | Executing agency | 7 (2M / 5F) | 7 (2M / 5F) | 7 (2M / 5F) | 100% |
| | # entities involved | # entities contacted | # people (M/F) contacted | # respondents (M/F) | % response |
| **Project partners implementing/ executing** *(receiving funds from project)* | 3 | 3 | 14 (8M / 6F) | 14 (8M / 6F) | 100% |
| **Project partners collaborating/contributing**[2] *(not receiving project funds)* | >12 | 3 | 7 (5M / 2F) | 7 (5M / 2F) | 100% |
| **Beneficiaries:** *Examples:* Duty bearers; Gate keepers; Direct beneficiaries; Indirect beneficiaries; Civil society representatives. | >50 | 18 (*) | 26 (18M / 8F) | 26 (18M / 8F) | 100% |

Table 2: Evaluation respondents' sample, as managed by the CPP Programme. (*) *Entities included territorial branches of competent authorities, provincial governments, water management bodies, farmers and cooperatives.*

47. Consultations with stakeholders were through semi-structured interviews, which took place either privately (in the absence of the project team and involving the external evaluator and the National Facilitator) or as group meetings and open discussions.

[2] Contributing partners may provide resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space, etc.).

Inputs from interviews have been compiled anonymously, and information collected according to relevant UNEP guidelines and UN standards of conduct. Efforts were made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups, and collect data relating to gender, social and human rights issues. For this, project stakeholders from all intervention areas across the country were interviewed, not only those in the capital, covering a mix that included local government representatives, producers and water managers and making sure to inquire about gender and socio-economic benefits. Pictures taken during the country visit were done so with the knowledge and/or consent of those involved.

***Secondary Data Sources:***

48. Project documents (reports, outputs, dissemination material, etc.) are a key source of secondary information and were facilitated either by AMA directly, or by UNEP mostly via ANUBIS, the GEF project reporting platform that UNEP makes available to executing agencies to generate and upload project reports, workplans, NSC minutes and other information. Specific information requests were channelled through the CPP Programme Director. Project data sources included technical reports, news stories, videos and website content, obtained either in person from Cuban sources (printed or digital format) or via the internet. Key documents consulted in this TE are listed in Annex V.

## Evaluation methods and tools

49. The evaluation process has been iterative, using rounds of data collection and analysis to distil findings from a more general level down to more specific issues. A cyclical process helps to identify priorities for further inquiry, and extract lessons learnt and good practice that can be useful to future efforts. It facilitates the identification of success factors, through closer understanding of those project aspects most valued by different stakeholders.

50. Inputs and responses were corroborated by triangulating the information/evidence derived from different sources (interviews, videos, web-stories and document reviews), as much as possible. Efforts were made to clarify or reconcile differences where these occurred, and surpass limitations faced in data collection.

51. A central focus is the UNEP SLM Portfolio Review and the formulation of recommendations that can be useful to the inception of P4, which is expected to be in 2023. Information exchange was therefore promoted as part of this evaluation process, and close communication was maintained with those responsible for the project and the CPP Programme, with a view to motivate ownership of the evaluation findings, including acceptance of the ensuing recommendations and their consideration in the context of P4's execution. Exchanges also included the UNEP Evaluation Office and the consultant undertaking UNEP's SLM Portfolio review process.

52. In general, evaluation methods comprised the following:

- Use of an evaluation framework (Annex VIII) based on the 9 evaluation criteria and the Key Strategic Questions and an Interview protocol to guide the interview process in Spanish.
- Close examination and cross-referencing of project documentation to analyse project achievements, check for consistencies, fill gaps, and identify key issues. These documents include: Project approval documents; Project implementation documents

(reports); Project outputs and dissemination materials; Project mid-term evaluation; and terminal documentation (technical completion).

- Interviews (oral /written) with members of the project teams with execution and oversight responsibilities; staff from partner institutions with technical roles and/or benefitting from the project; and on-the-ground beneficiaries (territorial actors), where changes are expected in land degradation and water resource management.
- Field-visit to a project intervention area.
- Use of UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines, templates and samples.

***Limitations:***

53. Prior to arrival in Cuba, evidence to document project results and deliverables was unavailable as this needed to be provided in person, once in Cuba. What was accessible in digital format was limited to public online content (e.g. CPP-OP15 Facebook page, news stories, etc.) and to documentation from project execution, compiled for project management purposes on ANUBIS.

54. Due to administrative reasons, the National Facilitator joined the evaluation process very close to the date of the country visit, which reduced the prior exchanges that could take place and the time available to obtain information in preparation for the country visit, as intended.

55. Due to Hurricane Ian (Sept/Oct 2022), only one intervention area could be visited during the country visit, not two as initially planned. This limitation was mitigated through additional virtual interviews, and a diverse set of field sites included in the single intervention area that was visited.

56. The embargo against Cuba limits the country's internet visibility and online access. Internet users from outside the country face difficulties in accessing information produced and housed by Cuban institutions. This had a direct impact on the TE as certain Outputs and project evidence (means of verification) could not be readily viewed by the evaluator and needed either access to Cuba's own network, or clearance by the competent authority in order to be shared externally.

57. In general, the availability of evidence from secondary data sources was low, meaning that a good number of project Outputs and indicators were reported, but not documented or systematised. Even though the project team made efforts to obtain as much information as possible in support of the evaluation, project management files that were accessible to the evaluator lacked supporting files to facilitate corroboration of the project's suite of Outputs, activities and indicators. Additional evidence had to be sought to verify results.

58. The TE is biased towards the perspective of the public sector, though the private and non-governmental sectors, respectively, were represented by two key stakeholder groups: (i) agricultural producers, farmers and cooperatives (in all project intervention areas); and (ii) a water management community group in Mayabeque, Havana-Matanzas. Other private sector or civil society actors, especially representatives from larger federations or associations, such as the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians (ACTAF) and the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), could not be interviewed.

***Analysis:***

59. The evaluation combines quantitative and qualitative techniques, in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the project's accomplishments and learnings. Quantitative data has been used to explain the *what*, *who* and *when* of the project's intervention, while qualitative data was captured to explain the *why* and *how* behind the project's results and performance. The primary mode of analysis relies on an exploration of the evidence that supports the causal pathways articulated in the TOC. The evaluation aims to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change processes and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') were needed and were in place to support such changes.

60. Without intending to carry out a full Contribution Analysis, this methodology was emulated as a way to guide the data analysis process. Two underlying questions that were central to the examination of change processes taking place along the TOC pathways were: "What role did the intervention play in bringing about behaviour and policy changes?" and "How and why did these changes occur?".

61. In seeking evidence that would answer these questions and justify the relationship between project efforts and its results and impact, the evaluator aimed to establish *attribution*[3] of project results where possible, or alternatively, *substantive contributions*[4] or a *credible association*[5] where not possible due to insufficient evidence. This approach included the triangulation, as much as possible, of evidence and information from different sources and followed guidance from the UNEP Evaluation Office on the use of TOC in project evaluations. Efforts were made to clarify or reconcile differences where these occurred, and surpass limitations in data collection.

[3] **Attribution** can be claimed when comprehensive evidence *proving* the cause-and-effect relationship between the project and the observed results is presented. To make a strong claim of attribution one needs to be able to isolate the effects of an intervention from changes over time and differences in contexts (UNEP guidance).

[4] **Contribution** can be claimed when compelling evidence *supports* a cause-and-effect relationship through which intended collective results are achieved by the combined efforts of more than one project (UNEP guidance).

[5] A claim to a **credible association** can be made based on the project's intentions (stated in the ProDoc), its causality pathways (the TOC), and evidence derived from the chronology of events, the roles played by executing partners and the influence of identified drivers that shows that the intention was followed and the expected causality pathways emerged (UNEP guidance).

## III. THE PROJECT

### A. Context

62. To reduce land degradation and to promote the integrity of ecosystems and the achievement of national goals for sustainable development and food security, Cuba initiates the CPP Programme in 2008 as a 10-year effort that would introduce diverse land-dependent sectors to SLM. This Programme comprised five projects that would address six barriers, identified during preparation of the CPP Programme, that prevented land degradation threats from being addressed effectively and constrained the comprehensive implementation of SLM throughout Cuba. These **barriers** were:

1. - Limited integration and institutional coordination;
2. - Inadequate incorporation of SLM considerations into extension and environmental education programmes, with emphasis in water management;
3. - Limited development of financing mechanisms and incentives favourable to the application of SLM focused actions;
4. - Inadequate systems for monitoring land degradation and management of related information;
5. - Insufficient knowledge and tools for planners to incorporate SLM practices into plans, programmes and policies; and
6. - Inadequate development of the regulatory framework for the fight against land degradation.

63. As a water-centred project, P2 was built on the premise that removing at least three of these barriers (specifically 2, 4 and 5) would enhance the coordination of information and monitoring systems for the improved management of water resources, based on an SLM approach. The main capacity gaps that would be addressed by this project were therefore information-related, tools-related, and water-focused. Closing these gaps, and advancing Cuba on its path towards data-driven decision-making for IWRM, would require close coordination and collaboration between a number of institutions, information sharing, and a degree of modernisation in data management.

64. To satisfy these fundamental capacity needs, P2 would continue with P1's institutional strengthening goals, and focus more specifically on the capacities required to ensure that key stakeholders (decision-makers, technical experts, water managers and producers) had adequate access to useful science-based knowledge on water resources management for SLM. The project would further mainstream SLM and introduce elements of IWRM and its multiple benefits into planning tools, policy and regulatory instruments and relevant agricultural practices. In addition to an integrated information and monitoring system, the project would promote an enhanced coordination and collaboration framework for intersectoral planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and build on the early warning and land use system put in place by P1.

65. Thus, by building on the foundations laid by P1, the intervention logic of P2 would lead to institutional strengthening, coordination across competent authorities, and ultimately to SLM implementation. This was no small feat considering that Cuba's environmental institutionality is complex and multi-layered. Competencies relating to land management and water resources are spread across diverse Ministries and their various technical, research and business entities, and territorially expressed through provincial and

municipal government structures. The project's main beneficiaries from the Cuban agricultural sector are also diversely structured (as cooperatives, associations and state enterprises) and comprise a range of productive models (forestry, livestock, staple crops, cash crops).

Figure 2. Georeferenced map of the CPP Programme intervention areas.

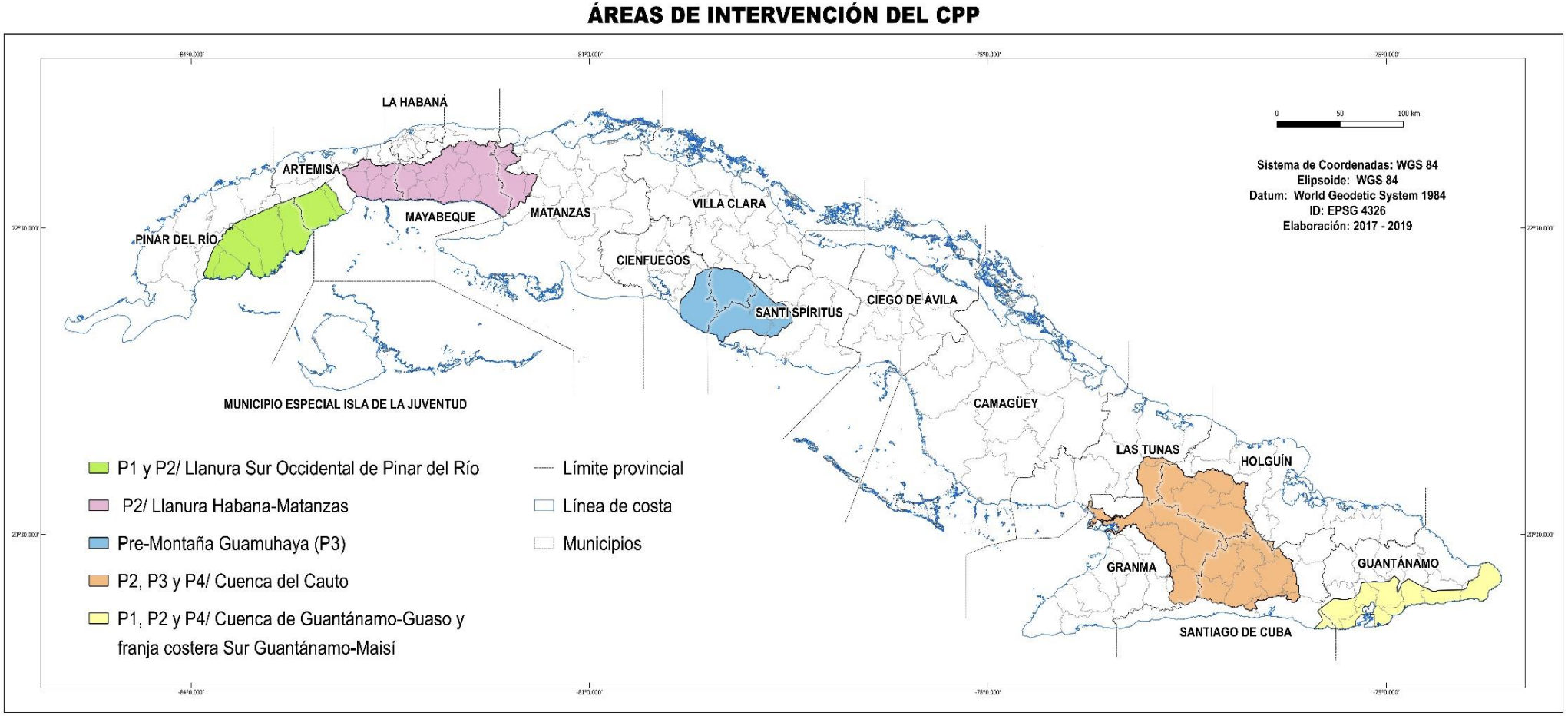


Table 3: Demonstration sites in project intervention areas

| Intervention areas | P1 sites | Demonstration Sites | Coordinating entity in charge |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pinar del Rio** | ✓<br>✓<br>✓ | 1. - CCS Raúl Gomez García (Farm Manolo)<br>2. - CPA Jesus Suarez Soca (Farm El Pilón)<br>3. - CCS Niceto Pérez (Farm Tierra Brava) [6] | 1. INRH<br>2. MINAG - Suelos<br>3. MINAG – Suelos |
| **Havana-Matanzas Plains** | | 4. - Agricultural Company Güira de Melena<br>5. - State Company for Water Use and Güines Irrigation community - CCS 17 de mayo (Farm Arocha)<br>*. - UEB Swine Breeding Company "Camilo Cienfuegos | 4. CITMA<br>5. Pedroso Mamposton Hydraulic Complex |
| **Cauto River Basin** | | 6. - CCS General Ramos "El Horno" [7]<br>7. - CCS Cuba Va [7]<br>8. - CCS Hermes Rondón<br>*. - CCS Rene Muñoz | 6. MINAG - Suelos<br>7. CITMA<br>8. IAgric |
| **Guantánamo-Maisí** | ✓<br>✓ | 9. - CCS Enrique Campos (Farm Matabajo)<br>10. - UBPC Eliomar Noa Moreira | 9. INRH<br>10. Municipal Land Office |

| | |
|---|---|
| CCS | Credit and Services Cooperative |
| CPA | Agricultural Production Cooperative |
| UBPC | Basic Unit of Cooperative Production |
| UEB | Base Enterprise Unit |

66. P2 would also be supported by Project 5 (P5) that was designed to run throughout the life of the programme and support all CPP projects for the purpose of the M&E and learning. P5 was being implemented by UNDP and executed by AMA, but after 10 years in execution, the project was closed in 2021. P2 has had the benefit of being implemented by UNEP with the support of UNDP as well as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), both of which maintain a physical presence in Cuba through their Country Offices.

67. A key contextual constraint in this project relates to the embargo that the Unites States of America has imposed on Cuba since 1962 that makes the importation of goods and use of services a challenge, as well as unusually costly. According to FAO[8], the embargo has resulted in drastic reductions in agricultural outputs on the island, stemming from enlarged production costs, difficulties with imports and hindered food production processes, now compounded by the impacts of climate change and unsustainable land management models. The embargo creates a challenging context in which to operate, and this applies as much to Cuba's public services and agricultural production as to donor-funded interventions. The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic also had a severe impact on the country's economy[9], which was already affected by stricter international sanctions imposed since 2017. In operational terms, the pandemic created

[6] This site substituted the original site (UEB El Algodón (Farm Julio) Agroindustrial Company Cubaquivir) mentioned in the ProDoc.
[7] One document lists these two sites as replication rather than demonstration sites.
[8] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/03/cuba-us-embargo-must-end
[9] https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=CUB&lang=en

additional challenges for the project, especially during 2020, and affected the types and extent of activities that could be carried out.

## B. Results Framework

68. The project consists of three technical components and a fourth dedicated to project M&E, adaptive management and lessons learned. This TE centred primarily on components 1 to 3 - i.e., those that were conducive to Outputs that would generate the "changed states" described in the project's Outcome statements. Component 4 was more inward-looking, aimed at optimising the project's transparency, accountability, and learning potential. Its Outputs were aimed at having an operational monitoring system providing six-monthly reports on the project's progress, as well as mid-term and final evaluations, and project best practices and lessons learned.

69. For components 1-3, the project presents a highly comprehensive Results Framework, with a **Theory of Change** (TOC) and a set of Outputs and Outcomes that respond to the Project Objective. The Results Framework also provides a baseline for each Outcome Indicator, together with accompanying mid-term and end-of-project Targets, and assumptions. As part of this TE, specific revisions were proposed to the Results Framework to support assessment of its performance, which are described in chapter IV below (Theory of Change at Evaluation) and presented as a comparative table in Annex II (original vs. revised Results Framework).

70. The project's components were designed to work at the intersect between SLM and IWRM. The intention was not to apply a fully-fledged IWRM approach across all landscapes, by creating new governance arrangements or multi-stakeholder platforms at a watershed scale. Instead, the project aimed to introduce key aspects of IWRM into its SLM practice, and in this way, lay some of the foundations that IWRM requires. The project emphasised the importance of water management for SLM and sought to demonstrate that reducing land degradation, maintaining ecosystem functions and productivity, and increasing food security, required integrated policy-driven management approaches and a close look not only at agricultural practice and soil health, but also at the quality, quantity and distribution of water resources. Thus, by promoting "SLM with an emphasis on water", the project offered an opportunity for the sustainable intensification of existing farmlands through the efficient management of nutrients, the integrated management (including monitoring) of land, crop and water resources in irrigated and rain-fed productive systems, and the diversification of farming systems.

## C. Stakeholders

71. A full stakeholder analysis is provided in the TE Inception Report, describing stakeholder roles and relevance, in accordance with the ProDocs for P2 and the full CPP programme. Various stakeholder groups played differential roles to bring about change under the project, on different scales and exerting different levels of influence and interest over the project and SLM issues in general. Project records show ample participation from government entities, ranging from policy-making agencies to research institutes and extensionist facilities, with inclusion of economic actors, such as producer groups. The majority of project stakeholders are State entities, which is a particularity of the Cuban system and means that, in comparison with other countries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could seem under-represented, though in practice, social groups,

women's groups, students and local communities were very much present and active throughout the project.

72. Those with project execution responsibilities are CITMA (or more specifically AMA), as well as INRH, IAgri and MINAG-Soils. For technical inputs, there are other relevant branches of AMA and MINAG, such as: the Institute of Tropical Geography (IGT), the National Institute of Meteorology (INSMET), and the Institute of Soil (IS). In environmental protection, the Cuban Ranger Corps (CGB) of the Ministry of the Interior has a relevant role and a close working relationship with CITMA. The involvement of the Institute for Physical Planning (IPF), which responds to the Council of Ministers, was relevant for land use decisions, together with CITMA and MINAG. The Centre for Local Development (CEDEL) was key for tapping into territorial networks and facilities for capacity-building at the local level. Other key Ministries are the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX) for representation tasks and international liaisons, and for all formal education purposes and work with schools and universities, the Ministries of Education (ME) and Higher Education (MES).

73. There are also State-owned companies and conglomerates such as the Sugar Entrepreneurial Group (AZCuba) - formerly the Ministry of Sugar - which provides technical assistance through its Institute for Sugarcane Research (INICA), and under the auspices of the INRH, the Havana Company for Hydraulic Research and Projects (EIPHH) and the Business Group for Use of Hydraulic Resources (GEARH), as well as the State Companies for Water Use that act as INRH provincial delegations. In Cuba, these public companies are equivalent to private sector actors, and together with the ANAP and other local level stakeholders, including cooperatives and farmers, represent the main economic agents involved in the project.

74. Other key structures for the project are those offered by the CPP Programme itself. On a political level, project oversight was in the hands of the CPP's existing NSC, which brings together several Ministries to oversee the whole Programme and its projects. According to the P2 ProDoc, the NSC is composed of MINCEX, CITMA, UNDP and UNEP, yet the group is much wider in practice. On a technical level, sub-national representations of the central government, referred to as "territorial delegations", act as operating arms directly involved in project activities in demonstration areas. This has allowed the CPP and P2 to have political alignment, national reach, and impact on the ground. Technical support and guidance were also provided by other CPP structures, in particular the SLM Expert Group, and by the Programme's international organizations, namely, UNDP and UNEP, as well as FAO, as a supporting technical partner with local presence.

75. At the local level, government institutions, municipalities, scientific and academic institutions (including schools), producer groups, and community groups, would converge on selected territories to render SLM efforts multi-sectoral. In addition to ANAP, the FMC, the ACTAF, and the Cuban Association of Animal Production (ACPA) are all listed as relevant organizations that represent the interests of local stakeholders. In this way, the project contemplated the involvement of six of the nine major stakeholder groups recognized by UNEP: Business & Industries; Farmers; Children & Youth; Local Authorities; Non-Governmental Organizations; and the Scientific & Technological Community.

## D. Project implementation structure and partners

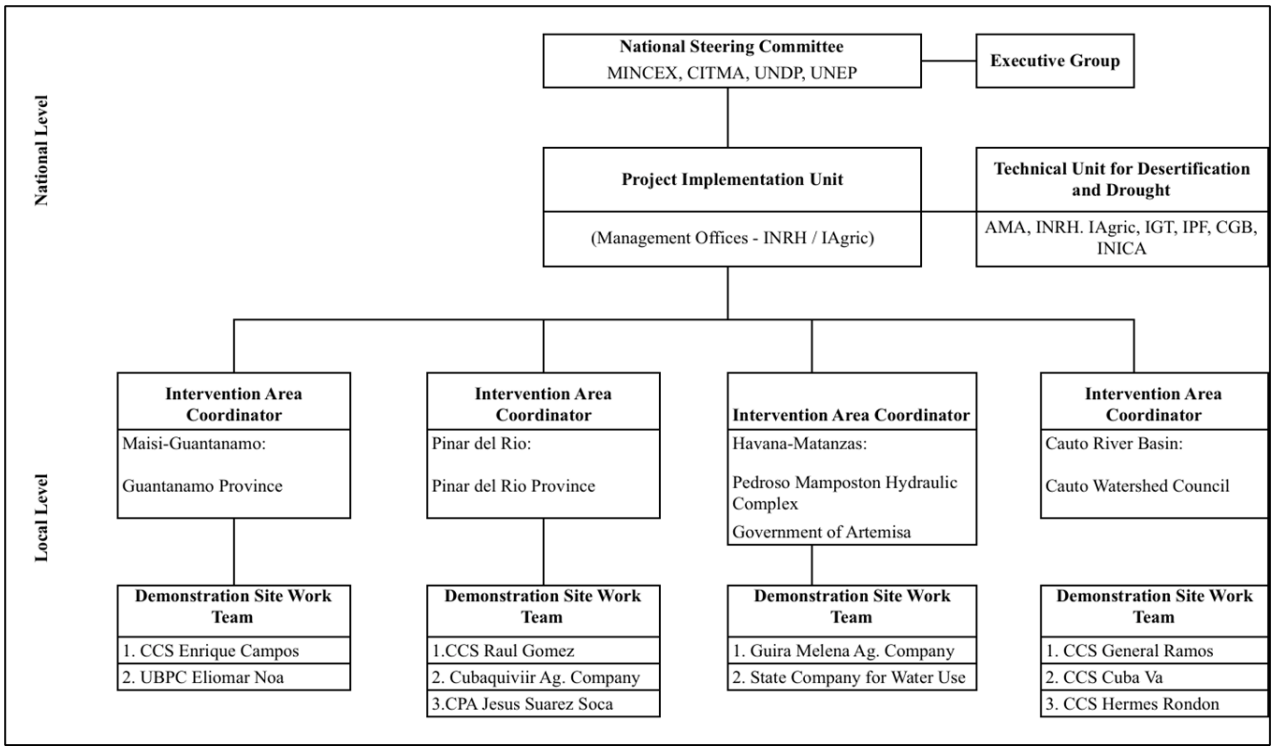
76. Acting in representation of CITMA as the national coordinating entity for the whole CPP-OP15 Programme and its projects, the overall responsibility for P2 execution and the coordination of its activities and M&E of its results lay with AMA. For this, a **Central Coordination Unit (CCU)** was set up within AMA, housing the CPP Programme Director, the Technical Coordinators for each project, and a Financial Administrator for the Programme. AMA's President was also involved in making sure the CPP-OP15 Programme and its projects stayed on track, gained visibility, expanded their reach and maintained a good political standing.

77. As with the other projects, P2 was overseen by the **NSC** of the CPP. This Committee is chaired by MINCEX and has CITMA, UNEP and UNDP as fixed members, FAO as a supporting partner, and a number of national institutions that participate regularly or on a needs-basis: MINAG, INRH, IPF, ANAP, ME, MES, AZCuba and more recently, Cuba's Bank of Credit and Commerce (BANDEC). The NSC had Programme and project oversight responsibilities, and met in person once a year, with the exception of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

78. The project also contemplated **two Project Management Units (PMU)** within key partner institutions INRH and IAgric), **plus another** inherited from P1. This Unit began within the IS of MINAG but was later transferred to the Directorate of Soils and Fertilizers of **MINAG**, leaving research and technical verification tasks to the IS. For P2 specifically, two further PMU were set-up (see Figure 3): One within the **INRH** as the agency responsible for directing, implementing and monitoring the country's water resources policy, and another at the **IAgric,** which is in charge of providing technical and methodological support for the development of scientific research and technical services for irrigation and drainage, and agricultural mechanization in Cuba. Each of these Units was staffed with a Head of Office and a working group comprising technical staff and specialists.

79. Both the INRH and IAgric (as well as AMA) are members of the Technical Unit for Desertification and Drought (Figure 3), a supporting inter-institutional coordination group formally recognised in the context of the CPP, and of the Executive Group, which is responsible for periodically reviewing work plans and procurement activities, submitting reports to the NSC for approval, and organizing and preparing for NSC decisions regarding project implementation.

Figure 3: Organigram for Project 2 (key stakeholders and structures)




80. In each project intervention area, coordination or **territorial teams** were established (see Figure 3), made up of institutional representatives (generally CITMA, MINAG, INRH, IPF and AZCuba), as well as scientific, academic, and non-governmental institutions, and representatives from municipal and provincial governments. These closely knit teams were actively involved in collectively carrying out demonstration site work, such as monitoring, technical assistance, trainings, and exchange with producers. Each team was headed by a Territorial Coordinator (or Intervention Area Coordinator), who tended to belong to different institutions - i.e., few were from CITMA - and would report to the CCU on a monthly basis, as well as to their institution's Territorial Delegate.

## E. Changes in design during implementation

81. In order to accommodate the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was conceded a 6-month no-cost extension (without a contractual modification) to allow execution to run up to March 2021 (operational /technical completion date), instead of September 2020 as originally established. The project agreement remained in force until December 2021, its original expiration date, obliging terminal reporting to conclude expeditiously.

82. The 10 pre-selected demonstration sites established in the ProDoc were slightly modified in the early project stages, with one site substituted in Pinar del Rio and two more added in Havana-Matanzas Plains and Cauto River Basin. Also early on, it was decided that the Havana-Matanzas intervention area would be managed as two areas: Artemisa and Mayabeque Provinces, with a Territorial Coordinator (and team) for each. The project was

later subject to a MTR, which took place during the second semester of 2019, concomitantly with the MTR of the CPP Programme. The MTR observed significant progress at mid-point and after drawing a set of conclusions common to both project and Programme, offered just two recommendations specifically for P2. These changes were adopted from 2020 onward (as reflected in project reports):

1. Modify indicator 3 of Outcome 2: *The plans and programmes of at least 15 institutions citing data from the SLM Repository and the Information and Monitoring Network.* It was suggested that "citing" should be replaced by "have access to" to facilitate its future measurement.

2. Modify indicator 3 of Outcome 3 *(Water productivity):* The modification involves eliminating soy and malanga crops for Pinar del Río, which are not part of the province's irrigation plan. (This modification had been officially requested by the province).

83. The MTR also notes two weaknesses to be addressed moving forward and requests that these be taken into account in the design of P4: "the lack of a comprehensive gender strategy" and "the contributions of the Programme and Project 2 in confronting climate change must be more clearly articulated", especially with regards to climate change adaptation. While gender is considered in the design of P4, the current project draft (Oct. 2022 version) contains a placeholder for a 'Gender Analysis and Action Plan', which is due to be drafted during the project's first year of implementation when more data is available. Climate change adaptation is mentioned in the P4 ProDoc as a point of emphasis and of interest for project beneficiaries.

## F. Project financing

84. The project was approved with a GEF grant allocation of USD 2,444,500 and an expected co-financing amount of USD 24,544,380. In total, the project's **approved budget** was therefore **USD 26,988,880**. The GEF financing originated from the GEF-3 OP15 on SLM at a time when neither focal areas nor individual country allocations nor required co-financing ratios were in effect. The volume of expected co-financing in this project is therefore unusually high, and originated from six government agencies (CITMA, MINAG, INRH, IPF, INICA and MES) as well as ANAP as the only non-governmental co-financier.

85. Co-financing, which is shown by source in Table 4, was a mix of both cash and in-kind support. Actual (achieved) **co-financing** was reported as **USD 42,361,173** which is 173% higher than the amount pledged at project approval. Cash co-finance came out 430% higher than the total amount initially pledged, while in-kind co-finance was only 17% of the expected amount. By sector, government agencies were expected to contribute 97.8% and ANAP 2.2% of total co-financing, and ended up contributing 99.26% with ANAP providing only 0.74% of the total. Of the six government co-financiers, three (especially MINAG) greatly exceeded their expected contributions, while three (especially INICA) fell short of their initial pledges (see Table 4). This is consistent with the roles ultimately taken on by each agency.

| | Cash co-finance | | In-kind co-finance | | Total co-finance | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual |
| MES | 1 080 000 | 509 663 | | | 1 080 000 | 509 663 |
| ANAP | 131 000 | 2 176 | 411 000 | 312 375 | 542 000 | 314 551 |
| INICA | 1 425 368 | 475 275 | 826 382 | 122 183 | 2 251 750 | 597 458 |
| IPF | 496 800 | 261 704 | 7 350 | 21 356 | 504 150 | 283 059 |
| CITMA | 688 356 | 1 717 483 | 95 827 | 248 614 | 784 183 | 1 966 097 |
| MINAG | 2 468 086 | 21 843 759 | 2 391 351 | 186 264 | 4 859 437 | 22 030 022 |
| INRH | 2 933 690 | 14 890 331 | 11 589 170 | 1 769 991 | 14 522 860 | 16 660 322 |
| **Total** | **9 223 300** | **39 700 390** | **15 321 080** | **2 660 783** | **24 544 380** | **42 361 173** |

Table 4. Planned and actual co-financing by stakeholder group (cash and in-kind)

86. Although the project's GEF budget was initially set by Outcome, GEF expenditures were not reported in this way. Instead, the budget was structured and reported only on the basis of UNEP's budget template. Planned versus actual GEF expenditures are shown in Annex III, together with the Financial Management Table required by the TE. Up to 31 March 2021 (technical completion date), final **GEF expenditures** were reported as **USD 2,414,443**. This amount accounts for all GEF funds granted to AMA and administered by UNDP-CO; it excludes the budget set aside for the independent TE and was used for a final budget realignment upon technical completion.

## IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

### *Causal pathways in original project design:*

87. The project is structured into four components, three of which are technical and the fourth is for project M&E, adaptive management and lessons learned. For the technical components, the approved Results Framework originally presented 13 Outputs through to one general Objective and a Goal. The original TOC depicted results pathways as linear, without a hierarchy amongst Outputs or linkages between Outcomes. Causal pathways for P2 led to **three Outcomes** and onto **three Intermediate States** that, if all assumptions held true, would be conducive to achieving two CPP Programme Intermediate Objectives. While these original pathways still stand, this design likely simplifies how causal interactions actually occurred, so this evaluation prompted a revision of the interactions between causal pathways, and the inclusion of CPP Outcomes as an additional result layer (see below), as befits an integrated and programmatic design.

**P2 Outcomes:** (as stated in the ProDoc)

**(1).** Individuals and institutions have the human and material capacities to undertake SLM with emphasis on water management;

**(2).** Strengthened biophysical monitoring and information management system, adjusted to user interests for better land use decision making;

**(3).** Comprehensive management model for monitoring IWRM / SLM increases agricultural production in four intervention areas, with replication potential to other areas.

88. The first causal pathway culminated in **Outcome 1** and a single Intermediate State. It set out to address barriers 2, and partly 6, by increasing knowledge of SLM widely and developing the institutional instruments necessary for delivering IWRM for SLM. The first step was to increase SLM awareness among decision makers (Output 1.3) and knowledge in local producers and resource managers (Output 1.4) in key institutions and agencies at the national, provincial and municipal levels. Following this, SLM considerations were to be mainstreamed, by a number of institutions, into territorial plans and programmes (Output 1.1) and technical standards and regulations (Output 1.2) relating to water use and management, and agricultural production. This causal pathway was reliant on progress made in P1 to improve coordination and integration among key institutions with competencies in IWRM and SLM, thus addressing barrier 1. It also served to reinforce and consolidate inter-institutional collaboration around SLM and can be considered as contributing to redress barrier 1.

89. **Outcome 2** was reached via the second causal pathway, also conducive to another Intermediate State. This pathway centred on the generation, coordination and use of key information and biophysical data for water resource management and SLM. Achieving the Outcome implied the integration of data bases and monitoring systems (Output 2.1), the dissemination of information tailored to end users (Output 2.2), and gathering critical data through water availability assessments in the four intervention areas (Output 2.4). Importantly, greater human and material capacities would strengthen the hydrometric network, water quality laboratories and early warning systems (Output 2.3) and enable the monitoring of water use and management in the four intervention areas (Output 2.5).

90. Boosted by the previous two, the third causal pathway took efforts further along the change continuum to reach **Outcome 3**. To apply a comprehensive management model in the field, based on improved monitoring, that increased agricultural production and had replication potential, required interactions with the other two pathways (not shown in the original TOC) as well as a farm level reach. This causal pathway would be achieved by applying an IWRM model and demonstrations in four intervention areas (Output 3.1) that ensured increased efficiency in water use for agricultural production (Output 3.2), and monitoring and evaluation of action plans that accounted for results, impacts and lessons learned (Output 3.3). Replication would be promoted along this more advanced results pathway, as the management model was to be upscaled to new geographical areas (Output 3.4).

91. Having reached these three Outcomes, combined with achievements in P1 and in part P3, change processes led to three **Intermediate States** that are not named in the project's Results Framework but form part of the TOC. These three Intermediate States were: 1) Partner institutions disseminate and upscale SLM principles in planning, policies and regulations; 2) An expanded knowledge base is available and accessible for planning and decision making; and 3) Stakeholders implement plans and development programs that properly deal with threats and barriers to the adoption of SLM.

92. Once capacities for IWRM in SLM reached this level, P2 would be contributing to the **CPP Intermediate Objectives** of increasing national capacities for SLM, ensuring inter-sectoral coordination and effective implementation of land management plans and activities, and promoting successful and replicable SLM models by means of field demonstrations and practices that halt, prevent and remedy land degradation in critical landscapes within Cuba. Ultimately, P2 strived as much as the other projects towards the CPP Goal that "Cuba has the capacities and conditions for sustainably managing land in a manner that contributes to maintaining ecosystem productivity and functions". The CPP Goal is in fact also the P2 Goal.

93. Underscoring this TOC are two sets of inter-related or similar **assumptions** (as noted in the respective Results Frameworks): those that affect the CPP as a whole and those that concern P2 more specifically. P2 presents a combined narrative of the overarching assumptions that need to be met in order to achieve the project's Outcomes and Intermediate States and contribute, as intended, to the Purpose of the CPP. These assumptions are summarised as follows, and apply, as depicted in the TOC diagram, across all result pathways:

- Continued interest and willingness of the Cuban Government in applying SLM principles.
- The institutional, planning and legal framework continues in favour of the environment.
- Stability of staff in key institutions.
- Social and economic conditions in rural areas remain favourable for SLM.
- Continued commitment on the part of local stakeholders.

### *Revising the TOC*

94. The intervention was designed on the basis of a TOC that was fully consistent with the CPP and made clear contributions to CPP results and Goal. Formal changes to the project concerned specific indicators and project duration, and did not alter the result statements or pathways. Following the UNEP Evaluation Office's TOC guidelines, a 'TOC at Evaluation' (Figure 4) was prepared and shared with the project team, showing

adjustments in the project's causal pathways (arrows) and their inter-relationships, and accompanied by wordsmithing of the Results Framework (see Annex II).

95. Through this TOC review exercise, the vertical logic of the results pathways was reaffirmed, and the hierarchy and linkages between P2 Outputs and Outcomes, and CPP Intermediate Objectives, clarified. The evaluator made minor edits to specific indicators for greater clarity, and proposed additional ones, only for academic reference. All three Outcome statements were also edited for a closer fit with UNEP's result definitions, given that in their original formulation, these needed to be interpreted in conjunction with their indicators in order to reflect uptake, adoption or application (see Annex II).

96. The evaluator also proposed the inclusion of CPP Outcomes (those relevant to this project) as additional result statements to further demark each result pathway, and two additional Outputs to better reflect the full array of deliverables that were to be made available to project beneficiaries. Unlike these revisions, those concerning indicators (also shown in Annex II) did not constitute retroactive changes to the project's Results Framework and were not used in this evaluation's performance review.

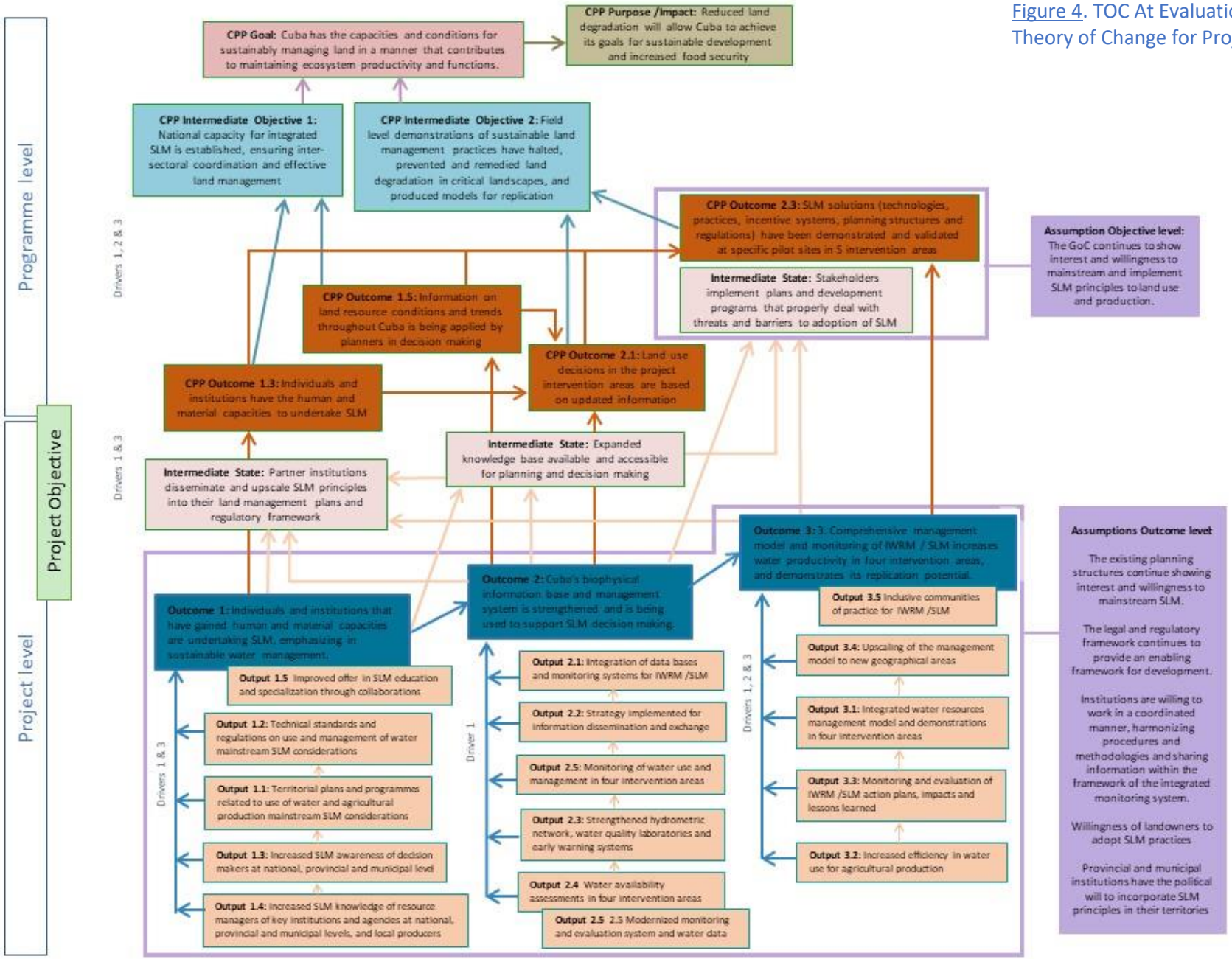



Figure 4. TOC At Evaluation: Revised Theory of Change for Project 2

97. Following this exercise, causal pathways are no longer linear: the first pathway reaches both Outcomes 1 and 2 as well as two Intermediate States and then CPP Outcome 1.3; the second pathway is conducive to Outcomes 2 and 3, all three Intermediate States, and then CPP Outcomes 1.5 and 2.1; and the third pathway reaches Outcome 3 (now placed at a higher level than the other P2 Outcomes) and contributes to two Intermediate States and CPP Outcome 2.3, the most advanced of the relevant Programme Outcomes.

98. As the project lacked an impact statement, the CPP Purpose has been equated with an Intended Impact for P2. The assumptions in the P2 Results Framework and TOC, which represent requisite conditions for reaching project and programme results, vary slightly from those drafted for the CPP though they focus on similar issues. The P2 Results Framework and TOC do not identify Drivers in the results pathways. For this reason, the evaluator proposed the following **Drivers** as external factors that were generally under the influence of the project, and could favour the desired change processes:

99. Driver 1: ***Cuba's high level of technical sophistication, available expertise and local knowledge is leveraged towards the adoption of SLM and IWRM practices.*** As Cuba is a country with a high level of technical knowhow, SLM and IWRM decisions have the potential of being strongly science-based and to take into account the huge wealth of government and academic expertise regarding soil, water, forests and crop management available in Cuba, as well as local knowledge regarding the climatic conditions and variability expected for the island.

100. Driver 2: ***The project taps into, and advances, the forward momentum in favour of smallholder farming and local decision-making that is shaping Cuba's agricultural sector.*** At the time of CPP approval (2008), the new Constitution that would be drafted was set, among other things, to recognise private property and encourage land use planning at the local level. Cuban agriculture was undergoing major changes in aspects that were highly relevant to SLM, such as in the area of land tenure, where the tendency was towards smaller, private holdings, and away from large production enterprises, and in production methods, that were shifting from high input to low input systems. Similarly, the decisions of farmers regarding productive activities were increasingly influenced by market forces and micro-economic considerations at the farm level, and less by centralized planning of agricultural production. Altogether, this meant that smallholder farming and agroforestry projects, as well as locally-driven land management decisions, were expected to encounter more favourable conditions.

101. Driver 3: ***The project builds on the achievements and foundations laid by the other CPP projects, and vice versa, to create synergies and drive change processes further.*** P2 was designed to initiate just prior to the completion of P1, and to finalise as P3 began to take off. P2 was therefore well poised to benefit from the results, experience and traction of P1, and together, create enabling conditions for P3 and P4 to achieve key results. This mutually beneficial set-up was intended to create synergies, and potentially to move change processes further along their causal pathways. For this, the project team needed to ensure that P2 functioned as an effective CPP "building block", as intended in its design.

## V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### A. Strategic Relevance

#### Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

102. The project was overseen by what was then UNEP's Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (GEF Biodiversity /Land Degradation Unit), and what is now UNEP's Ecosystem Management Division. The project responded to the 'Ecosystem Management' Sub-programme of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017, for which the relevant expected accomplishment (EA) is: **Ecosystem Management – EA (a)** Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased. The ProDoc pinpoints the project's contribution to Output 3 (without an anticipated contribution to the EA indicators) but the evaluator considers that the project had the potential to deliver against all other Outputs of EA (a) as well:

| UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2017 - Ecosystem Management: Expected Accomplishment (a) |
|---|
| Output 1. Methodologies, partnerships and tools to maintain or restore ecosystem services and integrate the ecosystem management approach with the conservation and management of ecosystems. |
| Output 2. Tools, technical support and partnerships to improve food security and sustainable productivity in agricultural landscapes through the integration of the ecosystem approach. |
| Output 3. Tools, technical support and partnerships to improve integrated water resource management, including water quality, through the adoption of the ecosystem approach. |
| Output 4. Partnerships are built and strengthened to catalyse the uptake of tools and approaches for establishing regional, national and subnational frameworks, agreements and policies for improved food security and for the management of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. |
| Output 5. Collaboration with the private sector through partnerships and pilot projects to integrate the ecosystem approach into sectoral strategies and operations is enhanced. |

103. Each UNEP Mid-Term Strategy (duration: four years) is operationalised through two biennial Programmes of Work. Considering that GEF funding cannot be used to finance UNEP's Programme of Work directly, only an indication of substantive correlation can be given for UNEP-GEF projects. In this case, the project was deemed by UNEP to be best aligned with its 2018-2019 Programme of Work.

104. The project was clearly aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, adopted by UNEP's Governing Council to strengthen the capacity of governments to coherently address their needs, priorities and obligations in the environmental field. Capacity building in this project was emphasised at both the individual and institutional levels, and across a range of sectors. It was also institutionalised by means of technical formation, education and extension programmes

that develop capacities at the provincial and municipal level and now integrate SLM and IWRM.

105. The project also met the strategic objective of being responsive to UNEP's **south-south cooperation** policies. As an additional result to those in the Results Framework, south-south cooperation was a notable feature in this project, prompted by both UNEP and the NEA project staff. This cooperation resulted from deliberate exchanges between GEF-funded SLM projects facilitated by the UNEP Task Manager or stemmed from the participation of other countries in Cuba's International Convention on Environment and Development. These opportunities served as spaces for the bilateral transfer of Cuban knowledge regarding SLM, not only between government officials but also by providing technical assistance to farmers directly in the field. The countries who benefitted from this technical assistance were Dominican Republic and Panama, while exchanges regarding policy instruments and tools took place with Ecuador and Peru. The UNEP-GEF projects entailed were GEF ID 4750 (Ecuador and Peru) and GEF ID 5085 (Panama).

***UNEP SLM Portfolio Review:***

106. **Question 1. (a): Why did UNEP choose this project?** At the time of project design, the UNEP Task Manager noted UNEP's comparative advantage for this project in the Project Review Committee minutes, stating that "UNEP was specifically chosen for Project 2 for its focus on the link between assessment and policy". This points to UNEP acknowledging its capacity to support the use of science, in this case hydrological, in SLM policy and decision-making. Other than this, there is little to go by to answer this question. The current UNEP Task Manager missed out on the genesis of the project, which was first conceived and negotiated in 2003 as part of a UNDP-led Country Pilot Partnership programme for Land Degradation. Subsequent negotiations by UN leadership led to one project being ascribed to UNEP, three staying with UNDP, one being shared between the two agencies, and FAO taking part as a supporting technical partner.

## Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Satisfactory

107. This project is part of a Country Pilot Partnership programme put together under the GEF's third replenishment cycle (2002-2006), in response to its Operational Programme #15 dedicated to Sustainable Land Management. In late 2002, the GEF Assembly designated land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, as a focal area of the GEF as a means to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). With this designation, sustainable land management became a primary focus of GEF assistance to achieve global environment benefits within the context of sustainable development. Land degradation has remained a GEF priority to this day, even if no longer called an Operational Programme. This project, and its parent programme, are therefore fully aligned with the GEF's strategic priorities. By adopting the GEF Tracking Tool for SLM at approval, the project sought to contribute to the GEF's results indicators for this focal area.

## Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Satisfactory

108. More so now than at the time of its approval, this project and its parent programme are fully aligned with the environmental and developmental priorities of Cuba. As SLM has

since been mainstreamed into a number of policies, strategic plans and regulations, the relevance of this project for national priorities has grown, yet it was already ample enough when the project was conceived. At that time, Cuba had a number of policies, strategies and laws, at the national, sectoral and territorial levels, to which this project and the CPP programme contributed directly. In the policy arena, the most relevant of these were:

- the National Environmental Strategy, which at the time was in its third edition (period 2011-2015) and identified land degradation amongst Cuba's main environmental problems;
- the National Water Policy (2012) which spelled out the country's vision for the continued and efficient development of its water sector; and
- the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought, which continues to define the principles, priorities and guidelines to be followed for UNCCD implementation.

109. Currently, the project and the CPP Programme are recognised as responding to the country's 2030 National Economic and Social Development Plan, State Plan for Addressing Climate Change ("Tarea Vida") and the recent land degradation neutrality targets for 2030 set before the UNCCD. Other strategies that have benefitted from this project included the National Strategy for Environmental Education (2011-2015), first launched in 1997 to increase the degree to which environmental considerations were incorporated into economic policies, social development and communication processes, and the National Forestry Action Plan of Cuba, approved in 1992 and focused on long-range productive goals (to 2025 and 2050) that contribute to the sustainable use and assessment of forest resources and their ecosystem services.

110. At the territorial level, Cuba has Territorial Environmental Strategies that identify local actions to preserve the environment and achieve sustainable development goals and incorporate elements of the Provincial Programmes to confront Climate Change implemented by key institutions working in agriculture, sugar production, tourism, and public health among others. As part of these territorial strategies, municipalities have Integrated Environmental Programmes that include actions aimed at managing watersheds, mountain areas, biodiversity, desertification and drought, pollution, climate change and environmental education. For those provinces included in the project's intervention areas, this project and the CPP programme were means to operationalise and articulate these strategies and programmes in an integrated manner.

111. This project also served to implement, and technically substantiate, a number of regulations linked to SLM, which have continued to increase since the project was first approved. When the project was first conceived, its design was fully aligned with:

- Decree 138 (1993) on Terrestrial Waters which regulated the use, control and protection of territorial waters, and was later revised to align with an updated National Water Policy.
- Law 85, Forest Law (1998) which, in addition to conservation objectives, stipulated the promotion and provision of reforestation incentives for economic, social and environmental purposes, and constituted the legal framework for the National Fund for Forestry Development (FONADEF), established in 2000.

- Decree No. 179 (1993) on the protection, use and conservation of soils, containing specific regulations for soil conservation and management, including rules on fertilizer use and water quality for irrigation purposes that were developed under CPP P1.
- Decree Law 259 (2008) on the distribution of idle lands, amended in 2012 by Decree Law 300, which created important reforms in the agricultural sector and new opportunities for small-scale farmers to utilize potentially productive lands. These Decrees allowed idle state-owned lands to be claimed for agricultural purposes under an usufruct modality, thus opening the possibility for more farmers to become "smallholders".

112. At the regional level, this project is compatible with the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC) initiative, which began in 2007 as a political commitment between Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and has since been joined by Puerto Rico and soon, Jamaica. This Initiative aims to contribute to the long-term conservation of biodiversity based on ecosystem connectivity across these countries and beyond political boundaries. Although the CBC was not cited by the project as a relevant framework, this initiative recognises the restoration of terrestrial ecosystems as a key strategy, and was in this regard supported by the project, and the CPP Programme as a whole.

### Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Satisfactory

113. In addition to its "sister projects" under the CPP Programme, P2 was intended to be complementary with a number of other existing interventions, funded either by the GEF or other donors. At the time of its approval, the project had identified at least six projects or programmes in Cuba, most of which were being executed by CITMA, MINAG or INRH, the same government institutions in charge of this project, that presented opportunities for collaboration and coordination. In this way, the project sought to act coherently and seek out complementary initiatives in order to maximise synergies, particularly in the fields of ecosystem management, restoration, food and agricultural production, and water resources, in selected intervention areas.

| **Rating for Strategic Relevance:** | **Highly Satisfactory** |
|---|---|

## B. Quality of Project Design

114. The CPP programme document is the UNEP ProDoc for the GEF project #2437, which addresses the entire programme and project sequencing. The Endorsement Request for P2 (GEF ID 8003) presented to the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) notes that project design was carried out in the context of the CPP, led by UNDP. The drafting of P2 benefitted from a GEF Project Preparation Grant (USD 55,500) and significant baseline information available through P1. The project's design demonstrates clear logic with regards to the main elements needed to arrive at expected results, considering its various levels of intervention (demonstration sites, provincial and national).

115. The overall **score for the Quality of Project Design is 5.04** which translates into a Satisfactory rating. In general, P2 was found to be well designed, reviewed against the UNEP Evaluation Office's Template for Quality of Project Design Assessment. A complete assessment of Project Design Quality is presented in the TE Inception Report. Its main

design strengths include a thorough problem analysis, situation analysis, stakeholder mapping, results framework and budgeting, and high strategic relevance. Overall, the project's results are 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Attributable /Achievable, Realistic /Relevant, Time-bound) with clear indicators and targets provided. The only exception is Outcome 4 which is not phrased as a result but as an M&E component.

116. A design feature that could have been more thorough relates to the use of a generic workplan, despite the project narrative listing a number of activities under each Output. As the project's design was informed by P1, it shows good understanding of the needs and key stakeholders in each intervention area. Still, it could have benefitted from a description of how local beneficiaries (women, men and disadvantaged social groups) were involved or consulted during P2's design phase. The robust results framework, and the confluence of an ample range of executing institutions, confirms the solid basis and coherence on which the project was designed and that stakeholder needs were indeed accounted for.

117. Gender is mentioned in the ProDoc in relation to the empowerment of women being a priority. A key role is ascribed to the FCW (to which the majority of women in Cuba belong, regardless of sector or education level) in coordinating the integration of gender issues in CPP demonstration sites. One gender-disaggregated indicator was included in the Results Framework and used in project monitoring (number of producers and water resource managers, in P2's four intervention areas, that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water).

118. Minority group issues are not explicitly cited in the ProDoc, while human rights issues are treated in the context of the Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist, presented as part of the UNEP ProDoc. In this checklist, where a positive response is given to the question of whether the project will respect internationally proclaimed human rights, stating that "the project will assist Cuba in strengthening capacities of the national and local governments and stakeholders to reverse land degradation trends, ensuring sustained ecosystem services and meeting national priorities and goals for food production and water supply/quality". It is worth noting that the new Constitution of Cuba (2019) recognises a healthy and stable environment, food, and clean water, not just as goals or duties of the State, but as rights of the Cuban population.

119. There is documentation to indicate that stakeholder consultations took place as part of project design, involving mostly national and sub-national government entities and international agencies during the project drafting phase, facilitated by the Project Preparation Grant. Records show that field visits took place for the selection of demonstration sites within chosen CPP intervention areas, during which exchanges with local actors took place and possible local working groups were identified. Project documentation suggests that good use was made of expert knowledge and research networks, especially in defining P2's results, indicators and targets, and hydraulic research needs.

***UNEP SLM Portfolio Review:***

120. **Question 1. (b):** ***Were learnings from Terminal Evaluations of previous projects absorbed into this project's design?*** From interviews and available project documentation, the evaluator found no evidence that the TEs of other UNEP projects influenced this project's preparation process. As the second of five projects, P2 was drafted at a time when two other UNDP-led CPP projects were already in implementation (P1 and P5). Its design and

governance arrangements were therefore informed by lessons and successes from the early implementation of these two projects, and conditioned to fit the wider programme. There was in fact no conceptualization phase for this project, as the approved CPP Programme both cancelled the need for a 'concept' and provided a strong conceptual framework. This project, which was not designed as a stand-alone effort, highlighted potential synergies with other ongoing GEF and non-GEF efforts. This is a GEF and UNEP requirement in the project preparation phase, while purposefully absorbing the learnings from previous projects in the design phase is not.

121. **Question 4. (e):** ***How did the project address its key assumptions/drivers (included at design or noted by the evaluator at TE)?*** Project assumptions mirror those of the CPP Programme as a whole, while the drivers for this project were identified as part of revising the TOC. The majority of project assumptions held true; two assumptions held partially, one relating to the stability of staff in key institutions and the other to social and economic conditions in rural areas remaining favourable for SLM. There was some staff turnover that overall did not seem to impair project execution, but socio-economic conditions in rural areas were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as occurred in many countries. This slowed the adoption of SLM and project activities, as much as it slowed economic and social systems worldwide. The assumptions that held true relate to maintaining the interest and willingness of the central government land managers and local governments, in applying SLM principles and practices to land use and production. The continued commitment on the part of local stakeholders and competent authorities was evident, as was the continuity of the institutional, planning and legal framework in favour of the environment and SLM, and of an operational integrated monitoring system.

122. How this project took advantage of its Drivers is commented on in later *UNEP SLM Portfolio Review* sections - see Questions 3.(a), 4.(d) and 4.(f). In effect, all three Drivers were favourable forces that spurred change along the project's causal pathways.

| |
|---|
| Driver 1: Cuba's high level of technical sophistication, available expertise and local knowledge is leveraged towards the adoption of SLM and IWRM practices.<br><br>Driver 2: The project taps into, and advances, the forward momentum in favour of smallholder farming and local decision-making that is shaping Cuba's agricultural sector.<br><br>Driver 3: The project builds on the achievements and foundations laid by the other CPP projects, and vice versa, to create synergies and drive change processes further. |

**Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory**

## C. Nature of the External Context

123. The external context was found to be Moderately Favourable, due to limitations faced by Cuba in general, not just this project. The economic, financial and political embargo to which Cuba is subject creates a challenging context in which to operate. In the context of UNEP-GEF projects, the embargo has repercussions on procurement processes, which tend to be more convoluted and costly, and on internet access and information availability. These challenges were met with adaptability and resilience on the part of the Cuban project team, and even an avid interest to collaborate with other countries on SLM when possible. Economic shortcomings and lack of inputs did however affect project results in relation to crop yields and water productivity, in the Havana-Matanzas Plains

region. In relation to this evaluation criterium, the evaluator considered that economic conditions were generally stable but occasionally hampered project operations.

124. The team also faced operational challenges due to the global pandemic and the restrictions imposed on public events and group meetings. Even though project execution was slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during 2020, overall project performance was not affected. Some activities had to be cancelled, re-designed or re-scheduled, but regular communication and coordination was maintained between territorial teams and the central level, and with UNEP. In line with evaluation guidelines, this impact was equated with a security situation that had "occasional minor effects on project operations, staff and partners" (as per the evaluation criteria).

125. Climatic events, in particular hurricanes and droughts, are a reality and a frequent threat to the island. Every year, Cuba faces a hurricane season (1 June to 30 November) that varies in intensity and can temporarily hamper project operations, depending on the regions affected. During the project execution period (2016-2021), project activities and sites were impacted by **hurricane Mathew** (October 2016), which affected Guantánamo Province, and **hurricane Ida** (August 2021) which struck the provinces of Artemisa, La Habana, Mayabeque, and in particular, Pinar del Río. Still, losses and damage, and workplan changes, proved to be manageable and did not throw the project off-track or preclude progress at the site level. A bout of pests did affect crop yields and water productivity, and therefore results, at selected farms in the Havana-Matanzas Plains. Adaptive management by the project team, and by farmers and communities, is therefore key in the context of climate change impacts.

**Rating for Nature of the external context: Moderately Favourable**

## D. Effectiveness

### Availability of Outputs

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Satisfactory

126. Without counting the Outputs corresponding to Outcome 4, the project's original design contemplated the delivery of 13 Outputs in order to achieve three main Outcomes. As seen in the revised TOC (Figure 4), Outputs have a natural sequencing that reflects their progression along three causal pathways. UNEP guidelines (2019) define *Outputs* as "the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions". Through the TOC revision exercise, two additional Outputs (1.5 and 3.5) were identified as intended results that were relevant when accounting for expected Outcomes but had not been expressly formulated as Outputs (see Table 5 below). Some Outputs were edited for clarity, and in one case (2.1), rephrased without changing the nature of the result, in order to reflect a more realistic ambition level.

127. The project was highly effective in delivering its technical Outputs, as all 15 were fully delivered, either to the expected degree or beyond. This was measured without Output indicators or targets, relying instead on the project's Outcome indicators, which comprised deliverables and products that also accounted for most project Outputs. By considering these together, a more comprehensive (and quantitative) picture arises of the project's intended deliverables.

Table 5. Project Outputs after Theory of Change revision

| Outcome | Outputs | TOC revision |
|---|---|---|
| **Outcome 1** | 1.1 Territorial plans and programmes related with water use and agricultural production mainstream SLM considerations | Unchanged |
| | 1.2 Technical standards and regulations on the use and management of water resources mainstream SLM considerations | Unchanged |
| | 1.3 Increased SLM awareness of decision makers at national, provincial and municipal level | Unchanged |
| | 1.4 Increased SLM knowledge of resource managers of key institutions and agencies at national, provincial and municipal levels, and local producers | Unchanged |
| | *1.5 Improved offer in SLM education and specialization through collaborations with universities and schools.* | *New* |
| **Outcome 2** | 2.1 Operational institutional network for the integration of data bases and monitoring systems for IWRM /SLM | Rephrased |
| | 2.2 Strategy implemented for the dissemination and exchange of information (SLM indicators, water quality, weather forecasts, maps, informative videos, etc.) considering different end users | Edited |
| | 2.3 Strengthened hydrometric network, water quality laboratories and early warning systems | Unchanged |
| | 2.4 Water availability assessments in four intervention areas | Unchanged |
| | 2.5 Modernized monitoring and evaluation system and data for the management of water resources | Edited |
| **Outcome 3** | 3.1 Integrated water resources management model and demonstrations in four intervention areas | Unchanged |
| | 3.2 Increased efficiency in water use for agricultural production | Unchanged |
| | 3.3 Monitoring and evaluation of action plans, impacts and lessons learned from IWRM and SLM | Edited |
| | 3.4 Upscaling of the management model to new geographical areas | Unchanged |
| | *3.5 Inclusive communities of practice for IWRM /SLM involving women, youth and elders and multiple sectors* | *New* |
| **Outcome 4** | 4.1 Project monitoring system operational and providing six-monthly reports on progress in achieving project output and outcome targets | Unchanged |
| | 4.2 Mid-term and final evaluations | Unchanged |
| | 4.3 Project best practices and lessons learned | Unchanged |

128. Most Outputs were developed **in line with institutional needs** and as such, had to adhere to the required quality standards. This is especially true for Outputs related to: the mainstreaming of SLM into territorial plans and programmes (1.1); the development or updating of technical standards and regulations /norms (1.2); the strengthening of Cuba's hydrometric network, water quality laboratories and early warning systems (2.3); water availability assessments (2.4); the modernization of the systems and data used for IWRM (2.5); promoting the SLM/ IWRM model and site-based demonstrations (3.1); and water use efficiency/productivity measurements (3.2).

129. Many of these Outputs had technological and methodological components that required inputs and/or clearance by the competent authorities and their technical institutes before application at the farm level (e.g. use of rainwater harvesting and

renewable energy systems in demonstrative sites). Other Outputs with a more social dimension, such as increased awareness and knowledge about SLM (1.2 and 1.3), the dissemination and exchange of information on SLM (2.2), and the creation of communities of practice for SLM (3.5), were also technically well substantiated and reliant on quality information that was user-oriented and applicable to different territorial realities.

130. *Quality of project management and supervision:* Outputs belonging to Outcome 4 (M&E) closely linked with project management tasks were also produced. The most notable was Output 4.3 which prompted the project team to carry out yearly M&E exercises consisting of internal discussions to derive **best practices and lessons learned** from both project management and SLM perspectives. These exercises not only involved territorial teams and the CCU, but also local producers, who enriched discussions by contributing from the beneficiary perspective.

131. All project Outputs remain **relevant, operational, and in use today**. High levels of **user ownership** were noted, with numerous institutions and stakeholders closely involved in the preparation or materialization of each Output. A strong degree of satisfaction and approval regarding project Outputs was evident from project beneficiaries, who ranged from farmers and water managers, to extensionists, data managers and senior government officials. Usefulness seems to have been the most notable feature of project Outputs, as expressed by project beneficiaries from different realms of action.

132. Certain Outputs reached beyond the project's planned duration or geographical scope. In this sense, a number of **'extra' or supplementary Outputs** can be identified for this project, either as additional results or as planned results with an extended scope. The fact that results were amplified in this way is a positive sign for the project that points to highly effective project design and management. Below, the underlying factors that blended together to positively influence the project's Output performance are identified.

133. A wise project design feature is the multiplier effect that comes from having, firstly, "*up-scaling of the [SLM] management model to new geographical areas"* as a project Output (3.4), and secondly, synergies with and continuity from other SLM efforts as a project Driver. Being able to build on prior efforts under the CPP and other programmes was undoubtedly a driving force in this project. In addition, Output 3.4 was amply delivered through new farms and cooperatives interested in adopting SLM and IWRM practices within and beyond project areas (Figure 5 below). This served to extend the reach of several other Outputs and heighten the impact of the project. Up-scaling and replication were clearly important elements in this project, and thanks to Output 3.4, project drivers and other performance factors (see below), the uptake of SLM and the number of successful SLM cases that can be attributed to the project were significantly increased.


Figure 5. Field visit to Farm "El Mulato" a project and CPP programme replication site (Mayabeque Province) that evolved from organic farming to become a "demonstration polygon" for SLM.

***Stakeholder participation and Cooperation***

134. The observed *amplification of Outputs* is not only associated with replication, it is also linked to the mobilization effect that comes from a participatory and inter-institutional approach to SLM, which the Cuban government actively promoted. The ample uptake of SLM for greater social and environmental benefits is the ultimate payoff and, in this project, can be observed in the way SLM has permeated across a wider group of sectors, provinces, and timelines than initially anticipated. Noteworthy examples are found not only in the large number of replication farms (58 above the baseline of 83 achieved by P1), but also in the **'extras'** that emerged in relation to certain Outputs, as outlined below. The degree to which SLM was mainstreamed into civil society, however, is unclear, though cooperation did occur with the country's large agricultural associations (ANAP, ACTAF and ACPA).

135. Relevant to *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* is the finding that the inter-institutional approach applied in Cuba was also taken across to other borders. Bolstered by preceding efforts, this project gave rise to **south-south cooperation** and knowledge exchanges with at least three Latin American and Caribbean countries (namely, Ecuador, Panama and Dominican Republic). These exchanges took different forms, from Cuban specialists and producers providing technical assistance to farmers in Panama, to Cuban participation at the IV Ibero-American Workshop on Sustainable Land Management and Food Security in Ecuador (June 2019).

136. These opportunities for participation and collaboration represent a "plus" for the project and an unplanned Output that offered valuable exposure, liaisons and learning experiences for Project staff, and validated the way SLM was being approached in Cuba. Although knowledge was exchanged to varying degrees, it generally consisted in Cuban knowhow being passed on to other countries. This finding is therefore relevant to the GEF Portal question concerning the project's *knowledge management* efforts.

***Project management and supervision***

137. This project was well managed and supported by a motivated and closely coordinated Cuban team, both at the central and territorial level, some of whom had been on board since P1. Strong leadership and good communication were evident within the team, as was the diversity and high degree of technical expertise of its members. This was undoubtedly an influential factor in the successful and timely delivery of Outputs that allowed P2 managers to have ample reach, attend to numerous issues simultaneously, and make the best of the team's matrixed composition, and thus be highly effective.

138. ***UNEP SLM Portfolio Review:*** **Question 2. (a):** ***Were the Task Manager or the UNEP project team aware of other SLM projects being implemented at the same time? If yes, were there any opportunities to share information?*** UNEP's role in project supervision was not limited only to oversight tasks. The Task Manager was involved in facilitating part of the south-south collaboration that took place, and in creating opportunities to share information. While some opportunities were also pursued by the Cuban team directly, the UNEP Task Manager established contact between the P2 team and at least two other projects in the same GEF portfolio that were being implemented concomitantly and that led to in-person visits, knowledge exchanges and cooperation agreements. One was the GEF-funded ECOANDES Project in Ecuador and Peru (GEF ID 4750) and the other, the Enabling Activity for Panama "Alignment of National Action Programs with the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy and reporting process" (GEF ID 5085).

139. According to the Cuban team, cooperation with Panama was also facilitated by the global Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project implemented by UNEP and executed by FAO (GEF ID 1329), in which Cuba took part. This project finalised in 2010 (when P2 was still unwritten), but it had a follow-up project and may have opened avenues for collaboration in the early CPP Programme years that materialised in later years. Overall, an open approach to project management and supervision helped to enrich the execution of P2 through knowledge exchange and south-south cooperation with at least three Latin American and Caribbean countries, namely, Ecuador, Panama and Dominican Republic.

***Communication and Public awareness:***

140. The project was able to raise public awareness, strategically and widely, and with this, amplify the project's interventions and key messages about SLM. Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 provided for increased **SLM awareness** of decision makers and **knowledge** of resource managers, while Output 3.5 (which was added as part of the TOC revision exercise) created inclusive **communities of practice** for IWRM /SLM (involving women, youth and elders and multiple sectors). These results continue to grow as interest in SLM expands across the country, and experience in SLM consolidates across a larger group of adepts. More and more benefits are being disseminated as SLM, as it relates to food systems and water resource management, becomes more widely practiced.

141. An "Info-Communication Strategy" was designed and implemented (Output 2.2) for the **dissemination and exchange of information** (on SLM indicators, water quality, weather forecasts, maps, informative videos, etc.) considering different end users. This Output was intended for specific groups of data users, i.e., stakeholders who had a degree of technical specialisation or an interest in particular datasets and technical information. As a complement to this Output, **public awareness** campaigns and information dissemination to the wider public were also carried out. The CPP Programme has an

official Facebook page that was used by P2. State media played a critical role, with news and television channels producing numerous short documentaries and news stories about the successes of SLM across Cuba. Raising the awareness of the general public on SLM and IWRM can therefore be considered an additional project Output.

142. Output 1.5 improved the offer in **SLM education and specialisation** through collaborations with universities and schools, not only in the project's four intervention areas, but in a number of other provinces too. This result has continued to expand beyond the end of the project. The list of universities, technical centres and schools that offer SLM and IWRM education of some type is still growing. This offer is not only from academic centres but also from key project institutions such as INRH and IAgric, through their own training centres, facilities and experimental stations, in the field and centrally, that were equipped and strengthened by the project (Figure 6) and that provide training to university students, producers, specialists, technicians and decision-makers linked to irrigation, drainage, mechanization and monitoring. SLM has also permeated into existing school programmes, such as the "Circles of Interest" (Figure 6), and into new curricula such as an SLM Master's degree. This offer is complemented by means of agricultural "polygons", farming operations that are designated by MINAG as exemplary for the conservation of soils, water and forests and are used by local governments as hands-on learning spaces for farmers, technicians and students. P2 taught not only about soil, water, biodiversity and new techniques, but also about policies and regulations, gender and climate change.

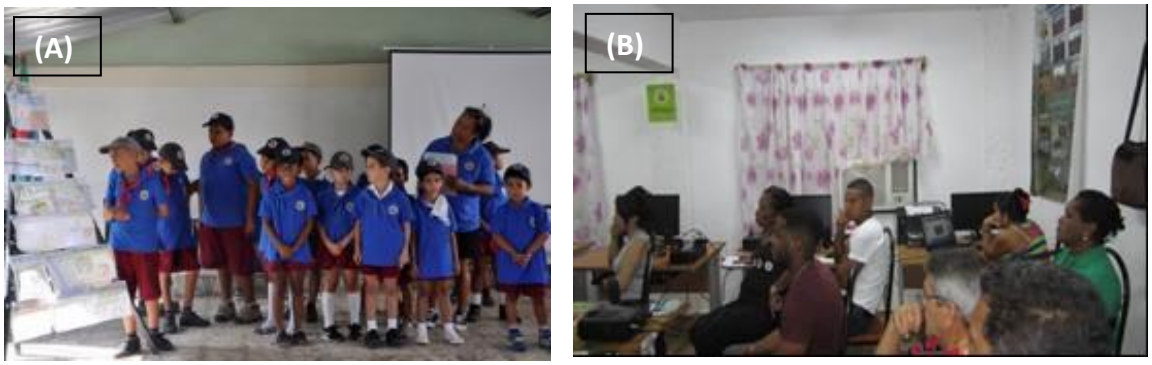



Figure 6. Education and specialisation activities. **(A)** Group of children ("Circle of Interest") from Ángel Guerra School at the UBPC Eliomar Noa (Guantánamo) demonstration site. **(B)** The IAgric Experimental Station in Alquízar Municipality (Artemisa) being used for training.

143. Satisfying Cuba's SLM needs did not initially contemplate developing a Master's degree in SLM, yet this is what the University of Camagüey took on, while the University of Ciego de Ávila preferred to integrate SLM into its Irrigation and Drainage Masters. By building on progress made under P1, P2 followed through with these collaborations involving universities outside the project's intervention areas and was able to support Cuba's (and the Caribbean's?) first ever SLM Master's degree. This important milestone is considered a key supplementary result that extends the scope of Output 1.5.

144. Likewise, an additional contribution was the **scientific publications and booklets** (black, white and grey literature) that the project facilitated, and that showed the M&E and other studies being carried out by Cuban research entities and key experts under P2. The topics researched (soils, irrigation, water quality, productivity, biodiversity, measures applied, , etc.) contributed fresh data for decision-making and were part of a number of project Outputs: 3.3 (M&E of IWRM and SLM); 2.5 (Modernized M&E system and data for water resources); 2.2 (Strategy i exchange of information); and 1.4 (Increased key institutions and agencies).


Figure 7: Sample of Publications from P2 and CPP Programme

***Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:***

145. The project was able to inform and share stories on how women, men, elders and school children were involved in SLM as agents of change, thus creating space for what could otherwise be marginalised groups. For this, national media channels, conferences and public events were used, as well as more targeted means such as bulletins, local events and group meetings. In Output 2.2, the Info-Communication Strategy contemplated the dissemination of SLM cases involving women, highlighting their role in water management or agriculture or as entrepreneurs, as well as dialogues and meetings to discuss the mainstreaming of gender into land and water management. Television documentaries, spots, interviews and new stories attested to the results obtained through IWRM and SLM and reinforced the social dimension of these management models. Issues relating to human rights and human wellbeing were also addressed indirectly, as explained below.

***UNEP SLM Portfolio Review:***

146. **Question 3. (b):** ***Were (a) tools or methodologies previously developed by UNEP used/upscaled, or (b) were UNEP tools and methodologies developed that could be used in other SLM work (within or beyond UNEP)?".*** This evaluation did not identify specific methodologies, exclusively developed by UNEP, that were used or upscaled during this project. The LADA project that was executed by FAO and implemented by UNEP between 2006 and 2011 (GEF ID 1329) was a cornerstone of SLM in Cuba, the island being one of the project's six pilot countries. The LADA methodology forms the basis for the assessments (diagnoses) that are carried out at selected sites, as precursors for the development of individual site management plans. Even if not labelled as a direct

contribution from UNEP, but rather one from FAO, the experience granted by this project, for which AMA was also the counterpart agency, did lay down important methodological foundations for SLM in Cuba.

147. UNEP staff pointed out that the UNCCD Performance Review and Implementation System (PRAIS), which is used for national reporting by UNCCD parties and is now in its fourth iteration, is a tool developed by UNEP with GEF funding. Throughout the years UNEP has been supporting the evolution of PRAIS and continued to add SLM projects and enabling activities to its portfolio, as a means to aid countries in homogenizing indicators and facilitate UNCCD reporting. UNEP therefore maintains a technical role as a facilitator of SLM methodologies (such as those promoted by the LADA Project) and of capacity building.

## Achievement of Project Outcomes

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Satisfactory

148. As shown in the revised TOC (Figure 4), the project was designed to achieve three interlinked and stepwise Outcomes that directly contribute to three Intermediate States and four CPP Programme-level Outcomes, based on three causal pathways. The project's fourth Outcome, focusing on M&E, is not included in the TOC as it has an ancillary management role, in support of the three technical Outcomes.

- Outcome 1. Individuals and institutions that have gained human and material capacities are undertaking SLM, emphasizing in sustainable water management.
- Outcome 2. Cuba's biophysical information base and management system is strengthened and is being used to support SLM decision making.
- Outcome 3. Comprehensive management model and monitoring of IWRM / SLM increases water productivity in four intervention areas and demonstrates its replication potential.
- Outcome 4. Project M&E, adaptive management and lessons learned.

149. UNEP guidelines (2019) define an *Outcome* as "the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an Output by intended beneficiaries, observed as a change in institutions or behaviours, attitudes or conditions". The original project Outcome statements were slightly edited during the TOC revision exercise, in order for the wording to better articulate an Outcome level ambition. Accompanying these Outcomes, the project provided **indicators, baselines** and **targets** that facilitated an explicit understanding of the level of change desired with each Outcome. Though as part of the TOC revision exercise, new indicators and edits were suggested, these were considered more for academic purposes, than for evaluative purposes.

150. P2 indicators are a mix of project and SLM indicators that account for project delivery and measure SLM results in the field. A total of 23 indicators are accounted for (three corresponding to the project Objective, six to Outcome 1, four to Outcome 2, six to Outcome 3, and four to Outcome 4), of which three are broken down by intervention area. One indicator (water productivity) is broken down further by crop (rice, malanga, potato, sweet potato, plantain, maize or beans), to show reductions in the volume of water needed to produce one tonne of the main crops for each intervention area. Although two indicators had missing baseline information, it was still possible, based on the data provided, to show progress using these indicators.

151. On almost all counts, **the project was able to meet or significantly exceed indicator targets**, and could, by the end of the project, show quantifiable change and notable improvements with respect to the baseline. Where this could not be asserted, it was mostly due to issues with the project data or gaps in the means of verification, not to the absence of progress altogether. Two indicators were changed in the context of the MTR (Outcome 2 indicator 3; Outcome 3 indicator 3), one had a numeric inconsistency in project reports (Outcome 3 indicator 4), and two were subject to interpretations (Outcome 1 Indicator 2, and Outcome 3 Indicator 6) rather than being reformulated.

152. The following performance analysis, based on project reports and corroborated where possible through means of verification, shows how **successful** the project was in achieving Outcomes 1 to 3. The measure of success with **Outcome 4** is given by four M&E indicators, all of which were **fully achieve**d and corroborated by this TE: (1) Project results achieved and demonstrating sustainability; (2) Project Progress Reports and Project Implementation Reviews; (3) Mid-term and final evaluations; and (4) Project best practices and lessons learned published and disseminated.

153. Beyond the numerical merits (or gaps) shown in the indicator analysis below, there is abundant testimony that **transformational change** occurred as much at project sites as in Cuba's institutionality, thanks to SLM and sustainable water management. There is little doubt that results can be attributed to this project, with inseparable contributions made by P1 (and to some degree, P3 and likely P5) to the successes reaped by P2.

154. **Under Outcome 1**, the main focus was to ensure that resource administrators in key institutions and agencies were aware of and supported IWRM processes for SLM, and that sufficient capacities were in place for local production entities in intervention areas to implement sustainable IWRM practices for SLM. This was demonstrated via six indicators, the first three dedicated to the institutional framework and instruments for SLM, and the last three to individual capacities for SLM.

155. Outcome 1 Indicator 1: The project achieved its target of 55 *'institutions with plans and programmes that mainstream SLM'*, starting from a baseline of 25. Even without information on the full list of institutions (or the list of plans and programmes entailed), these are known to comprise municipal entities (such as Administration Councils and branch offices), provincial entities such as the Mayabeque Renewable Energy Centre, competent authorities at the central level (e.g. CITMA, MINAG, CITMA, INRH, IPF, MES, AZCuba), and BANDEC, among others. The project's inter-institutional territorial teams were an important means to achieve the operational uptake of SLM here being measured.

156. Outcome 1 Indicator 2: The project initiated with two *'land use plans that mainstream water resources management'* already available for Pinar del Rio and Guantánamo (baseline) and aimed to develop a further two for the Cauto River Basin and the Havana-Matanzas plains. Although the scope of this indicator seemed ambitious, considering that a landscape or basin-wide approach was intended more for P4 than P2, the project still made progress in **land use planning processes** for the hydrographic basins of Ariguanabo and Almendares-Vento in the Havana-Matanzas plains, contributed information and support for the territorial planning of the Guantánamo-Guaso Basin, and produced an implementation report to aid the management of the Cauto River Basin. The project also reportedly strengthened the territorial planning of productive entities, such as the Güira de Melena Agricultural State Company (Mayabeque), the Swine Breeding Company "Camilo Cienfuegos" and a number of cooperatives, making sure to include an updated water balance and consider various land uses. The indicator's reference to "land

use plans", however, carried a degree of ambiguity that led to flexible interpretations with regards to scale but linked all the same to Output 1.1 ("*territorial plans and programmes*").

157. Outcome 1 Indicator 3: The project aimed to have at least 10 *'standards and regulatory instruments reviewed and updated to incorporate SLM'*, with four that related to the use of water in agriculture already in place at the start of the project (baseline). Project reports indicate that a total of 12 standards, technical norms and regulated procedures relating to irrigation systems, water quality and sanitary requirements were generated (Output 1.2), although the evaluator counted a total of 13. Either way, the **target was surpassed**.

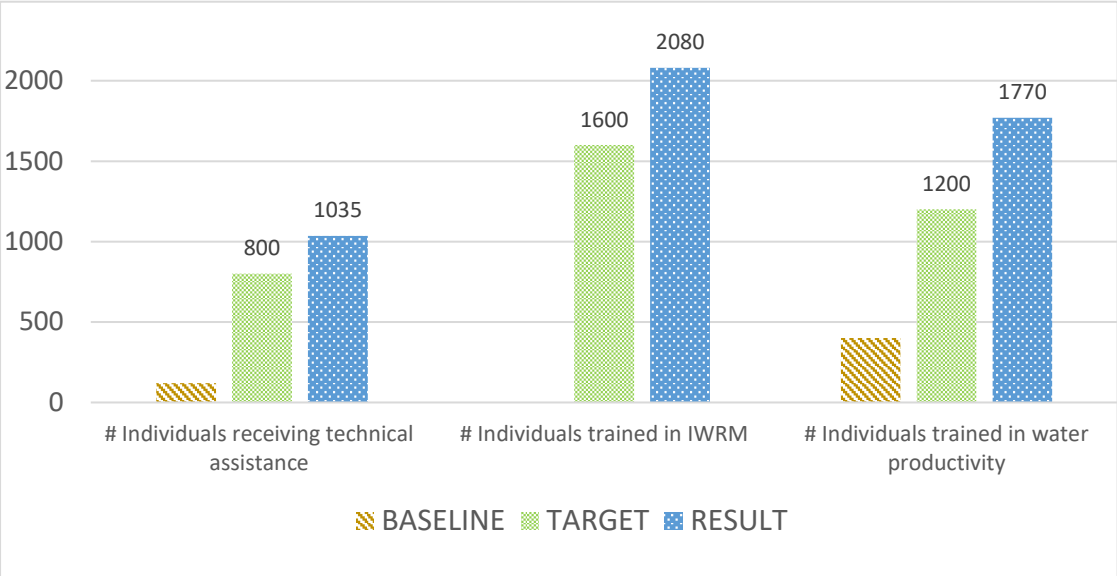



Figure 7: Performance of Indicators 4, 5 and 6 of Outcome 1

158. Outcome 1 Indicators 4 to 6: The project used these indicators to measure capacity building efforts, taking care not to double count individuals, and to consider trainings, knowledge-sharing and technical assistance provided both in the field and at the national level. As shown in Figure 7 above, the targets for all three indicators (which are the basis for Output 1.4) were amply surpassed by the project (by 29.4%, 30% and 47.5%, respectively). A total of **4885 individuals** (from a baseline of ~500) gained technical capacities and knowledge, receiving technical assistance in water resources management (Indicator 4) or were trained in water resources management in general (Indicator 5) or specifically for water use efficiency (water productivity) (Indicator 6). Baseline values were unclear for Indicators 5 and 6, based on results reported annually versus original values.

159. **Under Outcome 2,** the emphasis was on the ability of competent authorities to monitor SLM indicators and use the resulting biophysical data for decision making. The four indicators used for this Outcome were less quantitative and more qualitative, focusing on the operational capacity being created rather than on numeric targets. Results were indeed systemic, and although difficult to measure, they were highly significant in terms of the material and institutional capacities created. Indicators 1 and 2 were able to show a qualitative difference with respect to the baseline with regards to ecosystem monitoring and biophysical data management, in support of SLM, while with Indicator 3, a change of wording took place as a result of the MTR that rendered the baseline redundant and the indicator no longer measurable and led the project team to report

instead on what could be quantified. The target for Indicator 4 was also subject to interpretation given that the baseline lacked information.

160. Outcome 2 Indicator 1: Indicator 1 is for the *establishment of an operational network for the coordination of information for IWRM / SLM among key institutions in the four intervention areas*, with emphasis on a networked and coordinated approach. The baseline for this indicator (which relates to Outputs 2.1 and 2.3) recognised that Cuba lacked information sharing mechanisms and that existing monitoring networks did not operate in an integrated or coordinated fashion. As a result of the project, and following from P1, information management was integrated between INRH, INSMET, IS and IAgric, as per the target, and additionally involved IES for biodiversity monitoring and the CGB for data on forest fires. Each institution is in charge of monitoring specific biophysical indicators for SLM (see Table 6) and sharing the georeferenced data with the IGT and the CPP Programme's CCU at AMA. The IGT was in charge of information integration and for this, put together a Geospatial Content Management System (GeoNode) to visualize indicators through maps and over time. Coordination and information sharing now occurs across a wider group of institutions, and data flows regularly from the territories to the central level.

Table 6. Biophysical indicators used for SLM monitoring.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Biodiversity** | |
| by: IES | • Biological Quality of Water |
| | • Biological Quality of Soil |
| | • Biological Quality of Vegetation Cover |
| | • Biodiversity Friendly Management |
| | • = Ecological Integrity Index of Farms |
| **Water Quality** | |
| by: INRH | • Electric conductivity |
| | • Nitrate |
| | • Nitrite |
| | • Total Dissolved Salts |
| | • Biological /Chemical Demand for Oxygen |
| | • Thermotolerant Coliforms |
| | • Sodium Absorption Radius |
| | • = Water Quality Index |
| **Forest Fires** | |
| by: CGB | • Forest fires |
| **Soil Quality** | |
| by: IS | • Apparent density |
| | • PH |
| | • Organic matter content |
| | • Humus content |
| | • Salinity |
| | • Loss of soil |
| | • Soil retention through conservation |
| **Water in Agriculture** | |
| by: IAgric | • Efficiency in the use of water |
| | • Water productivity per crop |
| | • Water consumption per crop |
| | • Crop yields |
| **Meteorology** | |
| by: INSMET | • Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) |
| | • Agricultural Drought Index |
| | • Biological aridity index |
| | • Vegetation Wetness Index |

161. Outcome 2 Indicator 2: This Indicator notes whether the *long-term M&E system for the management of water resources is modernized and generating updated information for SLM.* This indicator is linked to Outputs 2.3 and 2.5, and accounts for changes in the soil and water monitoring systems which was given a new lease through the acquisition of critical equipment, software and training. The suite of SLM indicators mentioned above is being monitored regularly, in addition to other measurements that were needed to improve water management.

162. Water assessments (Output 2.4) were also carried out for the nine provinces involved in the project, which included a long-overdue assessment of the hydraulic infrastructure. Approximately 800 underground and surface stations are reportedly analysed per year, on a monthly, quarterly or semi-annual basis, depending on the characteristics of each source and the intended use (human consumption, irrigation, aquaculture or recreation). This served to monitor not only the indices for surface water quality, but also the depth and quality of the water table, trends in salt water intrusion and water availability levels. This was particularly relevant for the development of updated water balances by INRH, and for guiding management decisions to would increase the efficiency of irrigation systems (especially in the Havana-Matanzas Plains) and protect water basins and sources. The generation of new data was therefore key for planning, decision-making, regulatory compliance, as well as for verifying farm-level improvements as a result of the SLM and IWRM measures being applied.

163. Outcome 2 Indicator 4: Indicator 4 accounts for the human resources behind the boosted biophysical monitoring and so hones in on the number of "**monitoring brigades**" that are "established, trained and equipped in project intervention areas". Despite lacking a baseline, the project created conditions to work with the monitoring brigades of INRH so the baseline was not starting from scratch. Rather than establish new brigades, the project focused on training and equipping nine existing brigades of the INRH that to date continue to operate. This means the target of two brigades was readily exceeded and that all P2 demonstration site provinces were serviced.

164. Outcome 2 Indicator 3: The number of institutions that have access to data of the SLM Repository and the Monitoring Network was targeted at 25. In real terms it is likely much higher, given that the **SLM Repository** is open access, and takes the form of a searchable website that contains 650 records relating to diverse SLM topics. These records are organised into official, technical and reference documents, and by date, author, topic and title. Consequently, this indicator, which was changed as a result of the MTR, was difficult to measure. Initially the focus was on the number of institutions that *cite the data* in their plans and programmes, for which five were identified from the Monitoring Network and 18 considering the SLM Repository (15 of which were from the baseline).

165. **Under Outcome 3:** Indicator 1: This indicator counts the number of **hectares**, in the four intervention areas, where "the efficient use of water and increase in [water] productivity generate SLM". With this, SLM implies confirmed improvements in soils, biodiversity and water (in line with Table 6 indicators) as well as social factors. These hectares are reported as nearly **6900 ha in total**, directly linked to P2 efforts. Reports also detail that summed with earlier efforts and replication, there are **33 400 ha** in total where SLM practices are being applied across the country. So to differentiate, the current indicator focuses on areas assisted for water resources management and where monitoring is used to corroborate that IWRM is contributing to SLM. The values used here are those obtained from the periodic and final reports to UNEP, which do not always coincide with the annual or total values presented in other reports[10].

166. In all cases, **the project overperformed in relation to the target** number of hectares set for each intervention area (see Table 7 and Figure 8), reaching as much as 232% above the initial target number of hectares and 930% above the baseline in Pinar del Rio. Benefitted areas include both demonstration and replication sites (Output 3.1), so the total number of hectares attests to the project's success in up-scaling the SLM model (Output 3.4), emphasising the rational use and management of water resources. Hectares data was not disaggregated by site category (demonstration or replication), with the exception of the Guantánamo-Maisi intervention area, where 120 ha are from replication sites and 78 ha from its two demonstration sites, for a total of 198 ha "where the efficient use of water and increase in productivity generate SLM."

167. Together with this indicator, a number of **other variables** were also measured and used for farm management purposes. Although these variables are not project indicators, they do shed light on the project's performance in relation to SLM at demonstration and replication sites. These variables were analysed internally (few were reported to UNEP) to inform on how SLM and IWRM measures were impacting locally in social, economic and environmental terms.

168. The volume of technical data handled and processed by project teams and the CCU was (and continues to be) substantial and shows the importance of having support from P5 in SLM data management. Examples of this data are: sedimentation rates to monitor erosion levels, soil indicators and biodiversity indicators associated with the Ecological Integrity Index of Farms (see Table 6), water use efficiency and water productivity (see Indicator 4 below), and productivity indicators such as the cost of production per crop weight, average salary (personal income) and work force. The demonstration and

[10] Hectares data from different sources was dissimilar for certain intervention areas. For instance, for Pinar del Rio, total indicator values can be either 961,25 ha or 929,63 ha, and for Cauto River Basin, 2660 ha instead of 2942 ha with differences also in annual values.

replication sites for which data could be reviewed in this TE showed **consistent and significant improvements in these indicators** as a result of implementing SLM and IWRM measures.

Figure 8: Performance of Indicator 1 of Outcome 3. Baseline, target and actual hectares (ha) that are applying SLM and an efficient use of water in project intervention areas.

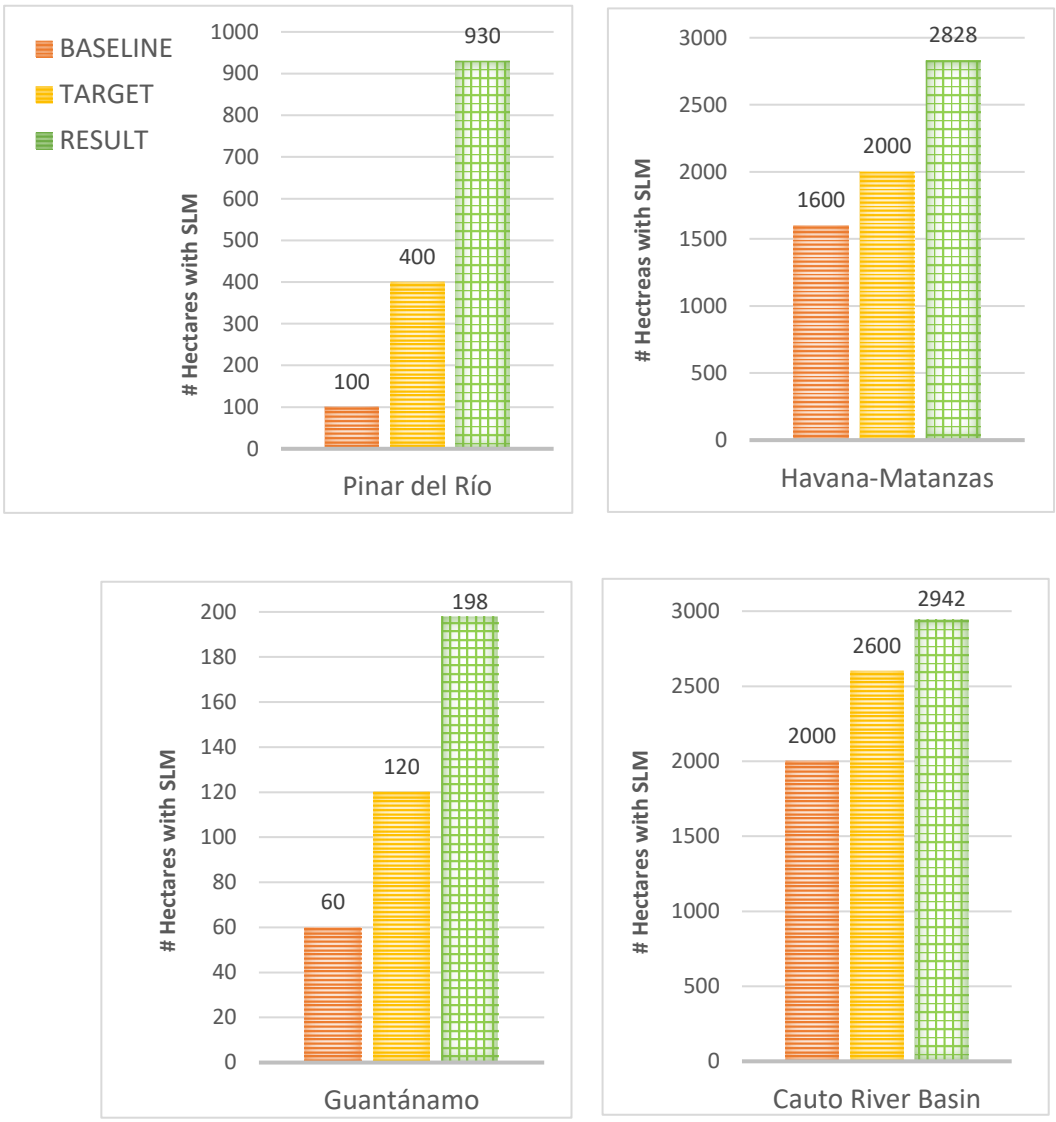



Table 7: Performance of Indicator 1 of Outcome 3. Baseline, target and actual hectares (ha) that are applying SLM and an efficient use of water in project intervention areas.

| **Intervention area** | Baseline | **Target** | % above BL | **Result** | Result above BL | % above BL | % above Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pinar del Río | 100 | 400 | 400% | 929.63 | 829.63 | 930% | 232.4% |
| Havana-Matanzas | 1600 | 2000 | 25% | 2827.84 | 1227.84 | 77% | 41.4% |
| Cauto River Basin | 2000 | 2600 | 30% | 2942 | 942 | 47% | 13.2% |
| Guantánamo-Maisi | 60 | 120 | 200% | 198 | 138 | 330% | 65% |
| **TOTAL** | **3760 ha** | **5120 ha** | **36%** | **6897.47 ha** | **3137.47 ha** | **83%** | **35%** |

169. Positive results in relation to **work force** often correlated with results relating to yields and average salary. So, at sites where production had been diversified (e.g. by introducing fruit trees, or sustainable animal husbandry) and showed productivity gains (e.g. better yields or regained crop surface thanks to soil restoration measures), the work force tended to remain stable or increase slightly, thus avoiding the tendency to migrate in the face of deteriorated livelihoods. With **average salary**, productivity gains would automatically translate into higher income for farm workers, as shown in the two examples of Figure 9.

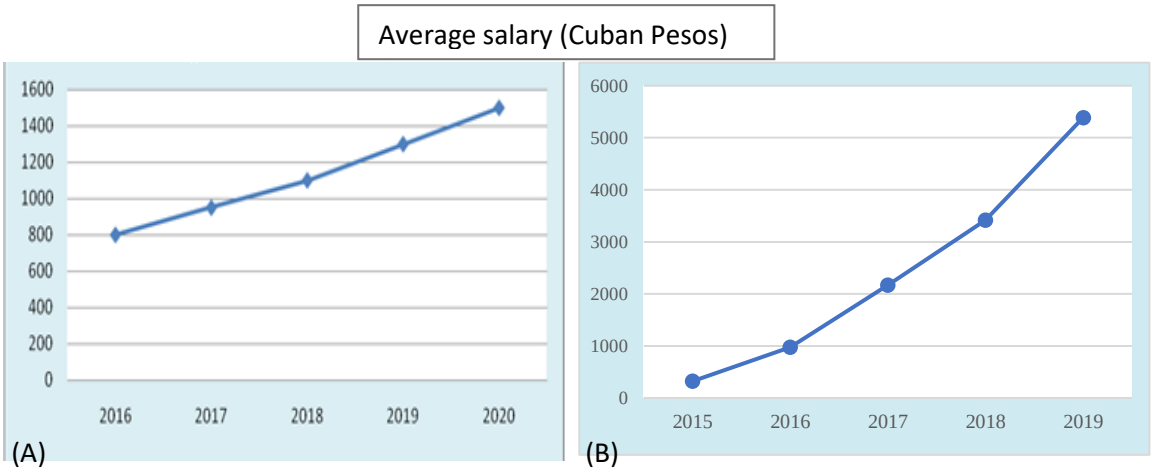



Figure 9: Average salary increases (in Cuban Pesos) for farm workers at (A) CCS Mariana Grajales Cuello, Guantánamo, and (B) Tierra Brava Farm, Pinar del Rio.

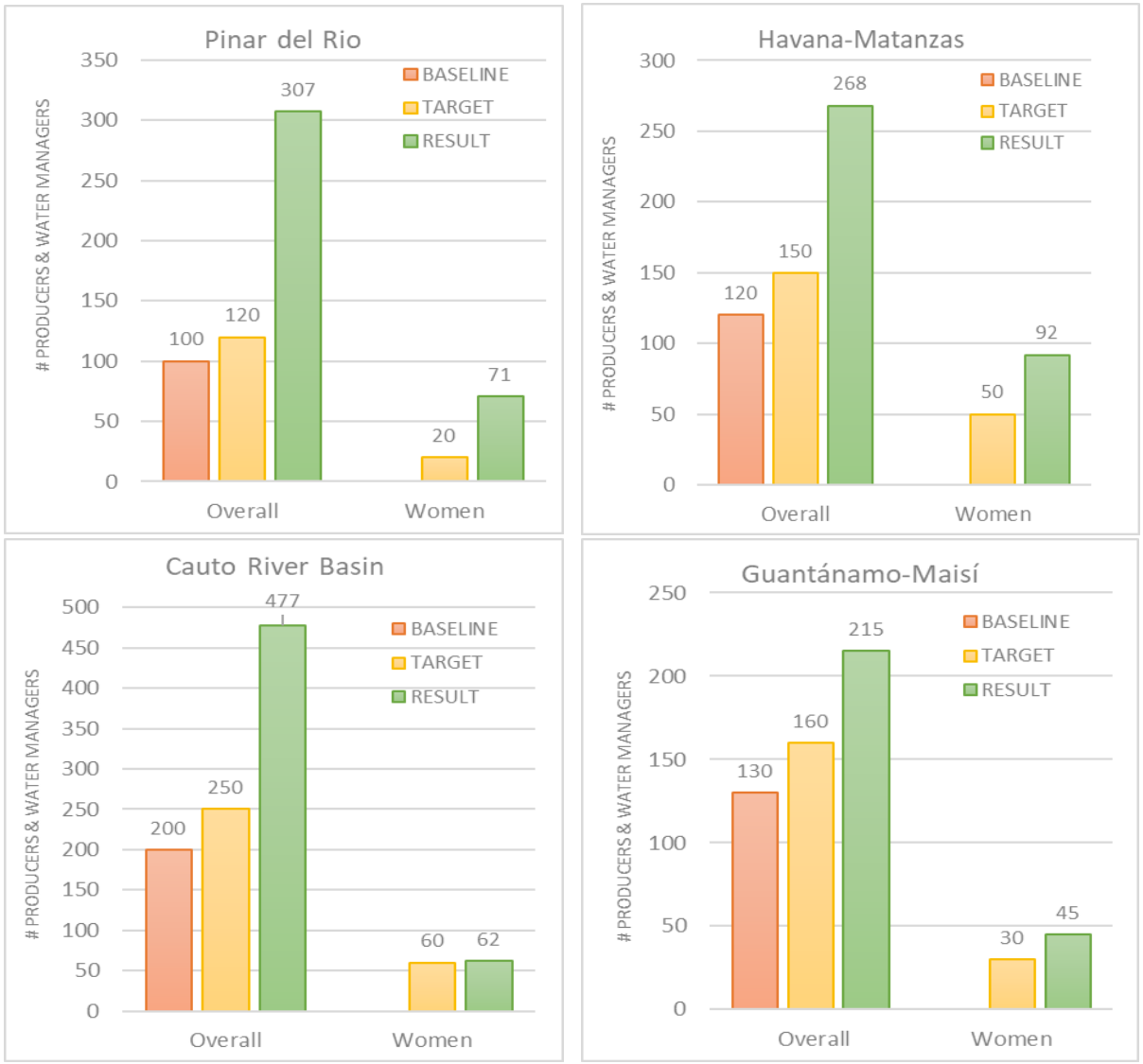
170. Importantly, **increased yields** were recorded in numerous sites, to differing degrees depending on the crop and usually accompanied by reduced cost per weight. Some of the most notable increases were for fruit trees, with crops such as mango, papaya and guava (or "guayaba"). In rice producing areas, such as the CCS Hermes Rondon in the Cauto River Basin, it was possible to increase rice yields from 3.6 to 4.3 tonnes $ha^{-1}$. In Guantanamo-Maisi sites, the crops that overall showed the greatest increase in yields were beans and corn, mainly driven by the introduction of varieties better adapted to local conditions. Together with IWRM measures and the application of irrigation regulations, one site was able to obtain beans and corn yields that for three years were above the provincial average.

171. It is worth recalling that demonstration sites in Pinar del Rio and Guantánamo-Maisí had a head start with respect to the other sites, as their introduction to SLM began with P1. Nevertheless, some sites and productive activities in these two regions were subject to external affectations (such as hurricanes in Guantánamo-Maisí or pests in Pinar del Rio) that reduced yields and required a productivity recovery period of 1-3 years. These fluctuations did not hamper however overall progress at the farm or cooperative level. Even in farms with less implementation time, such as those in Mayabeque in the Havana-Matanzas Plains, it was possible to see how good practices increased yields and improved social and environmental indicators.

172. Outcome 3 Indicator 2: This indicator speaks to the number of producers, technicians and decision-makers from the agricultural sector (grouped as "producers") as well as hydraulic infrastructure managers, operators, technicians, specialists and decision-

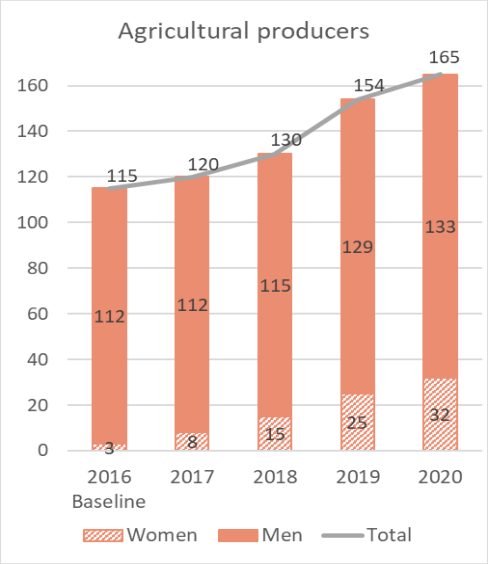
makers from the provincial water sector (grouped as "water managers") who implement SLM measures, with an emphasis on water resources. This total number was calculated at **1276 people** over five years, of whom **22% were women**. This indicator is related to Output 3.5 (*community of practice*) and included sex-disaggregated targets for each intervention area. In all cases, **results surpassed the targets set** for each area, considering both overall participation and the ratio of men/women, as shown in Figure 10.

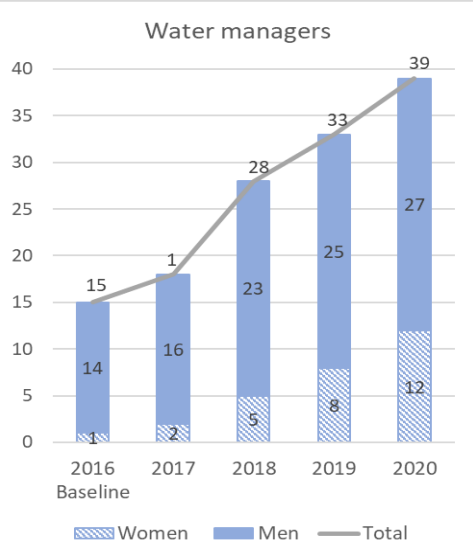
Figure 10: Number of producers and water managers (and portion of women) that implemented SLM measures with an emphasis on water in project intervention areas (baselines, targets and actual results).




173. Only for Guantánamo-Maisi was data also disaggregated into the distinct groups: "producers" (165) and "water managers" (39). Annual figures in Figure 11 show how participation increased year on year, as did the proportion of women in both groups (from 3% to 19% women producers and from 7% to 31% women in the water managers group).

Figure 11. Male/female trends in producers and water managers that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water.




174. Outcome 3 Indicator 3: Monitoring the productivity of water in the main crops of each intervention area (Output 3.2) was a novel approach in Cuba that generated informative results and lasting improvements in the way water resources are managed. The state water sector, in particular INRH and its provincial State Companies for Water Use, has now adopted this new indicator after piloting it through P2, and continues to create capacities for its application. In Cuba, water productivity is expressed as the volume of water needed to harvest one tonne of produce ($m^3/t$), so reductions in water use (i.e., lower values) are a sign of increased water productivity. In practically all crops monitored**, water productivity increased** thanks to better irrigation technologies, practices and prognostics, and improved farming practices (see example below). Increased water productivity came about through a mix of water, soil, crop and land management practices, and in some areas was closely linked to improved water quality and availability and required a close look at pollution, salinity and water sourcing issues.

CAUTO RIVER BASIN: At the Farm "El Palmar" (CCS René Muñoz), corn yields increased from 0.9 to 1.9 t $ha^{-1}$ and the productivity of water improved from a target of 3740 $m^3$ $t^{-1}$ to an achieved value of 2690 $m^3$ $t^{-1}$ thanks to:

- ✓ the installation of new irrigation systems;
- ✓ the monitoring of water quality to inform producers;
- ✓ on-site training for producers in corn and onion planting technologies and improved water management techniques;
- ✓ the use of high-yield certified seed varieties for maize;
- ✓ crop rotations;
- ✓ land preparation under the concept of minimum tillage;
- ✓ incorporation of crop residues and green manures into the soil;
- ✓ eliminating the use of fire; and
- ✓ increased area planted with fruit trees

175. As shown in Annex VI, the most consistent trends in water productivity were observed in Guantánamo-Maisi, where year on year, increasingly less water was needed to produce the same tonne of maize, sweet potato or plantain, and from 2019 onwards, water productivity levels surpassed by far the targets set for each crop. The strongest fluctuations were observed in Havana-Matanzas (Mayabeque), the only area where a number of water productivity targets were not met, yet overall trends for maize, rice, potato and plantain were positive and showed important reductions in water use with respect to baseline levels (the only exception being malanga, or taro).

176. Data analysis by the evaluator differs from calculations made by the project team regarding percentage reductions in water use. In all cases, reductions occurred though to a greater extent according to the evaluator. Using water productivity values reported to UNEP between 2018 and 2021 (Annex VI), the evaluator noted water savings as low as 1% and as high as 88.4%.

| |
|---|
| **Pinar del Río:** Values[11] for tobacco, rice, maize and beans oscillated between **23% and 51%** with water savings consistently improving each year for all crops, except beans. |
| **Cauto River Basin:** Water productivity for maize, rice and plantain was measured from 2019 onwards, and as of 2020, reported values[12] **47.5% - 67.5%** lower than baseline. |
| **Guantánamo-Maisí:** The main crops were plantain, sweet potato and maize, all of which showed increasing water productivity with time, expressed as reductions[13] in water use that went from **9.8% to 88.4%,** with the best results obtained in 2021. |
| **Havana-Matanzas plains:** A wider range of crops was monitored in the Artemisa and Mayabeque Provinces, including potato and malanga as key staple crops. While fluctuations were high in this region, water productivity did increase in a number of cases, with reductions[14] in water use ranging from **1% to 74.4%** compared to the baseline. |

177. Considering only 2021 results for each crop, Annex VI shows how across all intervention areas, the same tonne of maize required 35% to 88.4% less water with respect to the baseline, while rice required 35.75% to 67.5% less water to produce one tonne, and potato needed 20.54% to 66.55% less water than before. To take a concrete example, in the period 2012-2016, water consumption at the CCS "Hermes Rondón" (Cauto River Basin) was 68,349 million $m^3$ over two campaigns (cold period and spring) yet once IWRM actions were implemented, consumption levels in the period 2017-2019 went down to 32,093 million $m^3$ over the two campaigns. Table 8 below provides examples of the types of water and land management measures applied at the farm level, and their corresponding results.

Table 8: Types of water and land management measures applied in farms.

| **Measure** (examples) | **Result** (demonstration farms) |
|---|---|
| Modernization of 3 continuous flow surface irrigation systems with 3 pulse irrigation systems. | 19% average increase in water use efficiency.<br>42% reduction in the volume water used to produce one tonne of produce (water productivity) |

[11] The project team calculated water savings between 8% and 46% for the demonstration sites of Pinar del Rio.
[12] The project team calculated water savings between 20% and 60% for the demonstration sites of the Cauto River Basin.
[13] The project team calculated water savings between 5% and 70% for the demonstration sites of Guantánamo-Maisí.
[14] The project team calculated water savings between 0.98% and 50% for the demonstration sites of the Havana-Matanzas Plains.

| **Measure** (examples) | **Result** (demonstration farms) |
|---|---|
| Substitution of a continuous flow surface irrigation system for a semi-stationary sprinkler system or a localized drip system. | 25% - 30% increase in water use efficiency.<br>46% reduction in the volume water used to produce one tonne of produce (water productivity) |
| Levelling and smoothing of rice fields | 47% savings in irrigation water, reduced to 2699 m3 for the production of one ton of rice. |
| Dry-puddling as a rice field soil preparation technique apt for saline soils. Maintenance and cleaning of drainage channels for increased irrigation efficiency. | One farm: Rice yields (6.4 t $ha^{-1}$) and water productivity (2425.4 $m^3$ $t^{-1}$) rose compared to previous years (4.5 t $ha^{-1}$ and 8430.1 $m^3$ $t^{-1}$). Another farm: rice yields rose from 3.6 to 4.3 t $ha^{-1}$ and water productivity from the proposed goal of 5587 $m^3$ $t^{-1}$ to 3061 $m^3$ $t^{-1}$. |

178. To make water use more efficient (Output 3.2) and achieve increases in water productivity, there was a clear need to invest in the installation, maintenance and evaluation of irrigation systems and water metres. This was a central part of the technical assistance and training provided to farmers and productive units (cooperatives and state companies). In two intervention areas (Havana-Matanzas Plains and Cauto River Basin), it was also necessary to address contamination sources that were affecting water quality for both irrigation and human consumption. In these areas, improved large-scale water management was a prerequisite for improving water productivity in individual farms and crops. Linked to this was the need for monitoring and the availability of fresh data for decision-making.

179. In Havana-Matanzas, much of this work targeted a particular water governance mechanism embodied in the Güines Community of Irrigators (Mayabeque), as well as the water demands, irrigation systems and swine production facilities of the Güira de Melena Agricultural State Company (Artemisa).

The **Güines Community of Irrigators** is a unique community-based organization that dates from 1884. At the time, the area's growing demand for water and the unplanned construction of ditches drove the need to organize irrigation shifts to avoid conflicts over water. This initiative gave rise to the first organization of water users in Cuba (and Latin America), a milestone for the involvement of civil society in water management in Cuba.

The Güines Community of Irrigators administrates its own irrigation system; it meets annually with the State Company for Water Use of Mayabeque to organize the Community's water balance based on its various crops and productive modalities, and weekly with its own producers to plan and validate daily water needs. This Community benefitted from a modernised office and register of water users, demands and charges that can now be more readily corroborated with the State Company.

The **Güira de Melena Agricultural State Company** encompasses an area of 7977.72 ha, which represents approximately 45% of the Güira de Melena municipality. Its agricultural activity (mostly potato, plantain, vegetables, beans, cassava, rice, sweet potato, fruit trees, as well as livestock) depends on the water supplied by the Pedroso Mamposton Hydraulic Complex, of which the Company administrates 3 of its 8 regulating reservoirs.

For over three years, the water demand of the Güira de Melena Agricultural State Company had not included surface water from the Hydraulic Complex due to serious deficiencies in its water distribution and irrigation infrastructure. Instead, the Company extracted groundwater for irrigation purposes and was unknowingly increasing saltwater

intrusion into the region's coastal aquifer, and contributing to the salinization of soils and water sources.

The project prompted the maintenance and repair of 5 km of irrigation canals, together with the training of Company directors and technicians on the Water Balance methodology, and the formulation of a renewed water demand that integrated surface waters. This ultimately reduced pressures on the aquifer and reduced its overexploitation by 4,664 million $m^3$.

180. Outcome 3 Indicator 4: This indicator is directly related to Output 3.4 which delivered the "**upscaling** of the [SLM] management model to new geographical areas". Compared to the baseline of 83 farms left by P1, the total number of sites applying SLM and the monitoring of water-related land degradation processes reportedly rose to 141 after P2. This is **significantly above the target value of 100 farms** (by 41%) and includes sites in Camagüey Province, outside the project's intervention areas (Table 9). This increment of 58 sites comprises a mix of individual farms and cooperatives (see Annex VI), so in practice is much greater, as each cooperative represents a conglomerate of farms. The majority (almost half) of replication sites are located in the Havana-Matanzas Plains, the heart of Cuba's agricultural sector. The greater part (69%) is catalogued as "demonstration polygons" by MINAG for the conservation of soils, water and forests, making them also valuable for onward replication.

Table 9: Replication sites in project intervention areas.

| Area | Replication sites (# and % of total) | Polygons (# and % of area's repl. sites) |
|---|---|---|
| Pinar del Rio | 9 (15.5%) | 8 (88.9%) |
| Havana-Matanzas | 26 (44.8%) | 12 (46.2%) |
| Cauto River Basin | 13 (22.4%) | 13 (100%) |
| Guantánamo-Maisí | 7 (12.1%) | 5 (71.4%) |
| Camagüey | 3 (5.2%) | 2 (66.7%) |
| Total | 58 new replication sites | 40 polygons that replicate |

181. Different project reports show different values for this indicator (either 141 or 120): the evaluator summed 120 sites (83 + 37) from the project's 2016-2021 periodic reports, yet the project team confirmed the total as 141 sites (83 + 58), which is the value being recognised in this TE. It is worth noting that the indicator's reference to "*demonstration farms* that replicate…" may have given rise to an interpretation in favour of *polygons* that replicate, even though there are a number of non-polygon sites included in this important result. It is also possible that the indicator's emphasis on replicating the model for "monitoring water-related land degradation processes" may have meant the exclusion of SLM replication sites that do not yet monitor water resources. In either case, the performance of this indicator is still highly commendable and provides clear evidence of **successful up-scaling of the SLM model with an emphasis on water**. This entailed aiming first-and-foremost at already designated polygons, as the "low hanging fruit", but in areas

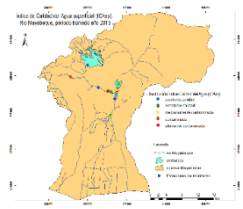
such as the Havana-Matanzas Plains, also involved uptake in farms and cooperatives without a prior track record of good practices to address land degradation.

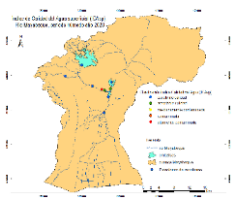
182. Outcome 3 Indicator 5: This indicator measured the number of plans that were prepared "for water use in agricultural production that incorporate consumption indices per unit of production or service". The target was to have nine such updated plans, one for each project Province, and was **fully met** (1 Guantanamo-Maisí, 1 Pinar del Rio, 3 Havana-Matanzas Plains, and 4 Cauto River Basin). These plans now consider the updated water consumption standards for each crop, according to specific soil-climate conditions.

183. Outcome 3 Indicator 6: In the Havana-Matanzas Plains and Cauto River Basin, water quality monitoring was considerably strengthened and in addition to salinity issues, served to address contamination problems from **pig farming operations**. This indicator accounts for the management plans that resulted from this work and aims to show that applying a comprehensive management model and monitoring of IWRM / SLM is a way to improve water quality, and hence, water productivity (Outcome 3). The target, which was to have two comprehensive management plans to reduce aquifer contamination across the southern strip of the Havana-Matanzas Plains and increase the availability of good quality water for human and animal consumption in the Cauto River Basin, was **accomplished**.

184. In the Artemisa Province, specifically the Güira de Melena municipality, the project led to the development of a comprehensive management plan to remedy, reduce and halt the pollution of waterways resulting from mismanaged **piggery waste** from the UEB "Camilo Cienfuegos". This entailed the dredging of lagoons by INRH and the installation of a small-scale biodigester, among other measures. An integrated management plan was similarly prepared for the Swine Breeding UEB "Los Báez" to reduce the pollution load reaching the aquifer. In the Cauto River Basin, it is unclear whether a comprehensive management plan was drawn up, but reports speak of *action plans* for the cleaning, maintenance and monitoring of water wells for human consumption aimed at the populations of CCS "Cuba Va" and CCS "René Muñoz" and the installation of a biodigester in CCS "Cuba Va" and a rainwater harvesting system for the Blanca Rosa community (Majibacoa municipality) to increase water availability for 22 homes (88 people). Table 10 shows how the monitoring of organic matter pollutants at nine stations along the Mayabeque River (Havana-Matanzas) helped to confirm that measures taken together with the porcine production units had indeed improved the Surface Water Quality Index.

Table 10: Monitoring of surface water quality in the Mayabeque River





| **2015** Surface Water Quality Index | |
|---|---|
| 3 stations contaminated | 3 |
| 3 stations acceptable | 3 |
| 3 stations excellent quality | 3 |
| **2020** Surface Water Quality Index | |
| 1 stations contaminated | 1 |
| 2 stations acceptable | 2 |
| 6 stations excellent quality | 6 |

*UNEP SLM Portfolio Review:*

185. *Responsiveness to Gender Equity* **Question 3. (d):** ***To what extent did the success of the project depend on gender equity and/or considerations of gender roles? Were there any particular innovations the project was able to achieve in addressing gender equity?*** Gender considerations were integrated into the project, especially in site-based interventions, and efforts were made to be inclusive and ensure equitable opportunities to participate in project activities. In many cases, this meant convincing both farmers and their wives of the benefits of increasing female participation, and actively motivating women to get involved, learn, and take a hands-on approach. The ways in which the project was gender-sensitive are recorded through bulletins, television spots and news stories, but lack quantification. The project has one Outcome indicator that accounts for the "equitable engagement of women, men and disadvantaged social groups, taking into account their different roles and their different concerns". As shown above, it measures the number of producers and water managers, in each intervention area, that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water.

186. The project highlighted the **role of women** (Figure 12), showing how SLM offered opportunities for women to strengthen their role as social actors, and for families to work together to achieve transformative changes. Still, the success of the project at the farm level was not dependent on gender equity and/or the considerations of gender roles. Rather, it was accentuated by good examples in certain intervention areas of female leadership and entrepreneurship in agriculture and food processing, and by the recognition that lasting change is best achieved when supported by all family pillars. In the **project management** arena, openness to gender equity meant that several project coordinators, at the central and local level, were women and contributed directly to the project's progress and impact. Even if the project did not set out to address gender equity, it did serve as a reminder that it is important to value and showcase the role of women.


Figure 12: Informative material on the role of women in SLM.

187. *Responsiveness to Human Rights:* **Question 3. (e):** ***Did the project address human rights and human wellbeing (e.g. access to land and resources, human health, rights to healthy environment)?*** The project addressed human rights issues in effective and often subtle ways. In its design, the project was careful in its consideration of land tenure issues,

making sure to include a diversity of tenure models in its selection of demonstration sites, in order to be representative of Cuba's prevalent agricultural land rights schemes.

188. Additionally, issues relating to human health, the right to a healthy environment, women's rights, and human wellbeing can all be identified in the stories that derive from project intervention areas. Beneficiaries (farmers and territorial specialists) will readily name the benefits, to themselves and to others, brought about by the adoption of SLM practices and the support of the project, even if they do not articulate them as gains in individual or collective rights. Some of the positive changes, prompted by P2, identified in relation to human rights and wellbeing, are:

- Food sovereignty and food diversification are recognized as one of the main social benefits associated with SLM, in addition to economic and environmental benefits.
- Agrochemical-free agricultural production is recognised to generate crops of better nutritional quality in addition to being safer for farmers and wildlife.
- Biogas production, as a way to reduce or avoid the contamination of surface and groundwaters and soils caused by pig farming operations, has improved water quality and provided an energy source for local producers.
- The transition to mixed farming and agroforestry systems in production units applying SLM means that producers who are officially recognised for their SLM efforts, are able to sign supply provisioning contracts with the government to offer fruit and vegetables to children and schools for a healthier diet, with some even providing directly to the most vulnerable populations to reduce their nutritional deficit.
- Upholding women's rights and highlighting the role of women as agents of change are seen as key to the promotion of SLM and its participatory approaches and serve as inspiration for other women to join the agricultural sector, become entrepreneurs or specialise in relevant technical disciplines.
- "Living off the land" under a SLM approach offers viable livelihood options and prospects for growth and employment that are attractive to all family members, young and old, men and women. Farm-based SLM for sustainable local development can help keep families together and improve their wellbeing, making it possible to mitigate and, in some cases, even reverse the tendency to migrate elsewhere in search for better opportunities.

189. **Question 4. (b):** ***How were project partners who stood out as champions supported and empowered? Were the best partnerships leveraged (and also sustained, both in terms of the project, and in terms of UNEP's network toward SLM)?*** The answers to these questions bring forth two key performance factors that contributed to the project's successes, and that can be catalogued as best practice when seeking to ensuring lasting changes for SLM. One is *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* and the other is *Country ownership and Driven-ness,* which in this case are interwoven.

190. Project champions consist of both project staff and beneficiaries, and both groups were given due recognition for successful performance. Project staff were supported through regular dialogue, reporting and monitoring by the CPP Programme Director and empowered by celebrating those with the best performance, informing superiors and communicating internally on their successes. Project beneficiaries (farmers, cooperatives and land managers) who achieved SLM based on one of three official categories (see paragraphs 219-221), were given formal recognition at public

ceremonies, which at first were carried out annually as big national events, and later began to take place locally, involving municipal and provincial authorities and local communities. The latter was an important shift, as it allowed for greater recognition amongst peers and created accessible role models, while also amplifying SLM more widely and locally.

191. **SLM champions** were also given tribune through the production of documentaries and TV interviews, the organization of special meetings and exchanges with Ministers, and the listing of their farms as "demonstration polygons" where students from universities, technical colleges and schools came to learn about sustainable agriculture, IWRM and SLM. Altogether, these have been empowering experiences that have contributed to the successful uptake and upscaling of SLM across project intervention areas and beyond.

192. For this project, it is safe to say that the **best partnerships** were indeed leveraged and have not only remained in place but have strengthened over time. Government institutions are working together, rather than in silos, and have created **new institutionality** for the implementation of SLM. In Cuba this is understood to entail a "Country Partnership" (*Asociación de País*) as per the Programme's name. Soils, water, environment, land planning, education, finance, all have a role in this SLM institutionality and have made the best use of Cuba's complex institutional architecture and its territorial expressions for SLM to permeate as far as possible into Cuban society. The project achieved local reach effectively, based on existing territorial representations and institutional hierarchies, social organization (cooperatives, water bodies and associations) and mutually supportive inter-institutional relations. Territorial governance was strengthened in this way in project intervention areas, and SLM consolidated as a management model that is responsive to Cuba's social and environmental needs.

## Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Likely

193. The project can demonstrate significant progress along its three main results pathways, beyond its Outcomes. The project complied fully with its Objective by focusing on both water resources and the use of novel data for SLM. **All Objective indicators targets were either met or exceeded**.

**P2 Objective** (revised): To strengthen the sustainable management of water resources and the coordination and use of information and monitoring systems, based on an SLM approach.

Indicators: 1. # Methodologies for SLM adjusted (*or adopted*)
2. # Agreements by Scientific Councils (*signed*)
3. # Development programs that take decisions on the basis of updated information

194. In addition to a pre-existing 'Manual for SLM' (baseline), at least **three methodologies** for the efficient use of water in SLM were needed (Objective Indicator 1) to accompany the adjustments made to the irrigation regulations. The result was **five** new and revised methodologies (procedures, manuals and technical guidelines focusing on irrigation systems and practices, drainage systems, conservation agriculture, and agricultural 'polygons') produced through P2, above the baseline of one.

195. To support inter-institutional coordination and information sharing, **three 'agreements'** were expected from the Scientific Councils of key institutions, namely: IAgric, INSMET

and INICA in representation of AZCuba (Objective Indicator 2). Ultimately, different types of agreements emerged from a wider array of institutions than anticipated, involving both national and municipal entities. Although only five agreements are reported, project documentation and reports attest to a total of **15 agreements**, including the following:

- ✓ two agreements (or endorsements) by the Scientific Councils of IAgric and INICA that pledge support to SLM and the CPP Programme;
- ✓ five Cooperation Agreements between AMA and other SLM competent authorities, namely: IAgric, MINAG (both the General Directorate of Agricultural Engineering, and the Directorate of Soils and Fertilizers), INRH (through EIPHH), and IPF; and
- ✓ three other Cooperation Agreements with (i) the Municipal Assembly of the Popular Power of Consolación del Sur for work in Pinar del Rio; (ii) the University of Camaguey for work towards the SLM Master's degree; and (iii) the "Manglar Vivo" project (implemented by UNDP, executed by AMA and financed by the Adaptation Fund) for synergies in common areas of intervention (Artemisa and Mayabeque provinces).

196. The project also expected to show 'development programmes' incorporating SLM principles into their plans. Objective Indicator 3 named **four programmes** (including one as baseline) that, as a result of the project, would benefit from updated SLM information for decision-making. The project accounted for three such programmes, as a mix of national policies, strategies and programmes linked to sustainable development that either used SLM information or prompted competent authorities to do so:

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| The **National Programme for Soil Conservation and Improvement (NPSCI)** of MINAG was upgraded with fresh data and new regulatory instruments that operationalise SLM, as was the **National Hydraulic Development Programme** of MINAG. |
| SLM priorities were also mainstreamed into the **State Plan for Confronting Climate Change** (known as "Tarea Vida" or Life Task), launched in 2017, which has water, drought and coastal areas as key concerns. |

197. There is evidence that, by taking advantage of the attention the CPP Programme was receiving from the **banking sector**, P2 and P3 achieved ahead of time a result that was expected only with P3. This achievement was noted by the evaluator at the Objective level and esteemed to be associable to Objective Indicator 3 referring to "development programmes that take decisions on the basis of updated information". Thanks to joint efforts between P2 and P3, BANDEC now uses SLM data in its decision-making regarding loans for the agricultural sector. The bank recognises producers who are committed to SLM as worthy of preferential credit rates (2% lower) and has an alliance with AMA to facilitate access to loans and increase coverage for such producers. Thus, the evaluator considers that the uptake of SLM information by the banking sector can be counted together with the consideration of SLM by other 'development programmes' under Objective indicator 3. This addition replaces the only programme, as per the indicator, that was seemingly not influenced by the project: National Action Programme for Integrated Management of Hydrographical Basins and Coastal Areas.

198. ***Country Ownership and Driven-ness:*** The adoption during P2 of **cooperation agreements** between AMA and other key entities was a significant and novel step aimed at consolidating inter-institutional ties and commitments to the CPP Programme (and ultimately to SLM in general). It also served to clarify areas of competency under SLM and ensure institutional co-financing for P2. The variety and large number of such

agreements are indications that SLM was achieving high-level support from government entities that are essential for driving change processes forward along the TOC's causal pathways (from Outputs to Outcomes and onto Intermediate states). Likewise with the development programmes that were influenced by the project and whose institutions show a high degree of acceptance of project results, as well as forward-looking provisions for SLM, and a catalytic effect after venturing into the realm of financial incentives. The close involvement and leadership of a number of different sectors was a key factor of success. The strong country ownership and driven-ness demonstrated by Cuba over the project's Outputs and Outcomes is an assurance that the desired long-term impact is likely to be realised.

199. As shown in the revised TOC, the project expected to achieve three Intermediate States and, at the CPP Programme level, contribute to three higher Outcomes and two Intermediate Objectives. This was based on the Objective-level assumption that the Government of Cuba would continue to show interest and willingness to mainstream and implement SLM principles to land use and production. This assumption without a doubt held true, as the government's "interest and willingness" was not only maintained but expanded into novel sectors. In consequence, there is ample evidence that supports the realization of the project's Intermediate States, and the contributions made to the CPP's Intermediate Objectives.

| P2 Intermediate States |
|---|
| 1. Partner institutions disseminate and upscale SLM principles into their land management plans and regulatory framework |
| 2. Expanded knowledge base available and accessible for planning and decision making |
| 3. Stakeholders implement plans and development programs that properly deal with threats and barriers to adoption of SLM. |

| CPP Intermediate Objectives |
|---|
| 1. National capacity for integrated SLM is established, ensuring inter-sectoral coordination and effective land management. |
| 2. Field level demonstrations of sustainable land management practices have halted, prevented and remedied land degradation in critical landscapes, and produced models for replication. |

200. The project adopted the CPP's Goal and Purpose (Intended Impact) as its own, which is consistent with its insertion into a wider programme. Reaching the CPP Goal requires proof that "ecosystem productivity and functions" are, at least, being maintained thanks to SLM. This is precisely what is now being measured and monitored at specific sites, as a result of the capacities, tools and methodologies that were developed and promoted by the project, and the information that is being generated, periodically and collegially.

**CPP Goal:** Cuba has the capacities and conditions for sustainably managing land in a manner that contributes to maintaining ecosystem productivity and functions.

201. At project sites, a number of testimonies attest to the summated impacts of the project in terms of agro-ecosystem health, whereby soil health and biodiversity indicators are recognised as necessary aspects of SLM, as much as agricultural productivity itself. The following quote from farmers provide examples of this:

*"The farm had very low productivity, a lot of erosion, but with SLM practices, such as living fences, organic matter for soil conservation, reducing water loss and drag, the water now filters through, before it just ran. I have corn, beans, tomato, and can now plant potatoes with a very good yield. The farm has become profitable."*

*"Before, it was a tradition to burn the crop stubble. Farmers were taught to integrate it into the soil instead. After applying sludge with minimum tillage, soil nutrients quadrupled. Economic savings were obtained alongside environmental benefits."*

202. The likelihood that the project's (and the CPP's) Purpose /Intended Impact will be reached is very high. The Drivers that support the transition from P2 Intermediate States to the CPP's Purpose /Intended Impact were all in place and favoured the achievement of lasting results in this project. Importantly, the project's impact was felt as much by beneficiary institutions, through gains in operational capacity, knowhow and appropriate frameworks, as by farmers and local communities, who gained skills, social standing, income and resiliency, and diversified their production for improved food security.

**CPP Purpose** (equated with P2's Intended Impact)**:** Reduced land degradation will allow Cuba to achieve its goals for sustainable development and increased food security.

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203. **Question 3. (a):** ***What was the level/nature of the practitioner-scientist interface?*** This interface was observed to be high and particularly strategic for this project. Exploiting this interface was in fact intended, as the use of water and climate data, the modernisation of water and soil monitoring systems, the strengthening of geographical information systems, closer interactions between farmers and technical experts, and science-based education and training, were integral to the project's design. This was in fact reaffirmed, as part of this TE, when the TOC was revised and three Drivers were identified, one of which highlights the opportunity that this practitioner-scientist interface represents:

| |
|---|
| Driver 1: Cuba's high level of technical sophistication, available expertise and local knowledge is leveraged towards the adoption of SLM and IWRM practices. |

204. Cuba having a high level of technical knowhow meant that SLM and IWRM decisions had the potential of being **strongly science-based.** Such decisions could take into account the huge wealth of government and academic expertise regarding soil, water, forests and crop management available in Cuba, as well as knowledge of the climatic conditions and variability expected for the island. Findings suggest that Driver 1 was indeed key to the project's success, and a critical factor in driving change processes forward (along causal pathways). Scientific and technical knowledge was not only applied in the field in a productive context and shared with farmers and cooperatives, it was also vital for competent authorities to expand their capacity for water resource management, data management and inter-institutional coordination. It was taken up by universities and educational centres for integration into various curricula (school, technical, graduate and post-graduate).

205. The use of science, and the participation of technical specialists, extensionists and academics, was therefore central to the project, as was the promotion of dialogue with local producers and the incorporation of their knowledge and knowhow into the SLM measures that were promoted. Creating a strong practitioner-scientist interface and a multi-disciplinary approach not only gave technical validity and content to the different instruments, tools, maps and even policies and regulations that were created, but also increased their social and institutional uptake.

206. **Question 4. (a):** ***Did the project focus on the most degraded areas or areas of high value (in terms of its global importance and human dependence)? How much of the degraded land has been improved (was it measured in ha)?*** The project did indeed focus on the most degraded areas, those already evidencing advanced levels of desertification, and areas of high productive and demonstrative value that presented deficiencies in water management. In this way, the four selected interventions areas ensured a representative spread across the country, and also applied *Environmental and Social safeguard* principles.

207. The CPP Programme Document states: *The intervention areas are among those prioritized in the National Plan of Action for Combat of Desertification Drought, as suffering from particularly severe problems of land degradation. The 5 areas eventually defined were selected as covering a wide diversity of geographical, climatic and land use conditions and suffering from a wide diversity of land degradation processes, thereby maximizing their replication potential.*

208. In this water-centred project, the focus was on semi-arid regions and regions subject to extreme weather events, such as droughts, cyclones and floods, Cuba's central plains that are subject to saltwater intrusion, and one of the country's most modified and hydrologically important basins. Specific sites were then selected based on their demonstrative potential or as a continuation of efforts initiated by the preceding P1.

209. At these sites, the project provided a scenario for the piloting of IWRM and SLM best practices as effective models for the sustainable management of natural resources. A snowball effect then led to a number of replication sites emerging, first in project intervention areas and later in other provinces. A total of **6897.47 ha** across both demonstration and replication sites are reported as **applying SLM measures** with emphasis on improved **water** management. Of these, 2,956 (43%) have been recognised as "initiated in SLM", with one farm reaching the "advanced" category. At these sites, SLM indicators are pointing to increases in agro-diversity and wildlife, yields, and efficiency in water management, all of which contribute to the wellbeing of local communities.

210. **Question 3. (c):** ***Are there any particular innovations and best practices coming from the project? How is UNEP sharing these? Was the project connected to any networks (e.g. WOCAT[15]) and knowledge management platforms for sharing? Were there any gaps or potentials in innovation not realized?*** There is a great deal of best practice and innovation coming from this project. This was observed both in natural resource management and project management, though below, only those associated with natural resources and SLM are described. (Best practices associated with project management are described in sections for this sub-criterion). The answers given below are relevant to the project's

[15] WOCAT (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies) is a global network on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) that promotes the documentation, sharing and use of knowledge to support adaptation, innovation and decision-making in SLM. https://www.wocat.net/en/

impact, as they describe key success factors and account for the considerable progress made by the project along its causal pathways. These answers also show how the project responded to the certain evaluation criteria, namely: *Communication and Public awareness; Stakeholder participation and Cooperation*; and *Country ownership and Drivenness*.

Innovations:

211. By means of the project, **water productivity** was introduced as a novel indicator for Cuba, to measure water use efficiency in agriculture - i.e. crop yield as a function of water use. This variable is usually expressed as production (crop weight) per cubic metre of water consumption though in Cuba, it is expressed inversely, as the volume of water used (m3) per tonne of agricultural produce. Decreasing values are thus a sign of increasing water productivity.

212. Until the project, this indicator was not applied in Cuba; now, it is regularly monitored by the competent authority, and is serving as a yardstick for producers (and provinces) to reduce their "**water footprint**". As a precursor to this, it was necessary to introduce water meters on a number of farms and digitalise water use records, in order to measure, track and charge for actual water consumption, as opposed to going by projected estimates. Prior to these changes, which are now being upscaled, water balance calculations by the competent authority were estimative and it was common for farmers to bare **unnecessary costs**, paying in full for water concessions even if they only utilized a fraction of the volumes granted.

213. The introduction of **new irrigation techniques and technologies**, combined with better **maintenance** of existing irrigation and drainage systems, was at the core of technical assistance to water managers. This included tackling water pollution and salinity problems and served to modernize water management in agriculture and highlight its importance. This in itself was innovative for many farmers, who had not previously experienced significant improvements in crop yields and quality, or in water quality, simply by introducing new equipment and sustainable water management practices. All of this, summed with climate-smart and sustainable agriculture techniques and ecosystem-based adaptation measures at the farm level, has led to significant increases in water productivity in practically all of the project's demonstration and replication sites.

214. Other innovations relate to the **modernization of monitoring systems**, through the acquisition of new equipment, tools and means of transport that now allow natural resource managers to better track provincial water use, needs and quality. Supporting the operations of biophysical monitoring networks was key, as it allowed fresh data to be obtained and to prompt the development of data sharing mechanisms, including mobile applications and a platform that facilitates the exchange of SLM data and information, considering both exchange with the general public, and exchange between competent authorities.

215. The **improved use of weather prognostics and soil data**, through the development of two novel digital tools, also proved strategic for farmers. One allows farmers to receive regular guidance, from the competent authority, on when and when not to irrigate, based on rainfall predictions, crop types, irrigation technique, and soil moisture calculations. The other is a mobile phone application that acts as an early warning system to prepare for extreme weather events (cyclones and drought periods) and uses rainfall predictions to aid farmers to better programme their activities (planting, harvesting, grass-cutting,

etc.). Both of these tools have been well received and represent an innovation in terms of how government agencies provide public services and interact with their user groups.

216. A further **mobile phone application** was also developed by the MINAG as a geo-referenced tool to assist in decision-making. Once the data sets for over 15 variables (soil type, agro-productivity, salinity, drainage, etc.) were digitalised and introduced into Geographic Information Systems (GIS), agrochemical laboratories were also required to digitalize their records and begin using mobile phone-based geo-referencing when taking samples. This means that biophysical, hydrologic, climatic, economic and social data are now available, digitally on the go, for over 200 sites covering > 200,000 hectares (and counting). These datasets, which are monitored and updated annually, are not only relevant to farmers and government specialists, but also for investment decisions and territorial planning, as they facilitate the identification, and hence protection, of the most productive agricultural areas.

217. In the policy arena, there have also been a number of important innovations that have prompted **catalytic results**, beyond the duration and scope of the project, and have served to institutionalise SLM to a strong degree. One is the concession by the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH), the competent authority for water resource management, of **reduced fares** for farmers who decrease water usage significantly, corroborated through the installation of water meters on their farms. This economic incentive, born from synergies with P3, shows how P2 delivered results beyond its initial scope.

218. The other is the **official recognition by AMA of three SLM categories** as 'prime' land management categories. For this, a graded award scheme was set-up that grants sites an official recognition if able to demonstrate that they are "initiated in SLM", "advanced in SLM" or fully "applying SLM". Resolution 6/2017 of AMA (see below) specifies the minimum requirements that applicant sites need to meet for each category. The productive units that achieve these categories are prioritised for entry into forestry and soil conservation **incentive programmes**, in order to receive financing from the FONADEF and conservation paybacks (reimbursements) from the NPSCI that cover the costs of the measures implemented.


Figure 13: Diploma awarded to the Tierra Brava Farm upon reaching the "advanced" SLM category.

**Article 4 of Resolution 6/2017:**

A. *Initiated* in Sustainable Land Management. The site:

a) demonstrates progress in the application of at least 50% of the measures contained in its Land Management Plan.

b) does not apply burning without authorization from the CGB.

c) does not apply felling except if planned and duly authorized under forestry legislation.

d) does not pollute inland waters (underground and surface) and coastal marine waters.

e) practices wastewater management.

f) applies soil conservation measures.
g) has increased crop species diversity.

B. *Advanced* in Sustainable Land Management. The site:
a) has attained the "initiated" in SLM category.
b) has fulfilled 50 to 75% of the measures contained in its Land Management Plan.
c) has begun to eliminate 100% of the anthropic factors that gave rise to its degradation.
d) applies at least 75% of the measures provided for in the NPSCI.

C. *Applying* Sustainable Land Management. The site:
a) fulfils more than 75% of the measures contained in its Land Management Plan.
b) has eliminated the anthropic factors that gave rise to its degradation.
c) has achieved positive impacts in at least two of each group of SLM indicators, defined in the SLM Methodology.
d) applies 100% of the measures provided for in the NPSCI.

219. The number of sites (and hectares) listed in the "initiated" category grew progressively during P2. Even though it was not measured as a project indicator, it is certainly equivalent to an impact indicator and shows a rising interest in achieving these categories. Annex VI lists all the sites (16) that achieved an SLM category with assistance from P2, which sum **2956.55 ha.** The CPP Programme team derived a lesson learnt from this experience, in recognition of the scheme's innovative value:

Lesson learnt #25 (2020): *The official recognition of sites that apply sustainable land management contributes to their future sustainability.*

Never before in Cuba had an international project led to an "official recognition" that could so clearly show how its objectives were being achieved on the ground. The sustainability factor of passing a Resolution for each SLM recognition was highly valued, as it gives this 'SLM seal' permanence and farmers who achieve the first category ("initiated") usually remain committed to continue advancing onto the following categories, all of which are subject to state verification. Figure 13 shows the diploma awarded to the only farm (Tierra Brava, in Pinar del Rio) that during P2 reached the "advanced" category and that has since attained the "fully applying SLM" category.

220. While this recognition scheme is not strictly a **certification mechanism**, it functions *de facto* as one and is accompanied by technical assistance from the state, in addition to economic incentives, to guide land managers, producers and productive units towards sustainability. The ultimate aims in achieving these 'prime' land management categories are to promote sustainable development and human wellbeing and to produce food without degrading ecosystems, and as far as possible, by regenerating them.

221. Encompassed within this is the aim of reconciling productive land uses with conservation objectives, as is well exemplified by the Hatibonico Ecological Reserve, in Guantanamo Province, that in June 2022 became the **first protected area** to attain recognition as "initiated in SLM". Even if this result is not exclusive to P2, as it initiated with P1, it is certainly innovative, as much in Cuba as elsewhere, given the precedent it is

setting and the message it confers regarding agricultural and forestry production within protected area boundaries.

222. The recognition of SLM categories and their sustainable production modalities has transcended into the **banking sector**, and is now permeating into the **insurance sector** too, thanks to the continuity afforded by CPP P3. It is now possible for SLM-recognised producers to access preferential credit rates with Cuba's Bank of Credit and Commerce (BANDEC), as well as better insurance options with Cuba's National Insurance Company (ESEN). This is not just innovative in Cuba but truly a breakthrough, as agricultural insurance is in itself a novelty, not least when state-supported, aimed at climate resilience, and accompanied by the possibility of cheaper loans for producers who mainstream sustainability. In addition, the SLM recognition scheme has given rise to the ambitious goal (taken up by P3) of achieving international certification in SLM, which would be an innovation for Cuba and the world.

223. Lastly, authorising a local sales point for SLM products, in the Province of Pinar del Río, for farmers to sell locally and directly to communities was novel. This small yet innovative step is valuing the role of **private actors** in the food supply and value chains. To achieve this, alliances were established with the local government, political organizations, institutions of the municipality of Los Palacios, MINAG, BANDEC and CITMA.

Best practice:

224. Best practice can be found in the **SLM procedural manual** that was developed for and by the CPP as the conceptual and methodological basis for applying SLM at the farm level. This manual was put together as a guide for carrying out site-based scientific assessments, based on FAO's LADA tool, and for preparing SLM management plans at the farm level. It has since formed the basis for Cuba's SLM recognition scheme, similar to a certification mechanism, that grants an official recognition to sites that are applying SLM measures to varying degrees. It is also the basis for a number of ecosystem-based adaptation measures, even if these are not labelled as such.

225. There is also best practice in the way producers who achieve any of the SLM categories are given **public recognition** and encouragement. Using large public events and media channels to showcase SLM sites that have been granted official recognition has served to reinforce the importance of farmers and agriculture for Cuba's sustainable development, especially its food sovereignty and climate resilience. These farmers are shown as true "SLM champions" who not only produce more and better with less, but also gain social standing as community leaders and role models.

226. In this project, **state support has been consistent, coherent, and integral.** Several SLM facets are being supported and stimulated directly by the Cuban state, with different competent authorities assisting with the technical, political, social, economic and financial aspects of SLM. Delivering SLM integrally is undoubtedly a best practice and has allowed the Cuban state to achieve significant results at scale. Below are a number of examples of how integration can drive SLM implementation.

227. **Information and knowledge sharing** took place intensively within Cuba, even if the project did not join specific networks (such as WOCAT) or global /regional platforms for knowledge exchange or knowledge management. This internal and intentional exchange gave rise to a 'SLM community of practice' (Output 3.5) that continues to generate,

promote and use SLM information, and increase SLM knowhow and information useability. A key to achieving this was the best practice of using multi-stakeholder participation to drive integrated land management approaches. Issues with internet access limit the extent to which Cuba can load information on web-based platforms.

228. The project promoted integrated information sharing across government institutions that, until recently, had not used the same datasets and indicators, or compiled and distributed user-oriented information based on the integration of several official sources. By building on synergies with another UNDP project (INFOGEO) and bringing together different stakeholder groups and competent authorities, **information management** is seeing fundamental changes thanks to this project. A networked approach is unfolding and evolving from paper-based datasets to digitalised and georeferenced datasets. Together, this can be seen as a precursor to an integrated and modernised environmental information management system for Cuba.

229. Another best practice example is the integrated way competent authorities managed field-based technical assistance and follow-up. For this, well-coordinated **"integrated field visits"** took place that mobilized, for each visit, experts and coordinators from different institutions and levels of government. This collegiate way of delivering technical assistance in the field and monitoring was strategic not only for more cost-effective logistics, but also for amplifying learning processes for those involved. Gaining exposure to different disciplines and technical knowhow was beneficial, plus the state was able to project a coordinated, common and coherent message on SLM to practitioners and beneficiaries (farmers, water managers and communities).

230. An integrated approach by the Cuban state also meant attending to both the **supply and demand** sides of food production systems. If the aim was to stimulate agricultural production (supply), then demand and consumption also needed looking into. A way to create a stable demand, and reap the benefits of better-quality produce, was to establish agreements between state institutions and producers committed to SLM (farmers or cooperatives) for the supply of specific food crops and value-added products, and to authorise local sales points to facilitate supply to rural communities. This implied the involvement of ANAP, ACTAF and ACPA, though the role of these institutions is the least narrated and could be made more explicit going forward. Cuba's investment in education and capacity building is also a means to continue improving the supply side. This ensures that the next generation of agronomers, extensionists, land managers and farmers, including women and youth, is able to apply SLM principles and practices in the field, and continue to raise agricultural production, increase water use efficiency, and ultimately, achieve conservation and restoration goals.

***Communication and Public awareness***

231. The project made significant efforts to produce and disseminate information on SLM and raise public awareness about the importance of water resources. Having developed an "Info-Communication Strategy" (Output 2.2), its implementation was concerned not only with generating communicational materials, and sharing technical content with specific users (e.g. weather forecasts for farmers), but also with stimulating exchanges between different groups and opening up **spaces for dialogue** and the confluence of ideas, and with enthusing key groups into taking part in the changes being promoted.

232. The Strategy states that it seeks to **stimulate participation**, "based on the real involvement of target groups in the conception, implementation and evaluation of

activities, and as a guarantee that their needs are covered". It places emphasis on horizontal and dialogic communication and recognises that exchanges needed to avoid impositions (i.e., valuing one type of knowledge or cultural expression above others) and occur "on equal terms". The effect of this, in practice, was that project communications and information sharing were managed purposefully and effectively, that inclusiveness was a strong project feature, and importantly, that key actors in SLM implementation were empowered and given due recognition for their hard work.

233. The project deliberately sought to give a **voice and visibility to "SLM champions"** around the country, with a view to motivating more farmers and communities to do similarly. For this, over 70 media-based interventions were produced and broadcast on radio, national television, local television, and international channels. Examples are:

- Radio programmes: "Teléfono Verde" and "Alborada Campesina" on provincial radio station CMKS, Guantánamo; "Hoy en las Noticias" on provincial station Radio Bayamo; and "Amar la Naturaleza" on provincial station Radio Artemisa.
- Radio spots and informative broadcasts ("Por Nosotros") transmitted through the Artemisa Radio station.
- Newscasts and reportages on TeleMayabeque and national television (e.g. reportage on the Tierra Brava farm on the "Round Table" programme, broadcast nationally).
- Programmes on provincial television channels: Granma Telecentre ("Radar"), SOLVISION channel Guantánamo-Maisí, GüiraTV channel, Educational Channel ("Ecos"), Tele Pinar ("Good Morning Pinar"), and Artv channel ("Señales")
- "Código Verde" (Green Code) series on Caribbean Channel and International Vision

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234. **Question 4. (c):** ***In what ways did the project ensure that increased scientific evidence/knowledge or capacity led to changed behaviour/decision-making (if at all)? Were the most appropriate stakeholders targeted?*** The project's TOC intended that an increase in the availability and use of scientific data and knowledge, together with capacity development, would enable changes in land management and productive practices and decision-making. For this, the most appropriate stakeholders needed to be targeted, which was indeed the case. Behaviour change has been observable at the farm level, within organised groups, and across competent authorities, backed by a number of testimonies on "before and after" SLM.

235. The evidence base for SLM is strongly empirical, or experiential, and built on years of prior studies, scientific research and technological development. Once monitoring was reinforced, datasets digitalised and updated, and technological applications deployed, scientific data and knowledge could be put to good use across project intervention areas. As farmers experienced first-hand how investing in SLM measures could increase productivity and income, climate resilience, food security, biodiversity and social empowerment, neighbouring farmers observing these changes became motivated to join the SLM community of practice in order to reap the same benefits.

236. To a degree, SLM has had a **snowball effect**, especially in areas where technical, technological or financial assistance is being provided. Decision-making has shifted now that land managers (based locally or centrally), as well as political leaders, have a more integrated notion of the various ecosystem components they are managing and their

inter-dependencies. The following impactful quotes from a farmer and government staff express this shift appropriately:


| **Rating for Effectiveness:** | **Highly Satisfactory** |
|---|---|

## E. Financial Management

### Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

237. UNEP's role as GEF Implementing Agency requires the signature of a Project Cooperation Agreement with the responsible NEA, in this case, AMA. The signatory for UNEP was the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation and the date of countersignature of the Agreement was 21 September 2015. The first cash advance, which is considered the project's operational starting date, occurred on 14 January 2016.

238. GEF projects are subject to specific due diligence processes and are implemented in line with UNEP's Partnership Policy and Procedures and the Financial Rules and Regulations of the United Nations. In this project, the UNDP Country Office (UNDP-CO) was also involved in financial management, supporting the NEA mostly with the procurement of goods and services using GEF funds. Managing the project grant within the UN system cancelled the need for annual external audits.

239. Evidence of adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures is found in various forms: (i) submission to UNEP of the necessary periodic reports from AMA as the NEA; (ii) budget revisions taking place as an annual re-phasal exercise and for no-cost extensions; (iii) UNEP seeking clearance of technical and financial reports (including co-financing) before proceeding with cash advances; (iv) maintaining an updated non-expendable equipment inventory and completing the transfer procedure upon project completion; and (v) allowing 6-12 months for terminal reporting after technical completion of the project.

## Completeness of Financial Information

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

240. Documents relating to financial management were available via ANUBIS. Using information duly provided by UNDP-CO and corroborated internally, AMA submitted to UNEP a complete set of consolidated financial reports in a timely and diligent manner from October 2015 to June 2019. These GEF expenditure reports were based on the approved budget, covered quarterly periods and were accompanied by half-yearly (July - December) and annual (July - June) technical and co-finance reports.

241. Standard budget revisions that were carried out annually. In this exercise, the project budget underwent restructuring a number of times, with budget lines fused and moved to arrive at a more condensed and streamlined version. Annotations in Annex III describe these changes, which were not considered substantive by the evaluator. Cash advance requests were also registered on ANUBIS and payments made via standard UN Financial Authorization Forms. Where these forms were not attached on ANUBIS as supporting documents, the Financial Authorization number was cited instead.

242. Co-finance reports were duly compiled by AMA on a quarterly basis, showing cash and in-kind totals for each trimester. All co-financing was concentrated in four budget lines: Cash expenditures towards project personnel, "sub-contracts" to government agencies /supporting organizations, and meetings /conferences; and in-kind expenditures relating to premises (office rent, maintenance of premises, etc.). With the exception of two co-finance tables completed for the MTR and this TE, co-financing data was not broken down by co-financier. The project team and supporting government agencies (those with execution responsibilities) agreed at the onset of the project to submit to the CCU monthly co-financing data and a certification at the end of each year to officially confirm each agency's total annual co-financing. This was understood to be necessary as "a means of verification at the time of project evaluation" yet co-financier reports submitted to AMA were not available for the TE.

## Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

243. Communications were found to be fluid and regular. UNEP finance staff, based in Kenya, consisted of a Fund Management Officer and a Finance Assistant, who liaised directly with the UNEP Task Manager and UNEP Programme Assistant, based in Panama. Exchanges between them would ensure that reports (technical progress reports, GEF expenditure reports, and when relevant, co-finance reports) were cleared by the UNEP Task Manager, before processing further cash advances to AMA (via UNDP-CO). UNEP staff in Panama would on occasions liaise directly with UNDP-CO staff regarding fund management issues, especially procurements and during the project closure phase.

244. At project start-up (2015), delays were seemingly incurred in the release of funds by the GEF Secretariat due to misplaced documentation. This would in part explain the time lapse between GEF project approval (May 2015) and receipt of the first cash advance (January 2016). This glitch, however, was not in the hands of those directly linked to the project at UNEP and AMA and was ably mitigated by good preparedness and readiness. For this reason, the rating for *Preparedness and Readiness* is not being penalised by this delay.

**Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory**

## F. Efficiency

245. In Efficiency, this project was given a Highly Satisfactory rating. It was found to be highly efficient for three main reasons: (i) effective and timely synergies were created with other donor-funded interventions, even outside of the CPP Programme, that led to joint actions and cost-savings; (ii) significant volumes of government co-financing were mobilised, greatly surpassing initial co-financing pledges, and strong complementarity achieved with baseline interventions; and (iii) good levels of preparedness and readiness at project start-up, and adaptive management during execution, helped to counteract workplan delays caused by external factors.

246. The project did need to extend its execution period due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, yet this "no-cost extension" was not linked to internal issues and is considered justifiable and unavoidable. Planned activities, such as workshops, trainings and meetings, had to be deferred or cancelled as a result of restrictions imposed on group activities, especially during 2020. Although project execution was slowed by the pandemic, it was unaffected in terms of overall performance, thanks to adaptive management by the project team.

247. **Synergies:** Reports show that the project team and the NSC were receptive to new opportunities for inter-project collaboration. There are a number of examples of how P2 actively sought to create and take advantage of synergies with other concomitant donor-funded projects (GEF and non-GEF) as well as national initiatives. Several such projects were identified as early as the project preparation phase (i.e., were contemplated at design), while others opened collaboration opportunities during implementation. Then there were of course the "sister projects" from the CPP Programme, especially P3 and P5, which were designed to be synergic and mutually supportive with P2.

248. Where the project was able to take advantage of these **synergies and opportunities**, the results were strategic and highly positive. With other CPP projects, important synergies were produced with P3 in the realm of financial incentives to producers. Not only did P2 pave the way for P3 with new financial and insurance products from BANDEC and ESEN, respectively, but joint work between these projects also gave rise to Cuba's first **water-based incentive**, whereby producers who consistently show reductions in water consumption are given discounts on their water bills, as an incentive.

249. With external projects, the most significant synergies stemmed from joint activities in intervention areas that coincided, as this led to important cost-savings and mutual reinforcements. This was mostly possible because the projects entailed were part of UNDP or UNEP portfolios or because the same national institutions were involved (e.g. INRH, CITMA or MINAG). Below (Table 11) are examples of the types of synergies achieved with other donor-funded efforts.

Table 11: Donor-funded projects with which P2 achieved effective synergies.

| Project (Donor) | Small Grants Programme (GEF) |
|---|---|
| Focus | Renewable energy from solid waste (to reduce pollution). Rainwater harvesting. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Project (Donor)** | **Small Grants Programme (GEF)** |
| Collaboration | Exchanges with producers (small grants beneficiaries) were promoted to inform about Resolution 6/2017 for SLM Recognition and its application process. |
| Result | El Alacrán farm in the Province of Camagüey, a small grant beneficiary, obtained recognition as a site "initiated in SLM". |
| **Project (Donor)** | **BASAL: Environmental Basis for Local Food Sustainability. (European Commission).** |
| Focus | Food systems, food security and efficient use of water in agriculture. |
| Collaboration | Certain demonstration sites of the BASAL project coincided with P2's sites in Havana-Matanzas Plains (Güira municipality,) and were supported to substitute irrigation by waterlogging for technical irrigation systems (La Rebeca farm: sprinklers, Santa Ana farm: pulse irrigation) and to introduce more efficient tillage equipment and apply soil conservation techniques. |
| Result | BASAL demonstration sites achieved a more efficient management of water resources, and opted to initiate the process to obtain official recognition as sites "initiated in SLM". |
| **Project (Donor)** | ***Manglar Vivo:* Reduction of environmental vulnerability to coastal floods through ecosystem-based adaptation in the south of Artemisa and Mayabeque Provinces. (Adaptation Fund).** |
| Focus | Ecosystem health for climate change adaptation in coastal zones of the Havana-Matanzas plains |
| Collaboration | The irrigation canals of the Agricultural State Company Güira de Melena (3km) were cleared of silt; irrigation and dam infrastructure was restored by the State Company for Water Use of Artemisa to help control saline intrusion in mangrove areas, and sampling points (of interest to the Manglar Vivo project) were incorporated into the monitoring network of the State Company for Water Use of Mayabeque. |
| Result | The irrigation canals lacked basic maintenance and the passage of water was being obstructed by excess silt, spilling over into the mangroves. Once cleared, irrigation was possible once again, as was restoration of the mangrove's fresh and salt water balance and the salinity of fresh water sources, and better control of water quality in the mangrove ecosystems of the coastal area of Dique Sur. |
| **Project (Donor)** | **INFOGEO: Information Management and Knowledge for Planning and Decision Making. (GEF)** |
| Focus | Integrating SLM data into a virtual information and knowledge management system to aid in decision-making and information accessibility. |
| Collaboration | The CPP's information management system and the georeferenced data and documents generated by P2 were anchored within the virtual platform for information management, INFOGEO, which functions on the national intranet (http://www.infogeo.cu/). SLM indicator data was made available for decision-making as well as institutional reporting at the national and international level. INFOGEO gave rise to Cuba's Environmental Information Repository, which stores 3,553 environmental records, of which the CPP OP15 content (650 records) represents 18.3%. This SLM Repository (hosted at http://repositorio.geotech.cu/jspui/handle/1234/2042) was enriched and enlarged through the P2-INFOGEO collaboration. |
| Result | This system facilitates the organization, control and updating of all necessary information (documentary, graphic, spatial, etc.) as well as the |

| Project (Donor) | Small Grants Programme (GEF) |
|---|---|
| | establishment of internal workflows and information management processes. As an intranet system, with a simple and intuitive interface, it helps to make SLM data publicly available to Cuban society, integrate knowledge among the scientific community, and incorporate the geographical dimension in decision-making. |
| **Project (Donor)** | **Water – A Child's Friend (United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF)** |
| Focus | Raising the awareness of children and youth regarding the appropriate management and conservation of water resources. |
| Collaboration | Joint activities were organised in order to increase the knowledge of children regarding water use and its importance in SLM. |
| Result | Large groups of children took part in seminars, exhibitions, fairs, educational talks, mangrove planting activities in coastal zones, formal acts for recognition of sites, contests, among other activities, were carried out. |

250. Synergies were also possible with government initiatives, in particular those aimed at environmental awareness-raising in schoolchildren. The best example is the **Trazaguas contest for children,** held annually since 1999, which contemplates drawing, painting, poetry, audio-visual, cartoon and didactic games competitions, in themes that deal with the importance of water for life, health and hygiene, suggestions for water savings, and protecting sources from contamination. As of 2018, a SLM Award was incorporated into the bases of this contest, in each of its modalities, thanks to the synergy created through the INRH PMU of P2 aimed at increasing awareness of the links between the protection of water resources and SLM.

251. **Co-financing:** Government co-financing in Cuba takes the form of national counterpart projects, for which institutions are accountable, that set forth the exact means and timelines by which each institution will complement the GEF-funded activities in which they partake. These counterpart projects serve to formalise institutional co-financing pledges, in the form of designated staff and an operating budget. This means GEF funds can be used in an efficient, targeted and incremental manner, to cover technological, logistical and technical needs, rather than staff time and consultancies. These parallel projects also prompt internal oversight and accountability with regards to their results and expenditures. Some of these projects are drafted as science, technology and innovation projects, which means that specific Outputs are followed-up by groups of experts within scientific agencies who analyse and endorse, and thus institutionalise, each result. This can be considered a **best practice**, applicable to Cuba, that makes co-financing trackable and coherent, and consolidates each co-financier's institutional commitment to the GEF project in question.

252. In this project, actual (achieved) **co-financing exceeded expected levels** by nearly two-fold. Mobilised co-financing (USD 42,361,173) was 173% higher compared to the pledged amount (USD 24,544,380), which itself was already high. A considerable part was reported as **cash co-finance** (94% of the total), in part due to the above counterpart projects that require specific budgetary allocations, and in part to cash payments being made to producers through development programmes such as the NPSCI. Reports to UNEP did not cite NPSCI amounts paid out as soil management incentives, but internal reports indicate that producers, in three project intervention areas, received at least 2.2 million Cuban Pesos under the NPSCI between 2016 and 2020, thanks to their SLM

efforts. The NPSCI is financed by MINAG, the co-financier that covered 52% of the project's total co-finance. The INRH, the other major co-financier (39%), also made important investments in irrigation infrastructure (evaluations, installations and maintenance), which count as cash contributions.

253. **Additional co-finance** that went untallied was also evident in this project, as much of the production of audio-visual materials for dissemination via television and cable channels was state-funded but not included within co-finance totals. The mobilisation of considerable volumes of co-finance is therefore a key reason for this project's high Efficiency rating.

***Preparation and Readiness:***

254. The project demonstrated good levels of preparedness and readiness, mostly thanks to its embedment in a wider country programme. When P2 initiated, P1 had already made headway in the policy arena and initiated work in SLM at a number of demonstration sites in two of P2's four intervention areas (P2 baseline = 83 farms). It had also gained traction in project governance (NSC) and inter-institutional coordination, providing P2 with a ready-made management arrangements. This facilitated project start-up significantly and allowed P2 to continue smoothly on from P1.

255. The delay experienced in the release of funds from the GEF to UNEP and onto the NEA during the project's inception period was also mitigated to a great extent by AMA. Prior to the arrival of GEF funds in January 2016, measures had already been taken to bring on board the project's Technical Coordinator, integrate the competent authorities for water in the project's inter-institutional management and governance arrangements, and advance laborious internal procurement approvals for the importation of non-expendable equipment. As a result, the project "hit the ground running" once the GEF funds arrived, and reported co-financing expenditures in the order of USD 2,784,092 for the period prior to this (first 3 months: Sept-Dec 2015).

| **Rating for Efficiency:** | **Highly Satisfactory** |
|---|---|

## G. Monitoring and Reporting

### Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

256. This evaluation sub-criterion expects the project to have prepared a monitoring plan, at project launch or inception, for the measurement of project indicators, detailing associated data collection methods, frequency, budgets and responsible persons. The project's approved M&E plan is similarly structured but focuses on generic M&E tasks rather than the monitoring of individual indicators. This means that for indicator monitoring, the project team utilised instead the approved Results Framework transposed into the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), and the relevant workplan into UNEP's Half-Yearly Progress Reports (HYPR).

257. In general, Outcome Indicators and their corresponding mid-term and end-of-project targets were relevant, measurable and appropriate for tracking progress. Some indicators proved more challenging than others, either because their interpretation was not straight forward or sufficiently distinct (as with "Number of individuals trained in

water resources management" versus "Number of individuals trained for an efficient use of water (water productivity)") or because the data collection and analysis process was onerous (as with water productivity data). Project indicators were nevertheless designed to show an attributive cause-and-effect relationship between activities and Outcomes.

258. The project accounted for its 'equitable engagement of women, men and disadvantaged social groups' through a single indicator (Outcome 3 Indicator 2) from a total of 19. For this indicator, sex-disaggregated data was collected in relation to "agricultural producers and water managers that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water". The evaluator considers that sex-disaggregated data could also have been collected, and degree of marginalisation noted, with Outcome 1 Indicator 4: "Number of individuals receiving technical assistance in water resources management".

259. This project had the particularity that one of its Outcomes was dedicated to "Project M&E, adaptive management and lessons learned". This meant that Outcome 4 was effectively the project's M&E component, with an assigned GEF budget of USD 122,398 and co-financing of USD 84,100. This Outcome focused mostly on project management, and included sufficient budget for the MTR, TE, audits, NSC meetings, inception and final workshops, and reporting costs. The manner in which P5 carried out programmatic M&E and with this supported P2's M&E, however, is unclear.

## Monitoring of Project Implementation

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

260. The project's monitoring system was operational and facilitated the **timely tracking of results and progress** towards project Outcomes and Objective. This is distinct from the SLM monitoring system, which is robust and complex but is not the focus of this evaluation sub-criterion. Periodic reporting to UNEP relied on biannual (January to June, and July to December) and annual (July to June) cycles, respectively, to inform on progress against Output-based activities and the project's 'SMART' Outcome Indicators. Staff from the CCU, the PMUs in partner institutions, Territorial Coordinators, UNEP and UNDP were all involved in monitoring and reporting.

261. The way information was generated for project M&E during implementation was well organised and effective. Internally, quarterly reporting cycles were used to keep a close eye on progress in project intervention areas. This required regular virtual coordination meetings between the CCU and territorial teams and was aided by the use of a reporting template and a set of management indicators. The CPP Programme team refer to this system, applied to all projects in execution, not just P2, among the lessons learnt that were drafted in 2020 in relation to monitoring and reporting.

> Lesson Learnt 8 (2020): *"The implementation of a quarterly evaluation system makes it possible to periodically check the progress of the indicators, alert about delays, and take timely measures."*
>
> Given that the CPP OP15 Programme entailed various implementation scales (national, provincial, municipal, local) and a huge diversity of stakeholders, avoiding and detecting disorder and delays in a timely manner called for strong project monitoring and control mechanisms. This was achieved by instating quarterly instead of half-yearly reporting cycles, whereby territorial teams reported internally to the CCU against a set of project management performance indicators, linked to the implementation of their intervention area's workplan, deliverables and project targets, including gender-related activities.

262. ***Quality of Project management and supervision:*** Having a rigorous internal monitoring system is good practice in the face of a multi-team intervention and can be turned into **best practice** if used in a potentiating fashion. Teams were encouraged to keep delivery rates high, using management indicators that translated into **performance ratings** that were then passed onto institutional superiors at the territorial level, who were regularly informed of progress. As noted by one team member "No one wanted low ratings!". There is also evidence of this system being used for **adaptive management**, to improve project execution in an intervention area that was falling behind the others. The approach taken to address shortcomings was **peer-to-peer support**, whereby one Territorial Coordinator with more experience (since P1) and strong performance provided guidance and offered on-site technical assistance to the other Territorial Coordinator with less experience in one of the new P2 intervention areas. This assistance was followed-up by off-site support also involving the CCU until activities got back on track. This approach, which proved to be highly effective and a useful learning experience, speaks well of chosen project management methods.

263. This TE was unable to determine the quality or accuracy of the project's baseline data, or whether it was appropriately documented. The only data collected on the participation and representation of vulnerable or marginalised groups was that which distinguished beneficiaries from the agricultural and water sectors and included sex-disaggregated data. The GEF Tracking Tool for Land Degradation, which was still in use during GEF-3 (but discontinued after GEF-6), was included as part of the approved project package. It was then expected to be used to track results at mid-point and at project end, but having been completed at project approval, the tool was not used thereafter, which may have been an oversight on the part of UNEP. In regards of the ***GEF Portal questions,*** Core Indicator Targets do not apply in the case of this GEF-3 project.

## Project Reporting

Sub-criterion rating: Satisfactory

264. The project fulfilled UNEP and GEF reporting commitments adequately. Progress reports (PIR and HYPR) were found to be timely and mostly complete from 2016 to 2021, providing a summary of how change was being generated and risks managed. Financial reports (GEF expenditures and co-finance) were complete, workplan changes were well documented, and terminal reporting was in order; only the first progress report (Sept 2015-June 2016) was missing.

265. Different UNEP and UNDP reporting means and formats (including ANUBIS), as well as the use of the English language, made periodic reporting challenging and implied a **learning curve** for the project team. As a result, narratives tended to be minimalistic, offering an overview of key achievements and deliverables but little information or specificity regarding individual activities, Outputs and indicators, as expected in PIR. This lack of detail was compensated, to a certain extent, by a comprehensive closing technical report prepared in Spanish that systematized the project's efforts and results and constituted a valuable source of information for this TE.

266. The CPP Programme and project team identified two lessons learnt (in 2017 and 2020) specifically in relation to monitoring and reporting.

*Lesson Learnt 4 (2017):* *"The success of the PIR and annual workplan depend on the knowledge and engagement of each of the territorial coordinators and those responsible for results. Their timely drafting, as a team, will facilitate their quality and timely delivery."*

The project team recognised the need to have a good command of the PIR and workplans and, above all, of the indicators and goals they contain, in order for these tools to be truly useful for project monitoring and have the required quality. Teamwork was considered necessary in the drafting of these tools, as were training sessions or inductions to better understand the nature and intent of these reports.

267. The majority of Objective and Outcome Indicators and Outputs relied on supporting documents and information being kept on file, as means of verification. For this TE, documentation to corroborate deliverables and the achievement of results (i.e., verify what is written into periodic reports) was provided when requested (e.g., samples of the methodologies, standards and regulatory tools that were developed or upgraded) but was not readily accessible via ANUBIS nor systematically filled by UNEP, as would be expected. This limited somewhat the exercise of results verification and called for the triangulation of evidence by other means.

268. ***Quality of Project management and supervision:*** The same UNEP Task Manager oversaw this project from approval to completion. However, staff changes did take place in the Cuban team towards the end of the project's first year, specifically the CPP Programme Director, the CPP Programme Financial Administrator, and a reduction from two P2 Technical Coordinators to one. Although this staff turnover did not affect execution, it may have affected early reporting tasks. Moreover, inconsistencies were found in the values reported for certain indicators, likely due to the complexities of (i) compiling and reconciling M&E data from different teams, (ii) distinguishing P2 results from those of P1 (P2's baseline) and (iii) applying a common definition or interpretation of indicator wordings. This was most noticeable with the following indicators:

- Outcome 1 Indicator 2 (# of land use plans…) and Outcome 3 Indicator 5 of (# of plans for water use in agriculture…) were both related to Output 1.1 ("territorial plans and programmes") and were understood to converge at the level of site management plans.
- Outcome 3 Indicator 1 (# hectares…) and Outcome 3 Indicator 4 (# of demonstration farms that replicate…) were subject to interpretation depending on how *demonstration farms* and replication sites were defined and filtered for those that "replicate the comprehensive management model for monitoring water-related land degradation processes."

269. ***Preparedness and Readiness:*** Between July and November 2015 (before the operational starting date), P2 Inception Workshops took place in each intervention area, rather than nationally, and focused on securing political and technical support for the project. This included the designation of Territorial Coordinators where these were pending and reaching a common understanding and agreements amongst key actors on the project's approach, expected results and selected sites. Enabling conditions were being created for execution even before the project officially started.

| **Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:** | **Satisfactory** |
|---|---|

## H. Sustainability

***UNEP SLM Portfolio Review**:*

270. **Question 4. (f):** ***Are there any key factors that contributed to the sustainability of project results and impacts (any highlighted examples of transformative effects, innovation and social uptake, championship and changed behaviour, financial and institutional commitments)?*** The sustainability of project results, and the likelihood of impact, is very high in this project due to a number of factors. The primary one is the way the project was conceived as part of a wider 10-year programme. P2 was designed to build on the progress made by its predecessor project, P1, to be supported by P5 as the engine of Programme coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and to synergise with P3 during their overlap period. Structuring the CPP Programme in this complementary way meant that P2 was able to achieve lasting results and transformative changes in a short time period, and consolidate SLM in ways that are socially, institutionally and financially sustainable. This was in fact one of the project's identified drivers (Driver 3), as this design offered a clear opportunity to create synergies and mutually supportive conditions, and drive change processes further.

| |
|---|
| Driver 3: The project builds on the achievements and foundations laid by the other CPP projects, and vice versa, to create synergies and drive change processes further. |

*271.* The paragraphs below are part of the response to **Question 4. (f)** of the *UNEP SLM Portfolio Review.* P2's main sustainability factors are either embedded in the project's design and implementation approaches, or are reinforced by the continuity conferred by the CPP's programmatic approach. P2 was designed to initiate just prior to the completion of P1, to be supported by P5, to finalise as P3 began to take off, and to facilitate conditions for P4 as the closing project. P3 focuses on the economic incentives and financial products available to land managers and farmers who reduce water usage and take up SLM practices, while the soon-to-start P4 aims to expand SLM at the landscape scale. P2 was therefore well poised to benefit from and contribute to other CPP projects and help the Programme to rapidly gain traction.

### Socio-political Sustainability

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Likely

272. The level of **ownership, interest and commitment** among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forward was found to be very high, as was the degree of **institutionalisation** of project Outcomes and the interest in institutionalising SLM even further. The Cuban government recently launched a 'macro-programme' for natural resources and the environment that includes SLM amongst its targets for 2030. These same targets have been taken up as the country's land degradation neutrality commitments before the UNCCD, and include for 2030: (i) having 150,000 ha applying SLM principles, (ii) restoring 465,000 ha of forests, and (iii) increasing by 65% the agricultural area benefited by the NPSCI. This is clearly a political recognition that SLM is an appropriate management model to attend to the country's land degradation priorities.

273. In more operational terms, a key sustainability factor that guarantees the durability of project Outcomes is the best practice of delivering SLM integrally, with the support of a number of government agencies, not limited to a single Ministry, and backed by technical

assistance as well as financial and institutional commitments from MINAG, INRH, CITMA and MES to provide incentives and enabling conditions for SLM.

274. Undoubtedly, the capacity of relevant individuals and institutions has also been considerably enhanced by this project. Experts and producers are seen supporting project Outcomes when exercising their duties and managing natural resources. Senior officials are on board with SLM, and the CPP Programme, and keen to continue propagating this integrated management model. In effect, barriers to SLM were founded more on material than political constraints. In many cases, the technological and logistical inputs, needed to enhance operational capacity and enable the acquisition of new data and the spread of knowledge, had been missing, but not the political will.

275. The project has prompted behaviour change and leadership, showcasing the successes of "SLM champions" and highlighting the transformative effects of SLM. The high degree of social and institutional uptake bodes well for upscaling SLM in Cuba, as its **community of practice** continues to expand. There are many youth studying SLM, municipalities looking to promote SLM, and farmers interested in practicing SLM with emphasis on water resources, beyond the project's initial intervention areas and demonstration sites. The fact that SLM has permeated into the education sector (from schools to technical to post-graduate studies) is also a strong sustainability signal as individual capacities will continue to be developed over the long-term.

276. The SLM recognition scheme promoted by the CPP Programme, and consolidated by P2, also has, built-in, two key drivers of its own socio-political sustainability. These are well described in the compendium of lessons learnt prepared by the CPP Programme team:

> *"Lesson Learnt #24:* The legal resolutions of AMA, in support of the CPP and its projects, guarantee continuity once these conclude. *AMA approved two resolutions in support of the Programme: Resolution 6/2017 recognizing the categories of sustainable land management, and Resolution 7/2017, for the formation of the CPP-OP15 Group of Experts. For farmers, having a certificate that recognizes them as having reached a SLM category, issued as a resolution of AMA, has a strong impact. The resolution, in addition to recognizing that farm-level SLM is being practiced, commits farmers to continue along this path. For the Group of Experts, the existence of a legal document approved by AMA that makes the group official represents a high professional commitment".*

277. Lastly, the transition toward SLM has been aided by Cuba's history of agroecological and organic production, whereby changes made in the 1990's have meant that much of the agricultural sector was already familiar with 'eco-friendly' production methods when the CPP Programme, and P2, initiated. In the 1980's, Cuba's agricultural sector was predominantly monoculture and heavily dependent on imported agrichemicals, hybrid seeds, machinery and petroleum. Yet after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba's main trading partner at the time, small farms and large state-owned farms alike were forced to shift to more natural, low input and self-reliant methods. In consequence, agroecological technologies (intercropping, locally produced biopesticides, earthworms, compost, crop rotations, etc.), as alternatives to chemical pesticides and fertilizers, were not new in Cuba. What therefore constitute enabling conditions for SLM adoption can also be viewed as sustainability factors, as promoting and maintaining SLM practices in Cuba does not imply the same 'quantum leap' that other countries, reliant on industrial-style farming, may face.

***UNEP SLM Portfolio Review:***

278. **Question 4. (d):** ***How much of the success of the project depended on production and consumption cycles and the economic system and how much influence did the project have on this? (de-coupling economic growth from land and ecosystem degradation).*** The success of the project in improving productivity, whilst avoiding ecosystem degradation, promoting conservation and restoration, and boosting human development, is undoubtedly linked to Cuba's particular economic and agricultural systems. Cuba's planned economic system tends to function on the margins of conventional international market forces due to the embargo imposed on the country that challenges it to be as self-sufficient as possible. Although production and consumption cycles do not follow the predominant neoliberal model, the decisions of farmers regarding productive activities are gradually being influenced more by internal market forces and micro-economic considerations (farm level), and less by centralized planning of agricultural production.

279. In this way, sustainable development has taken its own slow but steady path in Cuba, where agriculture, historically in the hands of the state, is now increasingly smallholder-driven. Cuban agriculture has in fact been making headway since the 1990's in integrating conservation actions as well as low-input and organic production methods, and in shifting away from large production enterprises towards smaller, private holdings with recognised tenure rights (usufruct). Considering that the ultimate purpose of the project, and the CPP Programme in general, was to achieve sustainable development and increase food security (or rather food sovereignty), the project was expected to positively influence this aspect of Cuba's production system, and to encounter an enabling environment for doing so. The revised TOC identified a Driver in this regard:

> Driver 2: The project taps into, and advances, the forward momentum in favour of smallholder farming and local decision-making that is shaping Cuba's agricultural sector.

280. At the time the CPP was approved (2008), Cuban agriculture was undergoing major changes in aspects that were highly relevant to SLM, such as in land tenure and production methods, which meant that smallholder farming and agroforestry projects, as well as locally-driven land management decisions, were expected to encounter more favourable conditions during the project. This represented an opportunity for the project and enabling conditions for the expected change processes, and allowed SLM to position itself as a rural development pathway that is de-coupled from degradation.

## Financial Sustainability

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Likely

281. If the project's benefits are to be sustained over time, stable institutional financing of the baseline is required. Acquired human and material capacities (Outcome 1) will remain in place, only as long as knowhow and technologies do not need to be newly updated or replaced. A good level of capacity has for now been installed, especially for monitoring and training purposes, yet eventually, the up-scaling of SLM and IWRM will call for further state investments. At present, these are being channelled via the CPP Programme through P3 and P4, combining institutional budgets with GEF financing. Importantly, in Cuba, these institutional budgets take the form of counterpart projects, designed as

baseline interventions that both complement and help to institutionalise donor-funded efforts.

282. The possibility of accessing financial incentives from the NPSCI, funding from FONADEF, and loans with lower rates from BANDEC, in order to implement SLM measures at the farm level, makes private sector actors more likely to invest in SLM. It is reported that until 2020, the NPSCI was funding reimbursements in the order of 30-40 million Cuban pesos per year, and in 2021, this jumped to 274 million. This occurred[16] in part due to greater outreach regarding the NPSCI and its funding, increased interest from farmers and cooperatives in the incentives, and higher capacity to implement soil conservation and improvement measures.

283. To strengthen the country's biophysical monitoring and information management system for SLM (Outcome 2), institutions sought -and continue to seek- ways to make these improvements self-sustaining and to bring down monitoring costs. Increasingly, producers and provincial specialists are being trained to carry out the geo-referenced monitoring of biophysical indicators and to generate data, with a view to avoid the need for central government specialists to undertake all field visits across the country. Important cost-savings could be had if this is institutionalised in the near future (for instance, by means of P3). In addition, the agro-meteorological information service created by INSMET, delivers regular tailor-made information to producers for a fee. Seemingly, this 'pay-per-view' system has been well received and continues to attract users, which points to a willingness to pay and a degree of financial sustainability for the service.

284. To continue up-scaling SLM to new areas (Outcome 3) also necessitates technical assistance and financial support, and hence financing and commitments from diverse institutions, cooperatives, farmers and local governments. This financial support has been forthcoming from interested cooperatives, municipal governments and universities, and is likely to continue and possibly grow in the near future.

285. Efforts are now underway (as part of P3) to elevate the status of Cuba's SLM recognition scheme to a fully-fledged state programme, under the auspices of CITMA instead of AMA. This would confer a stronger institutional standing to associated structures, such as the Technical Expert Group, raise the official rank of the awarded recognition from an AMA Resolution to a CITMA Decree, and most importantly, secure long-term financing to implement the system.

## Institutional Sustainability

Sub-criterion rating: Highly Likely

286. Project Outcomes have been fully institutionalised, which means that new policies and regulations have been approved and are under implementation through specific instruments and norms. Competent authorities value these achievements as major upgrades to their institutional frameworks and operational capacity, especially for soil and water which received full packages (policy, law, regulations and norms). There is therefore little doubt of the strong institutional sustainability of project results, and that

[16] This 2021 value is somewhat inflated due to a significant change that year in the way Cuba's currency exchange is calculated.

institutional achievements are robust enough to continue delivering benefits beyond the end of the project.

287. A new **Soil Policy** "on the conservation, improvement and sustainable management of soils and use of fertilizers" was approved during this project. A government official commented on the Policy as follows:

> *"With P2 it was possible to incorporate other elements beyond soils, and apply an integral approach in the Policy that considered water, soils, forests, etc. If it were not for P2, the Policy would not have been an integrating instrument; mentalities had changed."*

288. The Soil Policy required that an updated regulatory framework be in place by 2021, to guarantee its compliance. This prompted the development of five legal instruments that support SLM and respond to the main limitations that had been identified during P1. The most important of these was **Decree-Law 50/2021** "On the conservation, improvement and sustainable management of soils and the use of fertilizers". This raised the legal rank of the previous soil regulation from Decree to a Legislative Decree (Decree-Law) and included new elements on water quality linked to soil specifications. It also recognised those areas that opt for SLM recognition as a priority. This new law was accompanied by **Decree 52/2021** as its main regulation, which in turn gave rise to three **Resolutions**, one of which **(524/2021)** regulates the use and control of financing from the NPSCI, incentives and financial mechanisms.

289. Regarding terrestrial waters, specifically **water for agriculture and livestock**, the institutional framework was also upgraded to include new legislation, regulations and norms, in line with the National Water Policy that had been approved in 2013, as well as structural changes in MINAG and modifications in certain INRH resolutions relating to the use of water in agriculture. First, the **Regulations** for the Organization, Operation and Maintenance of Irrigation, Drainage and Water Supply Systems were updated.

290. This update served as a source of information to design and develop a new MINAG mechanization and irrigation policy that concluded with **Decree-Law 2/2020** "Of mechanization, irrigation, agricultural drainage and water supply to animals". This law aims to improve the way agricultural machinery is used, to achieve the rational and efficient use of water, hydraulic infrastructure and agricultural equipment; as well as contribute to increased productivity through labour savings; the use of advanced technologies; reducing areas affected by poor drainage, salinity and soil erosion; and environment protection.

291. This Decree-Law, which clearly contributes to IWRM for SLM, was followed by **Decree 21/2020** as its main regulation that establishes the necessary standards and procedures, and is further supported by **Resolution 498/2021**, which sets out procedures for the organization, operation and maintenance of irrigation systems, agricultural drainage and water supply to animals, and establishes norms for water quality (in accordance with the standard NC1048: 2014), efficiency and net irrigation. In this way, P2 made a major contribution to the institutional framework for water use in agriculture and the institutional sustainability of water resource management in SLM.

292. All of the above is further reinforced by the **norms, standards and procedures** that were also approved or updated under the project and are currently being applied. Having such

a comprehensive framework in place is clearly indicative of strong institutional sustainability. In addition, the **SLM recognition scheme** was institutionalised by means of **Resolution 6/2017** of AMA, which sets out the procedure to be followed and the minimum requirements for recognition in one of three SLM categories. The Group of Experts that evaluates each case also has legal backing through **Resolution 7/2017**, which is an update of an earlier AMA resolution from 2010. The institutionalisation of this SLM recognition scheme is a major step for project results and their sustainability. This novel scheme aspires, eventually, to reach international certification standards, an option that is currently in exploration.

| **Rating for Sustainability:** | **Highly Likely** |
|---|---|

## I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

293. The factors that affected project performance (positively or negatively) are described throughout the evaluation findings (chapter V, sections D to H). Those presented here are those that respond to the *GEF Portal Questions* listed in the TE TORs (Annex IX) or those that merit further consideration. Responses to the *GEF Portal Questions* are also provided as a separate annex (Annex X). The overall rating for this criterion, provided below, considers the following sub-criterion ratings:

- *Preparation and Readiness* — Satisfactory
- *Quality of project management and supervision* — Satisfactory
  - *UNEP/Implementing Agency* — (Satisfactory)
  - *Partners/Executing Agency* — (Satisfactory)
- *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* — Highly Satisfactory
- *Responsiveness to Human rights and Gender equity* — Satisfactory
- *Environmental, social and economic safeguards* — Satisfactory
- *Country ownership and Driven-ness* — Highly Satisfactory
- *Communication and Public awareness* — Highly Satisfactory

294. ***Quality of Project management and supervision:*** This sub-criterion considers both UNEP's role in project oversight and the NEA's role in project execution. On the part of the NEA, there is evidence of a proficient project management team. AMA, including its President, exerted good convening power and careful coordination to maintain productive partner relationships. It played a leadership role towards achieving the project's Outcomes and was actively involved in promoting SLM through outreach and political activities. Some challenges were faced in project *Monitoring and Reporting*, given the complexities of the project and its various management layers. Adaptive management was necessary in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, of climatic events affecting project sites, and of valuable opportunities arising outside of planned activities that warranted high level decisions. On the other hand, UNEP in its fiduciary role was an active member of the NSC, visited Cuba on a yearly basis (except in 2020), took care to regularly track project risks, and guided adaptive management decisions as needed. The use of the GEF-3 Tracking Tool for SLM at the MTR or TE stages and access to supporting documentation, however, were not followed up by UNEP.

***GEF Portal Questions:***

295. ***Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation:*** ***What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?*** This project has been enormously successful in stakeholder engagement and achieved high levels of cooperation, both of which are key elements in SLM. This is particularly evident in the government sector, which in Cuba includes large state-owned companies as well as competent authorities. Public institutions in charge of environment, agriculture, water resources, meteorology, education, land use planning and research are all contributing to implementing SLM and the country's National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought. Effective collaboration exists between these entities, having broken down silos to create a more collegiate and coordinated way of operating in the field, share information and datasets for the monitoring of SLM and water resources, and encourage farmers to adopt SLM and IWRM practices. In fact, the project's strengths in *stakeholder engagement* are largely behind the strong sense of ownership and commitment that prevails over the SLM model.

296. The project has also achieved the ample participation of farmers, cooperatives and the country's main agricultural associations, ensuring that its main beneficiaries from the non-governmental sector also took part. Farmers (including women) were not only given technical assistance and training in this project, but also due recognition as local leaders and the main agents of change. This participation has been so effective that a number of farmers from across the country are now recognised as "SLM champions" and act as spokespersons for SLM and role models to be followed. Engagement of civil society involved the country's main agricultural associations, ANAP, ACTAF and ACPA, but less information is available regarding their specific roles. It also involved a unique community-based water management body (the Güines Community of Irrigators) that exists since 1884 as a direct project beneficiary and partner in achieving a more efficient use of water resources in the Güines municipality of Mayabeque.

297. In this project, an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to land management was achieved. Cuba's approach to SLM was even taken across borders and shared with at least three Latin American and Caribbean countries (namely, Ecuador, Panama and Dominican Republic). Through south-south cooperation, these countries benefitted from knowledge exchanges and technical assistance from Cuba. Further details on key stakeholders (background information) are provided in paragraphs 72-76, 77-81 and 120 of this report, while findings regarding *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* are described in paragraphs 132, 135-137, 180, 188-193 and 228-231.

298. ***Responsiveness to Gender Equality:*** ***What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?*** The project carried out a number of gender-responsive actions and was proactive in its inclusion of women. At the level of project management, a large proportion of the project team, including the territorial teams acting in each project intervention area, was made up of women who occupied positions as coordinators, administrators and technical specialists. The acquisition of new equipment and technologies in Mayabeque Provincial and at the central level (at EIPHH) allowed young female and male graduates alike to take part in the monitoring and hydrometry of surface and groundwater, and the technical formation of INRH staff, respectively. The project was careful to ensure equal participation and access to these new technologies, encouraging young women to specialise in SLM topics and use their skills to become

advocates and resource persons for SLM and the rational use of water resources in agriculture for SLM.

299. Most of the project's **gender-related activities were for awareness-raising** and outreach to increase understanding of the gender dimensions of SLM. The project put together an Info-Communication Strategy that was inclusive and gender-responsive, with a strong focus on social factors relevant for information and knowledge management, communications and environmental education. At each project intervention site, a gender champion was appointed to coordinate talks and awareness-raising activities with local actors, producers, and surrounding communities.

300. In working with beneficiary groups in the field, the project purposefully included women in its activities and encouraged farmers to do the same in their farming operations and businesses. Workshops and meetings were carried out to discuss the relevance of gender to project activities the role of women in the conservation of natural resources and efficient use of water, and the differential roles of men and women in agricultural activities and to highlight how female leaders and producers were contributing to SLM across Cuba.

301. Specific gender results were obtained in relation to the number of producers and water managers that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water. This Outcome indicator showed important increases with respect to baseline values, and was reported with sex-disaggregated figures (Figure 10) only for one intervention area, Guantánamo-Maisi, the total number of producers and water managers, and the proportion of women, all increased year on year. Other examples of the project's gender-responsive measures can be found in paragraphs 146 and 186-187.

302. ***Environmental and Social Safeguards:*** ***What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?*** Please refer to paragraphs 42 (background) and 119 and 207-210 (findings). The UNEP Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist completed at project approval did not prompt the need for a Safeguards Plan.

303. ***Communication and Public Awareness:*** ***What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach****, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/ platform development); Knowledge Products/ Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions?* There are numerous examples of positive outcomes in the field of knowledge management in this project. These can be viewed as either outward-facing, for knowledge to flow between sectors, or inward-facing, for learning and knowledge exchange within project teams. One best practice of the latter type was bringing project teams together to review, at least once a year, the *Lessons Learned and Good Practice* from that year. Integrating this cyclical M&E exercise created a learning process for the project team. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn up, and best practice was noted and then propagated onto other projects (namely, P3 and P4) so as to continue implementing what works best in the field and for programme delivery.

304. Another inward-facing practice relates to *Adaptive Management*. There were needs that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and hurricanes affecting project intervention areas that led to changes in workplans and required adaptability (see paragraphs 126, 247-248 and 264). One of the project Outcomes was conceived in support of adaptive management and M&E tasks (paragraph 260) and helped to build a base of M&E practice.

305. *Knowledge and Learning Deliverables:* With outward-facing knowledge management, the project generated important changes in data management for SLM, in how monitoring and research are coordinated and in the dissemination of SLM and its practices and champions. In **data availability and exchange** there were important digital innovations in this project, which are detailed in paragraphs 141-142, 212-217, 228-229 and 235-236. There was also attention paid to information sharing for the **wider public** (see paragraphs 145 and 165) and even the possibility of knowledge exchange with other countries, giving rise to **south-south cooperation** whereby Cuba shared its know-how and provided assistance to other countries (paragraphs 106, 136, 139-140 and 296). There is very little use of web-based international exchange and dissemination through knowledge-sharing platforms, such as WOCAT, in part due to restrictions to internet access faced by Cuba.

306. *Knowledge and Learning Deliverables:* On the more **educational side**, having an SLM Masters and SLM integrated into various curricula thanks to partnerships with state universities is a worthy example of a knowledge and learning deliverable. Involving school children with an interest in environmental or agricultural issues at project demonstration sites and learning centres or as part of official acts, is also a means for learning and therefore an element of knowledge management for educational purposes. For more information about please refer to paragraphs 143-144.

307. *Communication Strategy:* The project developed an Info-Communication Strategy that guided outreach activities and products, and promoted the use of video, printed and digital materials. Details are provided in paragraphs 232-234 and 254.

**Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Highly Satisfactory**

# VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

308. This section will highlight the project's main **strengths and weaknesses** as Conclusions. Indications are given (in Table 12) on where to locate the answers to the **Key Strategic Questions** within the report. Overall **ratings** will be provided for each evaluation criteria in a summary table at the end of the Conclusions section. This will be followed by a series of Lessons Learnt and Recommendations. Annex XI provides the full texts of the Recommendations, translated into Spanish.

309. Recommendations are made considering that P4, the last of the CPP Programme cohort, is due to initiate implementation in early 2023. As a follow-up project, P4 will have both UNEP and UNDP as GEF implementing agencies, is expected to scale-up SLM at the landscape level, and to take on some of the programmatic M&E tasks previously carried out by P5. These recommendations are therefore intended to be useful to this next intervention and to the conclusion of the CPP Programme that will follow.

## A. Conclusions

310. This project exhibited many strengths and demonstrated **high performance** in a number of key areas. Its highest performance ratings were those obtained under *Strategic Relevance*, *Effectiveness, Efficiency* and *Sustainability*, boosted by similarly high scores for *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation*, *Country ownership and Driven-ness*, *Communication and Public awareness* and *Preparedness and Readiness*. Findings point to a highly successful project that achieved transformative changes both at the institutional and farm level. The way competent authorities, farmers and cooperatives work together to achieve SLM and manage water resources was significantly improved by this project.

311. The project's conception as one of five projects under a 10-year country programme created strong enabling conditions that undoubtedly contributed to its success. The project's performance is deeply influenced by its embedment in a wider programme and cannot be readily separated from the contributions made by its 'sister projects'. This design as part of a continuum not only brought coherency to the project, but also added to its *Strategic Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness* and *Sustainability*. The project was able to achieve lasting, impactful and politically relevant results, in a shorter period of time.

312. In terms of *Strategic Relevance*, the project was fully aligned with UNEP's, GEF's and Cuba's environmental priorities and strategies, especially those aimed at tackling land degradation and promoting sustainable agriculture. As sought by UNEP, capacity building and south-south cooperation were noteworthy features in this project. The project (and the CPP Programme) offered a convincing platform through which to implement Cuba's National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought, in a way that is responsive to the country's most recent land degradation neutrality targets. By design, the project was intended to be complementary with other relevant GEF and non-GEF interventions.

313. In effect, timely and fruitful synergies were created with other interventions, even outside of the CPP Programme (especially BASAL, Manglar Vivo and INFOGEO), that led to joint actions, mutual reinforcement and cost-savings. In addition, significant volumes of government co-financing were mobilised, greatly surpassing the project's initial co-financing commitment (by almost double). Good levels of *preparedness and readiness* at

project start-up (see below) and adaptive management during execution, helped to counteract workplan delays caused by unavoidable external constraints such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Altogether, this resulted in very high *Efficiency* levels.

314. The project demonstrated outstanding *Effectiveness,* in part thanks to its continuation of the work initiated by its predecessor, P1. By building on pre-existing efforts, institutional arrangements and partnerships effectively, **the project overperformed on almost all of its Outcome targets** and delivered a suite of relevant, timely and science-based **Outputs that display high levels of user ownership**. These Outputs have contributed to institutional strengthening, coordination, awareness raising, information and knowledge sharing, and improved agricultural and water management practices. Having consolidated the SLM institutionality and necessary material resources, all the capacities, tools, mechanisms and systems that were developed with this project, remain in use today.

315. The project achieved its three Outcomes amply, by improving human and material capacities for SLM and IWRM, meeting biophysical monitoring and information management needs, and propagating, through applied science and beyond initial selected sites, knowledge of how to increase water use efficiency, restore water and soil quality, improve yields and food security, and integrate conservation objectives and climate change factors into agricultural production. There are farmers who no longer see themselves as producers, but as "agro-ecosystem managers".

316. The project was extremely effective therefore in **lifting barriers to SLM and IWRM** adoption, while highlighting the integral nature and benefits of these management approaches. One crucial factor behind this was the use of on-farm demonstrative SLM experiences as **'proof of concept'**. Making this work required extensionist support and technical assistance (including new equipment) and involved inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary teams. By seeing notable short-term results in crops, water availability, income and even resiliency levels, the use of scientific evidence, data and new techniques was able to translate into behaviour change and shifts in perception on the part of producers.

317. In addition to high delivery rates, upscaling of the SLM model and critically important achievements in the field, the project even generated **catalytic effects** (almost a snowball effect) with results beyond those initially planned, such as the replication of SLM and IWRM practices outside of project intervention areas and several universities taking up SLM in their curricula, including an SLM Masters' degree. Hence there is no doubt that the project is highly likely to reach its intended impact.

318. Project results boast very high *Sustainability* levels due to the successful uptake of SLM and IWRM at various scales and across sectors. Much of the project's sustainability derives from its programmatic origin. The structures, mechanisms, capacities and collaborations set-up or consolidated by the project remain in place and continue sustaining SLM and IWRM efforts. Institutional sustainability is therefore high, as soil and water resource management are now supported by new policies, laws, regulations and instruments, as well as complementary frameworks and mechanisms. Socio-political sustainability is also high, whereby there is an evident interest in expanding the SLM community of practice (in which even schools and universities participate) and in fully institutionalising the government's innovative SLM recognition scheme. Government entities and all major stakeholders remain committed to continue using SLM, with an emphasis on water, to guide management decisions. Financial

sustainability is marked by complementarities achieved with P3, which together have unlocked existing incentives programmes and created new financial mechanisms and incentives for SLM. It is also marked by the extent to which government agencies and state companies continue to budget for SLM at the provincial level.

319. The project demonstrated good levels of *Preparedness and readiness* (parag. 240-241, 255), thanks to its embedment in an ongoing programme. At inception, the NEA was able to mitigate the delay experienced in the release of funds, by bringing on board the project's Technical Coordinator, confirming inter-institutional management and governance arrangements, carrying out inception workshops early in each intervention area, and advancing internal procurement approvals, prior to the arrival of GEF funds.

320. A key strength in this project is the extent to which *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* were achieved. The inclusion of multiple sectors and the search for balanced solutions were integral to the project's design, and to effective SLM and IWRM. Multi-stakeholder participation was indeed used to drive integrated land management approaches. Farmers, producer groups and water managers were given due recognition as key project stakeholders (as "SLM champions" even), and their participation and cooperation were promoted in diverse ways. The multi-stakeholder approach extended also to project management by giving other competent authorities execution responsibilities through designated PMUs, budgets, and the coordination of inter-institutional territorial teams. This good practice in project management served to consolidate stakeholder participation and cooperation for a stronger SLM institutionality, as well as generate *Country ownership and Driven-ness*.

321. *Quality of Project Management and Supervision:* A factor that influenced the project's impact is the way it was managed. P2 (and its Programme) created an inter-institutional project management model that was both effective and representative of the SLM institutionality. Sharing project management and execution responsibilities across a number of competent authorities was an effective means to operationalise and institutionalise SLM. In addition to strong leadership by AMA, a key element for this was the creation of PMU in relevant partner institutions (two in the case of P2, added to a prior PMU), inter-institutional territorial teams led by different institutions in the project intervention areas, and a CCU in the NEA. The result was a strong sense of teamwork, a multi-disciplinary outlook on SLM and a common understanding of the country's needs and challenges across government entities that had never worked so closely on land management issues.

322. In addition, the project took an innovative approach to capacity building by creating a robust, ground-truthed and, when at its best, horizontal practitioner-scientist interface. This interface, involving farmers, students and government specialists, manifested during technical assistance and environmental education activities, and was an enriching and innovative experience for those concerned that broke away from the traditional 'passing down' of technical knowledge and took on a more horizontal approach that recognised and valued the knowledge of local people.

323. While the government sector is particularly prominent in Cuba and includes state-owned companies and universities, it is still the case that a number of ministries, water and sugar companies, agricultural and forestry institutes, planning entities, universities, municipal governments, bank and insurance companies, producer groups and cooperatives were effectively brought together by this project. All these groups remain

engaged and committed, resulting in a considerable degree of *Country ownership and driven-ness* in favour of SLM and IWRM.

324. *Communication and Public awareness* were also prominent in this project. The project dedicated important resources, especially co-finance, to outreach, sensitisation and awareness-raising activities within Cuba and also beyond. On the basis of an 'Info-Communications Strategy', the project sought to encourage public participation through a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach and horizontal communication that is conducive to dialogue and exchange, instead of one-way knowledge transmission. For this, a number of channels were used, from social media, newspapers and documentaries, to colloquia, peer-to-peer exchanges and national and international conferences. Feedback channels were also established, in particular with farmers and producer groups.

325. The project's abundant strengths were accompanied by certain areas in need of improvement. These were minor issues relating mostly to project *Monitoring and Reporting,* which is distinct from SLM monitoring. Different UNEP and UNDP reporting means and formats (including the use of ANUBIS) made periodic reporting challenging and implied a learning curve for the project team. There were specific Outcome indicators whose consistency would vary depending on the project intervention area, with small data gaps in some cases. This did not prevent results from being successful, as performance was above target on most counts. The level of progress reported was often not accompanied by supporting documentation to UNEP (means of verification) which meant that the TE had to increase its efforts to identify triangulated data to verify results (Outputs, and Outcome and Objective indicators). Project data management therefore required strengthening.

326. Often in unsuspecting or subtle ways, the project was *Responsive to Human rights and Gender equality*. No explicit commitment was made in the project's design to attend to the needs of marginalized groups, yet by practicing conservation /organic agriculture, becoming more involved with their local communities, and creating conditions that improved human wellbeing, some of the farmers who adopted SLM did just that. There are stories from the field on how diversifying agricultural production in some farms increased food security and created new income streams for rural families in ways that benefitted women and youth, boosted the nutrition of marginalised children, and even slowed the trend of migration away from rural areas. The finding that the project brought up issues of human health, the role of women, and the right to healthy environment means that the project was responsive to this criterium.

## B. Key Strategic Questions:

327. The Key Strategic Questions that this evaluation sought to answer (listed below) are applicable to a portfolio of SLM projects, as part of a UNEP review of five SLM projects that were undergoing TEs at similar times. These UNEP-GEF projects were executed in Cuba, Kenya, Madagascar, Serbia and Albania. The **answers to these Key Strategic Questions for Cuba**, i.e., those concerning this project, have been inserted throughout chapter 5 (Evaluation Findings) of this TE Final Report. The Questions are provided below with paragraph references to match to the corresponding answers (Table 12).

Table 12: Key Strategic Questions and corresponding answers

| Key Strategic Question (grouping) | Specific Sub-Question | Answer in paragraph |
|---|---|---|
| **Question 1.** Level of continuity, integrative learning and growth of SLM projects at design phase | **1. (a)** Why did UNEP choose this project? | 107 |
| | **1. (b)** Were learnings from Terminal Evaluations of previous projects absorbed into this project's design? | 121 |
| **Question 2.** Level of sharing of project results and learnings among UNEP project teams [or] … across Sub-programmes… | **2. (a)** Were the task manager and the project team at UNEP (of the project you are evaluating) aware of the other SLM projects being implemented at the same time? If yes, were there any opportunities to share information? | 139-140 |
| **Question 3.** Extent to which project teams (UNEP and Executing Agencies) are working within a common technical framework towards SLM. | **3. (a)** What was the level/nature of practitioner-scientist interface? | 204-206 |
| | **3. (b)** Were (i) tools or methodologies previously developed by UNEP used/upscaled, or (i) were UNEP tools and methodologies developed that could be used in other SLM work (within or beyond UNEP)? | 147-148 |
| | **3. (c)** Are there any particular innovations and best practices coming from the project and how is UNEP sharing these (was the project connected to any networks (e.g. WOCAT) and knowledge management platforms for sharing)? (Were there any gaps or potentials in innovation not realized?) | 211-231 |
| | **3. (d)** To what extent did the success of the project depend on gender equity and/or considerations of gender roles? Were there any particular innovations the project was able to achieve in addressing gender equity? | 186-187 |
| | **3. (e)** Did the project address human rights and human wellbeing (e.g. access to land and resources, human health, rights to healthy environment)? | 188-189 |
| **Question 4.** Project contributions to a common vision for SLM based on the global strategic priorities for land degradation neutrality. | **4. (a)** Did the project focus on the most degraded areas or areas of high value (in terms of its global importance and human dependence)? How much of the degraded land has been improved (was it measured in ha)? | 207-210 |
| | **4. (b)** How were project partners who stood out as champions supported and empowered? Were the best partnerships leveraged (and also sustained, both in terms of the project, and in terms of UNEP's network toward SLM)? | 190-193 |
| | **4. (c)** In what ways did the project ensure that increased scientific evidence/knowledge or capacity led to changed behaviour/decision-making (if at all)? Were the most appropriate stakeholders targeted? | 235-237 |
| | **4. (d)** How much of the success of the project depended on production and consumption cycles and the economic | 279-281 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | system and how much influence did the project have on this? (decoupling economic growth from land and ecosystem degradation) | |
| | **4. (e)** How did the project address its key assumptions/drivers (included at design or noted by the evaluator at TE)? | 122-123 |
| | **4. (f)** Are there any key factors that contributed to the sustainability of project results and impacts (any highlighted examples of transformative effects, innovation and social uptake, championship and changed behaviour, financial and institutional commitments)? | 271-278 and 282-293 |

## C. Summary of project findings and ratings

328. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of '**Highly Satisfactory**'.

Table 13: Summary of project findings and ratings

| Criterion | Summary assessment | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Relevance** | | **HS** |
| 1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities | Very well aligned with strategic priorities of UNEP | S |
| 2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities | Responds fully to Operational Programme 15 for Sustainable Land Management | HS |
| 3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities | Land degradation is a key environmental priority | HS |
| 4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence | High complementarity with "sister projects" (CPP Programme), national programmes and other relevant donor-funded efforts | HS |
| **Quality of Project Design** | Good quality design | **S** |
| **Nature of External Context** | Embargo against Cuba and extreme weather events create challenging conditions in which to operate | **MF** |
| **Effectiveness** | | **HS** |
| 1. Availability of outputs | High quality Outputs, of relevance to water resource management, are in use today and have high user acceptance | HS |
| 2. Achievement of project outcomes | | HS |
| 3. Likelihood of impact | Catalytic effects observed and positive impacts including community wellbeing (e.g. food security). Impactful | HL |
| **Financial Management** | | **S** |
| 1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures | Good financial standards were followed, funding was managed intra-UN | S |
| 2. Completeness of project financial information | Financial reporting is complete and aided by UNEP's project reporting platform, ANUBIS. | S |
| 3. Communication between finance and project management staff | Fluid communications maintained | S |

| Criterion | Summary assessment | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **Efficiency** | Highly efficient due to mobilisation of large volumes of additional co- financing and synergies with other projects leading to cost-savings. | **HS** |
| **Monitoring and Reporting** | | **S** |
| 1. Monitoring design and budgeting | M&E design is adequate and funded | S |
| 2. Monitoring of project implementation | Monitoring | S |
| 3. Project reporting | | S |
| **Sustainability** | | **Hl** |
| 1. Socio-political sustainability | High commitment level and political interest in fully institutionalising SLM and continue forming capacities. | HL |
| 2. Financial sustainability | Government financing of SLM is high. Financial and economic Incentives are being mobilised for SLM and IWRM. | HL |
| 3. Institutional sustainability | Institutional framework for soil and water (policies, laws, regulations and norms) has been consolidated and will continue supporting SLM and IWRM | HL |
| **Factors Affecting Performance** | | **HS** |
| 1. Preparation and readiness | Was effective in helping to counter delays in cash advance faced at project startup | S |
| 2. Quality of project management and supervision | Many strengths (leadership, teamwork, territorial coordination) and an effective inter-institutional management model | S |
| 3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation | High levels of stakeholder engagement that shows as country ownership and driven-ness, cooperation and change processes | HS |
| 4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality | Clear examples of responsiveness to both human right issues and integration of gender topics. | S |
| 5. Environmental and social safeguards | Specific safeguards were not warranted, plus key degraded areas were prioritised | S |
| 6. Country ownership and driven-ness | Very high levels of multi-sectoral ownership and driven-ness | HS |
| 7. Communication and public awareness | Very effective communications and awareness-raising within Cuba | HS |
| **Overall Project Performance Rating** | **Score: 5.82 out of 6.0** | **HS** |

## D. Lessons learned

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| **Lesson Learned #1:** | **Sharing project management and execution responsibilities across a number of competent authorities is an effective means to both operationalise and institutionalise SLM.**<br>The way this was achieved (through Project Management Units and inter-institutional territorial teams led by different institutions) can be readily replicated by P4, and even by other projects that focus on land or ecosystem management. |
| **Context/ comment:** | The joint project management model that was promoted was a good practice that contributed significantly to the project's impactful results and excellent performance. This was the case both at the territorial level, where teams worked in an integrated and coordinated manner, and the central level, where competent authorities promoted a common agenda in SLM. This good practice can be readily replicated in the remaining CPP project, as well as other land-based, landscape-wide, or ecosystem management efforts that require the confluence of a number of institutions in order to be effective. |

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| **Lesson Learned #2:** | **A long-term (>10-year) country partnership approach, based on a cohort of thematically distinct projects, can generate results that are beyond the reach of a stand-alone project or a short-term programme.** |
| **Context/ comment:** | This project had a number of intelligent design features and enabling conditions for its execution that are directly related to its embedment in a wider programme. Rolling out a 10-year programme through a series of distinct 'sister projects' was a new approach in Cuba and had never been tested before. Even though such a long time-frame could seem excessive, the CPP Programme team reflected on the benefits of counting on a long-term programme to drive change processes (at the institutional and individual level) and concluded that lasting change at scale would not have been possible without a long-lasting programme (so far, 14 years in execution). |

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| **Lesson Learned #3:** | **The integration of gender issues by project teams has its own learning curve. To demonstrate gendered results, a good first step is to ensure that sex-disaggregated baselines are known and recorded, in such a way that any attribution by the intervention towards gender roles or groups (whether positive or negative), can be more readily measured.** |
| **Context/ comment:** | The "*number of producers and water managers that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water*" is a project indicator that included sex-disaggregated targets. Progress against these was duly informed to UNEP through PIRs (on a yearly basis) yet some inconsistencies in gender data arose from one report to the next. Only one territorial team used their own gender-disaggregated data to observe rising trends in female participation |

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| | from 2016 to 2020, and to differentiate between water managers and producers as two distinct groups.<br>This good practice serves as an example to other teams on how to better display gender results. Reporting cycles can be used as learning experiences for more project team members to begin using disaggregated data to showcase their gender-responsive results. |

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| **Lesson Learned #4:** | **Project data management is a vital asset for effective M&E and needs to be prescribed and built in from the onset of a project.**<br>Explicitness and common methods are required in order for project data management to be homogeneous, reliable and meaningful for performance evaluations. |
| **Context/ comment:** | This project generated substantial quantities of data from a number of different geographical areas, involving different teams and covering a diversity of topics. Data from project sites was multiplied further by the inclusion of replication and up-scaling as a project Output. A good part of this data was from biophysical monitoring efforts and another was linked to project indicators. For project M&E, there were challenges in collecting data in a homogeneous fashion, as some indicators had an ambiguous scope that made them subject to interpretations or had unclear baselines, and territorial teams would often use different formats to relay information to the CCU.<br>In order to avoid inconsistencies or gaps during reporting, it is therefore good practice to reach a common and explicit understanding of each Outcome indicator and its baseline value, at the start of each project, and to have in place an information management system for the project's own reporting. This was noted as lessons learnt (n°10 and 11 in the compendium) by the project team, who recognised the importance of all team members being fully familiarised with the Results Framework and using a common reporting mechanism for more effective project and Programme management.<br>A key purpose of project data management is to inform on results and impacts in a consistent and reliable manner. If well organised, this could even include results that are not listed as indicators in the project's Result Framework but are a good measure of performance. This could benefit the evaluations of individual CPP projects, as much as the overall Programme. |

## E. Recommendations

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| **Recommendation #1:** | **Prepare a Gender Strategy or Plan to guide and potentiate gender-related actions and gender reporting under P4.** |
| **Challenge /problem to be addressed by the recommendation:** | This recommendation was first formulated by the MTR of the CPP Programme and revived by the Programme team during a final reporting exercise at completion of P2. The team noted the need for "a gender strategy that enables greater awareness, training and empowerment". This |

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| | issue was not expressly listed as a recommendation in the MTR but featured instead in the MTR Executive Summary. It did not invoke a management response and has still to be designed as part of P4, yet it is recognised as a necessary element to plan and showcase gender results.<br>The Gender Strategy or Plan should:<br>- Have a clear objective that serves the CPP Programme, as well as P4.<br>- Be inclusive and consider the gender roles and perspectives of both women and men.<br>- Include indicators and targets to be reached by the end of P4 that combine both quantitative and qualitative indicators, expressed as process indicators (e.g. # of gender-related activities carried out) and impact indicators (e.g. changes in attitudes about gender equality).<br>- Establish responsibilities for implementing and reporting on specific indicator and targets. |
| **Priority Level:** | Opportunity for improvement |
| **Type of Recommendation** | Project level |
| **Responsibility:** | CPP Programme (Director and team), with support from UNEP and UNDP Task Managers |
| **Proposed implementation time-frame:** | Gender Strategy → Within 6 months of initiating P4 execution |

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| **Recommendation #2:** | **There is a lot to be gained from strengthening M&E practice for the purpose of P4 and the closure of the CPP Programme. P4 should have a common framework in place for information management and more impactful reporting that also accounts for the contributions of P5.** |
| **Challenge/ problem to be addressed by the recommendation:** | The consistent quantification, verification and communication of results through improved project information management is an area that needs further strengthening. Good experience has been gained through P5 and other prior projects that can be relied upon to take *project* data management (different to SLM data management) to the next level.<br>Cuba's good M&E principles can translate into robust M&E practice by developing the five outputs recommended here that focus on project information and data. *These five aspects could be valuable for Outcome 7 of Component 2 of P4.* Having a clear M&E framework, endorsed by UNEP and UNDP, will be especially relevant considering that P4 will be co-implemented by both GEF agencies. The start of P4 represents an opportunity to implement these recommendations that can also benefit the CPP Programme's final evaluation process.<br>**Good practice in information management for project M&E would entail:**<br>**(i) A common understanding of project indicators for greater consistency in project reporting.** At project inception, project teams should meet to jointly review the Results Framework, elucidate the scope of each indicator |

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| | (or adopt an interpretation), define what data is entailed in each case, and agree on how to distinguish between similar indicators. The result of this joint deliberation should be registered for internal consumption and feed into the M&E Framework mentioned below. → *Output: Reviewed and annotated Results Framework*<br><br>**(ii) Means of verification that are readily available for internal and external evaluation processes.** In this TE, the project's numerous achievements were described in reports and interviews but some indicators could not be immediately corroborated through documentary evidence. Further evidence was provided if officially requested and was not held by UNEP. Project-derived advancements in SLM are expected to be visible and measurable through project Outputs and indicators, so related materials should be on file and available for verification. Using a repository and agreed channels to systematise supporting documents and obtain clearance for public release or sharing would help to substantiate results more readily and thus facilitate evaluation processes. → *Output: Repository and channels agreed*<br><br>**(iii) Data collection and analysis for impact communication.** Project 4's information management would benefit from paying more attention to communication aspects in relation to results. Beyond project indicators, the possibility of obtaining and analysing the project's own data for the purpose of impact communication is a powerful way to showcase the project. Indicators and other variables could be used to develop key messages that highlight the project's (and the Programme's) most notable contributions[17] to sustainable development. Infographics could be developed too. This means collecting disaggregated data for various beneficiary groups and sites. It also means having greater possibility of noting the contributions of SLM to the country's SDGs and UNCCD targets (including 465,000 ha of forests under restoration by 2030) and to their reporting, as well as other national and international commitments. → *Output: Internal agreements on use of data for impact communication*<br><br>**(iv) Data spreadsheets for the main project sites containing basic and systematised information.** Basic information for sites in each intervention area: Name and size (ha) of site; original or replication site; municipalities; number of farms and size (ha); type of business; type of SLM practices being applied (including specific water management practices). More systematised or analysed data, including time series (to show change over time), could be: number and type of beneficiaries; involvement of women, youth, elders; number of ha under SLM; payments secured through financial incentives. Having spreadsheets for each main site would greatly facilitate understanding of project intervention areas. → *Output: Data spreadsheet for each project site*<br>**(v) Use of common reporting formats by territorial teams to facilitate the flow of comparable, timely and reliable information.** This measure can |

[17] e.g., m3 of water saved compared to previous practice. # women or youth that access to new jobs. # hectares and farms that are moving towards and/or applying SLM, and # that are officially recognised. # hectares undergoing restoration

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| | save considerable amounts of time in periodic reporting exercises and improve the efficiency of project management. (This was already noted by Project 2's team as lesson learnt #10). → *Output: Agreed format for internal reporting*<br><br>**To integrate these improvements into P4, it is recommended that an M&E framework be prepared to bring these five elements together and organise the project's information management needs as a function of project (and Programme) M&E**. |
| **Priority Level:** | Opportunity for Improvement |
| **Type of Recommendation** | Project level |
| **Responsibility:** | CPP Programme (Director) and UNEP (Task Manager)<br>involving government staff assigned to P4 execution |
| **Proposed implementation time-frame:** | (i) Reviewed and annotated Results Framework → Within 3 months of initiating P4 execution<br>(ii) Repository and channels →Within 6 months of initiating P4 execution<br>(iii) Internal agreements → Within 12 months of initiating P4 execution<br>(iv) Data spreadsheets → Within 6 months of initiating P4 execution<br>(v) Agreed internal reporting format → Within 3 months of initiating P4 execution |

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| **Recommendation #3:** | **Seek ways to demonstrate how civil society organisations have mainstreamed SLM and sustainable water management and that these institutions are not only aware of the benefits of SLM but also actively promoting its practice.** |
| **Challenge /problem to be addressed by the recommendation:** | The uptake of SLM and IWRM practices by farmers, cooperatives and productive units was evident in this project, with participation and support also from civil society bodies such as ACTAF and ANAP. However, the extent to which these associations, including other non-governmental bodies such as ACPA and FCM, have mainstreamed SLM and IWRM at a more political level remains unclear. These civil society organizations, all named within the ProDoc as key players, contribute to Cuba's sustainable development by promoting agro-ecology (conservation agriculture), climate resilience, food security and women's empowerment.<br><br>Those interested in SLM may be able to introduce its land and water resource management models into their work programmes, or have the association's leadership pledge its support SLM or sign a cooperation agreement with the AMA, in order to show the intent to formally and actively promote these models in their work. Any of these would be a clear indication of institutional uptake by civil society organisations, and thus a means to show that SLM permeated not only at the level of the individual membership but also of the organisation's governance structures and strategic direction. |
| **Priority Level:** | Opportunity for Improvement |

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| **Type of Recommendation** | Project level + Partners |
| **Responsibility:** | CPP Programme and the NEA (AMA /CITMA) |
| **Proposed implementation time-frame:** | Written and formal indication of institutional uptake of SLM by at least one association or federation → Within 12 months of initiating P4 execution |

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| **Recommendation #4:** | **Promote the CPP's international and internet visibility, based on knowledge sharing and dissemination of Cuba's approach to SLM.** |
| **Challenge /problem to be addressed by the recommendation:** | Cuba's effective approach to knowledge management was focused on the island's beneficiaries and the use of internal (domestic) networks, and very little on internet-based knowledge sharing, in part due to internet access limitations linked to the embargo on Cuba. Consequently, the international visibility of the project (and Programme) is low, as is the use made of international knowledge-sharing mechanisms (virtual platforms, webinars, conferences, etc.).<br>Knowledge management could therefore be enhanced by promoting greater international and internet visibility, and greater outreach outside of Cuba. Cuba has a wealth of knowledge, methodologies and stories to share and extensive expertise at hand that could be of benefit to other nations and practitioners who face similar land degradation issues as Cuba. A concerted effort in favour of **international knowledge exchange** would be an asset to the CPP Programme and could be supported by UNEP and/or UNDP, especially if needing to overcome internet barriers. Some of the platforms to be considered, that handle content in Spanish, are: WOCAT, Panorama Solutions, and the Bonn Challenge Restoration Barometer.<br>This exchange also has **communication** aspects that, if used strategically, can help to achieve greater impact through the use of terms and language that resonate with global communities of practice. This means that stories and practices from Cuba can be narrated from different angles, using different terms and data to relay the same story. The choice of language will depend on the preferred focus (gender, restoration, biodiversity, climate change, etc.). In terms of climate change, the MTR already noted the need for the CPP Programme to exploit and highlight its relationship with climate change. Even though it is not communicated this way, SLM in Cuba includes ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-smart agriculture and landscape restoration, terms that are amply used in the international arena. It is important to also use **project data** to support impact communication (# of jobs created, # of hectares restored, etc.), which ties back to the M&E Framework above. If the CPP Programme is able to calculate the tonnes of carbon equivalent that are sequestered, or emissions that are avoided, through SLM actions, this would be a strategic element and key variable to introduce into its data management and M&E practice. |
| **Priority Level:** | Opportunity for Improvement |
| **Type of Recommendation** | Project level |

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| **Responsibility:** | CPP Programme |
| **Proposed implementation time-frame:** | At least 2 Cuban cases or methods posted on an international knowledge-sharing platform → Within 12 months of initiating P4 execution |

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| **Recommendation #5:** | **To facilitate reporting to two GEF Agencies during P4 execution, these Agencies should consider the possibility and the means for the NEA to append Spanish content and accompanying documents to the project's periodic reports.** |
| **Challenge /problem to be addressed by the recommendation:** | Given some of the reporting challenges faced by the P2 team, allowing the next project to include a 'Learning and Success Factors' section or a 'Key Achievements and Challenges' section in the Spanish language, as an appendix to the PIR and HYPR reports, would greatly facilitate progress reporting for the P4 team. The core of the reports would remain in English and the more succinct sections would be complemented by more detailed narratives in Spanish provided as attachments. The practice of also including supporting documents (on project activities, web content, official or draft documents, email exchanges, etc.) should be promoted by both GEF Agencies. To facilitate reporting to UNEP, these supporting documents should, as much as possible, be uploaded systematically onto ANUBIS, especially those concerning project Outputs and indicators. |
| **Priority Level:** | Opportunity for Improvement |
| **Type of Recommendation** | Project level |
| **Responsibility:** | UNEP (with UNDP) |
| **Proposed implementation time-frame:** | Agreement between UNEP and UNDP, communicated to the CPP Programme, as to the inclusion of supplementary information in Spanish for P4 reporting → Within 6 months of initiating P4 execution |

## ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

| Page Ref | Stakeholder comment | Evaluator(s) Response | UNEP Evaluation Office Response |
|---|---|---|---|
| | The commenting process did not generate any feedback that has not been addressed within the report. | | |
| | | | |

## ANNEX II. OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND OUTPUTS

| **Intended Impact (=CPP Purpose): Reduced land degradation will allow Cuba to achieve its goals for sustainable development and increased food security.** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project Goal** (=CPP Goal): **Cuba has the capacities and conditions for sustainably managing land in a manner that contributes to maintaining ecosystem productivity and functions.** | | | |
| **P2 Objective** | **Indicators** | **Revised P2 Objective** | **Revised /Additional Indicators** |
| Strengthened coordination of information and monitoring systems for management of water resources based on an SLM approach | ♦ National, provincial and municipal authorities have developed and implemented agreements and coordination mechanisms for water management and use, on the basis of SLM principles, as evidenced by:<br>(a) Number of agreements by Scientific Councils<br>(b) Number of SLM methodologies adjusted<br>♦ Number of development programs that take decisions on the basis of updated information on the biophysical and socio-economic conditions for SLM | To strengthen the sustainable management of water resources and the coordination and use of information and monitoring systems, based on an SLM approach. | ♦ Number of national, provincial and municipal authorities that have developed and implemented agreements and coordination mechanisms for sustainable water management and SLM<br>♦ a) Number of inter-institutional agreements validated by Scientific Councils and signed<br>♦ b) Unchanged<br>♦ Unchanged |

| **Outcomes** | **Outcome Indicators** | **Outputs** | **Revised Outcomes** | **Revised /Additional Indicators** | **Revised / Additional Outputs** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Individuals and institutions have the human and material capacities to undertake SLM emphasizing in | ♦ Resource administrators of key institutions and agencies are aware of and support the processes based on sustainable management of water resources for SLM, as evidenced by: | 1.1 Territorial plans and programmes related to use of water and agricultural production [that] | 1. Individuals and institutions that have gained human and material capacities are undertaking SLM, emphasizing in | ♦ Number of resource administrators of key institutions and agencies who are aware of and support processes for the sustainable management of water and land. | 1.1 Unchanged |

| Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Outputs | Revised Outcomes | Revised /Additional Indicators | Revised / Additional Outputs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| water management. | (a) Number of institutions with plans and programmes that mainstream SLM for implementation of policies (environment, water, soils and forests)<br>(b) Number of land use plans that mainstream water resources management<br>(c) Number of standards and regulatory instruments reviewed and updated to incorporate SLM<br>♦ Local production entities in the intervention areas implement sustainable water resources management practices for SLM, as evidenced by:<br>(a) Number of individuals receiving technical assistance in water resources management<br>(b) Number of individuals trained in water resources management | mainstream SLM considerations | sustainable water management. | ♦ (a) Unchanged<br>♦ (b) Unchanged<br>♦ (c) Unchanged<br>♦ Number of local entities in the intervention areas that implement or teach about sustainable water management practices for SLM<br>♦ Number of individuals and productive units receiving technical assistance in sustainable water management | |
| | | 1.2 Technical standards and regulations on use and management of water [that] mainstream SLM considerations | | | 1.2 Unchanged |
| | | 1.3 Increased SLM awareness of decision makers at national, provincial and municipal level | | | 1.3 Unchanged |
| | | 1.4 Increased SLM knowledge of resource managers of key institutions and agencies at | | | 1.4 Unchanged |

| Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Outputs | Revised Outcomes | Revised /Additional Indicators | Revised / Additional Outputs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (c) Number of individuals trained for an efficient use of water (water productivity) | national, provincial and municipal levels, and local producers | | ♦ Number of individuals trained in integrated water resources management (IWRM) or water productivity.<br>♦ *(NEW)* Number of farms and productive units in intervention areas that receive recognition for SLM implementation | 1.5 *(NEW)* Improved offer in SLM education and specialization through collaborations with universities and schools. |
| 2. Strengthened biophysical monitoring and information management system for improved land use decision making | ♦ A network for coordination of information among key institutions in the 4 intervention areas for IWRM / SLM established and operational<br>♦ Long term monitoring and evaluation system for management of water resources modernized and generating updated information for SLM<br>♦ Number of institutions that have access to data of the SLM Repository and the Monitoring Network[18]<br>♦ Number of Brigades for monitoring of biophysical | 2.1 Integration of data bases and monitoring systems | 2. Cuba's biophysical information base and management system is strengthened and is being used to support SLM decision making. | ♦ Number of key institutions taking part in IWRM / SLM information exchange and coordinated monitoring in the 4 intervention areas<br>♦ Periodicity with which the monitoring and evaluation system for the management of water resources generates updated information for SLM<br>♦ Number of public SLM records accessible via the SLM Repository; number of institutions that upload information and data onto the SLM Repository<br>♦ Number of Brigades for monitoring of biophysical | 2.1 Operational institutional network for the integration of data bases and monitoring systems for IWRM /SLM |
| | | 2.2 Strategy for dissemination of information to end users | | | 2.2 Strategy implemented for the dissemination and exchange of information (SLM indicators, water quality, weather forecasts, maps, informative videos, etc.) considering different end users |

[18] This indicator was modified, following the Mid-Term Review, from # of institutions citing the data in their plans and programmes, to # of institutions having access to the data

| Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Outputs | Revised Outcomes | Revised /Additional Indicators | Revised / Additional Outputs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | indicators established, trained and equipped in the intervention areas | 2.3 Strengthened hydrometric network, water quality laboratories and early warning systems | | indicators trained and equipped in the 4 intervention areas<br>♦ *(NEW)* Number of management plans that make use of SLM indicators and biophysical information for improved land management decision making. | 2.3 Unchanged |
| | | 2.4 Water availability assessments in four intervention areas | | | 2.4 Unchanged |
| | | 2.5 Monitoring of water use and management in four intervention areas | | | 2.5 Modernized monitoring and evaluation system and data for the management of water resources |
| 3. Comprehensive management model for monitoring IWRM / SLM increases agricultural production in four | ♦ Number of hectares in the 4 intervention areas where the efficient use of water and increase in productivity generate SLM<br>♦ Number of producers and water resources managers in the 4 intervention areas that implement SLM measures with emphasis in water | 3.1 Integrated water resources management model and demonstrations in four intervention areas | 3. Comprehensive management model and monitoring of IWRM / SLM increases water productivity in four intervention areas, and demonstrates its replication potential | ♦ Unchanged<br>♦ Unchanged | 3.1 Unchanged |
| | | 3.2 Increased efficiency in water use for agricultural production | | ♦ Unchanged | 3.2 Unchanged |

| Outcomes | Outcome Indicators | Outputs | Revised Outcomes | Revised /Additional Indicators | Revised / Additional Outputs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| intervention areas, with replication potential to other areas | ♦ Increase in the productivity of water used in the main crops of each of the 4 intervention areas<br>♦ Number of demonstration farms that replicate the comprehensive management model for monitoring water-related land degradation processes<br>♦ Number of plans for water use in agricultural production that incorporate consumption indices per unit of production or service<br>♦ Number of comprehensive management plans to remediate, reduce and halt land degradation designed and implemented | 3.3 Monitoring and evaluation of action plans, impacts and lessons learned | | ♦ Unchanged<br>♦ Unchanged | 3.3 Monitoring and evaluation of action plans, impacts and lessons learned from IWRM and SLM |
| | | 3.4 Upscaling of the management model to new geographical areas | | ♦ Unchanged | 3.4 Unchanged |
| | | | | | 3.5 *(NEW)* Inclusive communities of practice for IWRM /SLM involving women, youth and elders and multiple sectors |

# ANNEX III. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

## GEF Expenditures (planned and actual) by UNEP budget line

| UNEP budget lines | | Notes on budget structure changes | Approved GEF Budget (planned) | Final GEF Expenditures (actual) | Expenditure ratio (actual/planned) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PERSONNEL COMPONENT** | | | | | |
| **1100** | **Personnel** | | | | |
| 1100 | Project personnel | | 0 | 0 | 0,00 |
| **1199** | **Sub-total** | | **0** | **0** | **0,00** |
| **1200** | **Consultants** | | | | |
| 1201 | International consultants | | 60 048 | 4 016 | 0,07 |
| 1202 | International Experts | National Experts | 12 000 | 0 | 0,00 |
| **1299** | **Sub-total** | | **72 048** | **4 016** | **0,06** |
| **1300** | **Administrative Support** | | | | |
| 1301 | Administrative Support | also labelled as 1120 | 25 400 | 0 | 0,00 |
| **1399** | **Sub-total** | | **25 400** | **0** | **0,00** |
| **1600** | **Travel on official business** | | | | |
| 1601 | Staff travel and transport | | 68 400 | 10 564 | 0,15 |
| **1699** | **Sub-total** | | **68 400** | **10 564** | **0,15** |
| **Component total** | | | **165 848** | **14 580** | **0,09** |
| **SUB-CONTRACT COMPONENT** | | | | | |
| **2200** | **Sub-contracts (MOUs/LOAs for supporting organizations)** | | | | |
| 2201 | Sub-contracts to governmental agencies | | 68 700 | 147 502 | 2,15 |
| **2299** | **Sub-total** | | **68 700** | **147 502** | **2,15** |
| **2300** | **Sub-contracts (for commercial purposes)** | | | | |
| 2301 | Sub-contracts for commercial purposes | | 27 000 | 0 | 0,00 |
| 2302 | Transport service contracts | fused with 2301 | 40 500 | | 0,00 |
| **2399** | **Sub-total** | | **67 500** | **0** | **0,00** |
| **Component total** | | | **136 200** | **147 502** | **1,08** |
| **TRAINING COMPONENT** | | | | | |
| **3200** | **Group training** | | | | |
| 3201 | Technical Training | | 74 100 | 101 282 | 1,37 |
| 3202 | Training activites (regional events) | fused with 3201 | 9 000 | | 0,00 |
| **3299** | **Sub-total** | | **83 100** | **101 282** | **1,22** |
| **3300** | **Meetings/Conferences** | | | | |
| 3301 | Meetings /workshops | other lines were added | 74 600 | 190 790 | 2,56 |
| **3399** | **Sub-total** | | **74 600** | **190 790** | **2,56** |
| **Component total** | | | **157 700** | **292 072** | **1,85** |
| **EQUIPMENT AND PREMISES COMPONENT** | | | | | |
| **4100** | **Expendable equipment** | | | | |
| 4101 | Office Supplies and consumables | | 38 250 | 198 650 | 5,19 |
| 4102 | Reagents and filters for new equipment purchased | first fused with 4101 then reinstated as 4102 Lab Supplies | 10 000 | 2 937 | 0,29 |
| 4103 | Waterproofing for channels | fused with 4101 | 20 000 | | 0,00 |
| 4104 | Protection module for monitoring personnel (shirt, pants rubber boots, leather boots, gloves, hat) | fused with 4101 | 3 700 | | 0,00 |
| 4105 | Monitoring work module (Backpacks, annotation tables, field notebooks, stringline 10m, water bottle, compass) | fused with 4101 | 2 500 | | 0,00 |
| **4199** | **Sub-total** | | **74 450** | **201 587** | **2,71** |
| **4200** | **Non-expendable equipment** | | | | |
| 4201 | Computers and accesories | Non-Lab purchases | 273 350 | 842 425 | 3,08 |
| 4202 | Laboratory and monitoring equipment | | 688 900 | 459 929 | 0,67 |
| 4203 | Office furniture / Laboratory | fused with 4201 | 62 750 | | 0,00 |
| 4204 | Vehicles | fused with 4201 | 263 000 | | 0,00 |
| 4205 | Air conditioning equipment | fused with 4201 | 13 500 | | 0,00 |
| 4206 | Communications Equipment | fused with 4201 | 9 400 | | 0,00 |
| 4207 | Audiovisual equipment (digital camera, accessories, TV+video & film editing) | fused with 4201 | 8 200 | | 0,00 |
| 4208 | Irrigation Systems | fused with 4201 | 132 300 | | 0,00 |
| 4209 | Cluster equipment | fused with 4201 | 65 000 | | 0,00 |
| 4210 | Hydrometry equipment | fused with 4201 | 55 000 | | 0,00 |
| 4211 | Biogas Systems | fused with 4201 | 15 000 | | 0,00 |
| **4299** | **Sub-total** | | **1 586 400** | **1 302 354** | **0,82** |
| **4300** | **Premises** | | | | |
| 4301 | Premises | | 1 000 | 0 | 0,00 |
| **4399** | **Sub-total** | | **1 000** | **0** | **0,00** |
| **Component total** | | | **1 661 850** | **1 503 941** | **0,90** |

| UNEP budget lines | | Notes on budget structure changes | Approved GEF Budget (planned) | Final GEF Expenditures (actual) | Expenditure ratio (actual/planned) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MISCELLANEOUS COMPONENT** | | | | | |
| **5100** | **Operation and maintenance of equipment** | | | | |
| 5101 | Equipment Maintenance | | 30 600 | 153 841 | 5,03 |
| 5102 | Other operation expenses (insurance) | fused with 5101 | 21 600 | | 0,00 |
| **5199** | **Sub-total** | | **52 200** | **153 841** | **2,95** |
| **5200** | **Reporting costs** | | | | |
| 5201 | Publication, Translation, Dissemination and reporting cost | other lines were added | 52 902 | 101 243 | 1,91 |
| 5203 | Steering committee and subcommittee meetings | added to 3301 | 13 500 | | 0,00 |
| **5299** | **Sub-total** | | **66 402** | **101 243** | **1,52** |
| **5300** | **Sundry** | | | | |
| 5301 | Communications (tel. fax, email, etc) | | 16 200 | 39 295 | 2,43 |
| 5302 | Other miscellaneous (Fuel) | | 42 300 | 121 573 | 2,87 |
| 5303 | Others | first fused with 5302 then became Tech Supp | 16 800 | 20 302 | 1,21 |
| 5375 | UNDP charges (Fund Management Agency´s charges) | | 26 100 | 20 095 | 0,77 |
| **5399** | **Sub-total** | | **101 400** | **201 265** | **1,98** |
| **5500** | **Evaluation** | | | | |
| 5501 | Inception workshop | added to 3301 | 5 400 | | 0,00 |
| 5502 | Mid term Evaluation | moved to 5303 Tech Supp | 20 000 | | 0,00 |
| 5503 | Final Evaluation | moved to 5303 Tech Supp | 30 000 | | 0,00 |
| 5504 | Reporting and Printing Costs for M&E | added to 5201 | 10 500 | | 0,00 |
| 5505 | Adaptive Management(AWP;PIR) | added to 5201 | 10 000 | | 0,00 |
| 5506 | Audits | moved to 5202 | 12 000 | | 0,00 |
| 5507 | Final workshop | aadded to 3301 | 15 000 | | 0,00 |
| **5599** | **Sub-total** | | **102 900** | **0** | **0,00** |
| **Component total** | | | **322 902** | **456 349** | **1,41** |
| | | | | | |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | | | **2 444 500** | **2 414 443** | **0,99** |

## Financial Management Table

| NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Financial management components:** | | **Rating** | **Evidence/ Comments** |
| **1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:** | | **S** | |
| Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[19] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules | | No | None |
| **2. Completeness of project financial information[20]:** | | | |
| Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below) | | **S** | The documents available were mostly those posted on ANUBIS |
| A. | Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines) | Yes | Good level of detail at design |
| B. | Revisions to the budget | Yes | Budget revisions were carried out annually |
| C. | All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA) | Yes | PCA was signed |

[19] If the evaluation raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation may be given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.
[20] See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

| NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Financial management components:** | | **Rating** | **Evidence/ Comments** |
| D. | Proof of fund transfers | Yes | Financial Authorizations to UNDP |
| E. | Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind) | Yes | Proof is consolidated reports by the NEA |
| F. | A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level) | Yes | Summary is annual expenditures by budget lines, not by components or outcomes. |
| G. | Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)* | N/A | Was audited as part of UND's regular internal control procedures |
| H. | Any other financial information that was required for this project (list): | No | None |
| **3. Communication between finance and project management staff** | | **S** | |
| Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status. | | S | Maintained regular communications |
| Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done. | | S | Status is determined via Task Manager |
| Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Task Manager. | | S | No major issues within UNEP |
| Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports. | | S | Contact is between FMO and Task Manager or the Programme Assistant who then liaise with project team. |
| Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process | | S | Sufficiently responsive |
| **Overall rating** | | | |

# ANNEX IV. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

## People consulted during the Evaluation

| Institution / Intervn. area | Name | Position | Gender | Contact means * |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | International | | | |
| UNEP | Robert Erath | GEF Task Manager (Biodiversity /Land Degradation) | M | I (V) |
| UNEP | Gloritzel Frangakis | GEF Programme Assistant | F | I (V) |
| UNEP | Paul Vrontamitis | Fund Management Officer | M | I (V) |
| UNEP | Solomon Kinuthia | Finance Assistant | M | I (V) |
| UNDP-CO | Grisel Acosta | Environment Officer - UNDP Country Office | F | I (In P) |
| | Central Government – Cuba | | | |
| AMA | Maritza Garcia | Director | F | GM |
| AMA | Alfredo Martinez | CPP Programme Director | M | I (In P) |
| AMA | Yulaidis Aguilar | P2 Technical Coordinator | F | I (In P) |
| AMA | Anisleidis Hernández | CPP Programme Financial Administrator | F | I (In P) |
| AMA | Amaury Bécquer | Communicator – Collaborator with IGT | M | GM |
| AMA | Martha Prado | International Relations Specialist | F | GM |
| IES | René Capote | National Facilitator (for Terminal Evaluation) | M | n/a |
| IAgric | Victor M. Tejeda | Director | M | GM |
| IAgric | Yoima Chaterlán | Director of Research | F | GM |
| IAgric | Felicita González | Coordinator IAgri Management Unit | F | GM |
| IAgric | Reinaldo Cum | Researcher | M | GM |
| IAgric | Enrique Cisneros | Coordinator of SLM Expert Committee | M | GM |
| INRH | Aymee Aguirre | General Director | F | GM |
| INRH | Orlando Laíz | Coordinator INRH Management Unit | M | GM |
| INRH | Juan C. Almeida | Director UEB | M | GM |
| INRH | Luis Batista | Head of Topography | M | GM |
| INRH | Lisette Fernández | Hydraulic Specialist | F | GM |
| INRH | Elany Alcebo | Human Resource Management Specialist | F | GM |
| IGT | Orlando E. Sánchez | Director | M | GM |
| IGT | Francisco Cutié | Subdirector | M | GM |
| IGT | Dayana Torres | Head of National Project | F | GM |
| IGT | Francisco Cejas | Responsible for IGT Repository | M | GM |
| IGT | Miguel Ribot | Responsible for SLM GIS | M | GM |
| MINAG-Soils | Yamila Vigo | Coordinator MINAG-Soils Management Unit | F | I (In P) |
| MINAG-Soils | Yordani López | Specialist – MINAG-Soils | M | I (In P) |
| MINAG-Soils | Manuel Farradás | GIS Specialist – MINAG-Soils | M | I (V) |
| MES | Tania Merino | Project Specialist | F | I (V) |
| INICA (+) | Reinerio Labrada | Extensionism Coordinator | M | I (V) |
| CITMA | Jessica Fernández | Head of Climate Change Dept, General Directorate | F | I (V) |
| | Territorial Actors | | | |
| Guantánamo-Maisí | Teuddys Limeres | Sub-Delegado– MINAG, Territorial Coordinator P2 | M | I (V) |

| Institution / Intervn. area | Name | Position | Gender | Contact means * |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Guantánamo-Maisí | Alexander Fernández | CITMA-Coordinator Management Unit | M | I (V) |
| Guantánamo-Maisí | Antonio Márquez | Farmer – Producer | M | I (V) |
| CRB Granma | Norbelis Reyes | Territorial Coordinator P2 – CITMA | F | I (V) |
| CRB Granma | Jorge Arcia | Farmer - Producer (Finca La Victoria) | M | I (V) |
| CRB Las Tunas | Amado Luis Palma | Sub-Delegate CITMA – Coordinator Las Tunas. | M | I (V) |
| Pinar del Rio | Gerald Malagón | Territorial Director for Provincial Meteorology Coordinator CITMA | M | I (V) |
| Pinar del Rio | Rafael Martín | Technical Coordinator for SLM – Iagric | M | I (V) |
| Pinar del Rio | Onay Martínez | Producer (Finca Tierra Brava, Los Palacios) | M | I (V) |
| Mayabeque | Suleidys Abreu | Sub-Director - CITMA Mayabeque | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Dulce M. Rodríguez | Territorial Coordinator | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Lidia Fernández | Soils Specialist – MINAG | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Kamila Pérez | Head of Soils Department - MINAG Mayabeque | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Iván E. Martínez | Specialist - CITMA Mayabeque | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Mirta C. Alfonso | State Forestry Service – Mayabeque | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Bladimir Carrasco | Specialist CPP-OP15 – Mayabeque | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Luis O. Hernández | Head of Service HDRRH – INRH | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Argelio González | Collaboration Director - Provincial Government | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Amalia Álvarez | Collaboration Specialist - Provincial Government | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Pedro R. García | Technical Service Director - Derivadora Mapostón-Pedroso-Guira INRH | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Saray Abaín | Head de Construction - Derivadora Mapostón-PG | F | GM |
| Mayabeque | Ramón Columbié | Operator - Derivadora Mapostón-PG | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Osmani Fernández | Head of Irrigation Community | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Radames Martínez | President, Cooperative "Rosa Elena Simeón" | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Duniesky González | Vice-President, Cooperative "Rosa Elena Simeón" | M | GM |
| Mayabeque | Yoel Hernández | Farmer – Producer (Finca "El Mulato") | M | GM |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

(+) Is part of the Sugar Entrepreneurial Group (AZCuba)
I = Interviewed.
Interview format: (V) = Virtual. (In P) = In person
GM = Group meeting
CRB: Cauto River Basin

## ANNEX V. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

**Programme documents**

- CPP Programme Document (GEF ID 2437)
- CPP country endorsement letter
- Lessons Learnt
- Publications (sample of books, booklets, compendia)

**P2: Project at approval:**

- P2 PPG documentation (GEF approval letter, workshop reports, PPG reports)
- Approved CEO Endorsement Request for Full-Sized Project proposal (GEF ID: 8003)
- Approved UNEP Project Document, and Appendices, specifically:
    - Appendix 1: Budget by project components and UNEP budget lines
    - Appendix 2: Co-financing by source and UNEP budget lines
    - Appendix 3: Incremental Cost Matrix
    - Appendix 4: Results Framework
    - Appendix 5: Workplan and timetable
    - Appendix 6: Key deliverables and benchmarks
    - Appendix 7: Costed M&E plan
    - Appendix 8: Summary of reporting requirements and responsibilities
    - Appendix 9: Standard Terminal Evaluation TOR
    - Appendix 10: Decision-making flowchart and organizational chart
    - Appendix 11: Terms of Reference
    - Appendix 12: Co-financing commitment letters from project partners
    - Appendix 13: Endorsement letter of GEF National Focal Point
    - Appendix 14: Draft procurement plan
    - Appendix 15: Description of Demonstration Sites and Map
    - Appendix 16: Social and Environmental Checklist
    - Appendix 17: LD Tracking Tool
    - Appendix 18: Theory of Change
    - Appendix 19: List of References
- UNEP response to GEF review (including STAP comments)
- UNEP Project Review Committee (PRC) notes and responses from Task Manager
- GEF approval letter for P2

**P2: Project in implementation:**

- Project Cooperation Agreement (countersigned by AMA and UNEP)
- Project extension request letter

- Progress reports – PIRs and HYPR (sample from 2017-2021)
- Expenditure reports (sample from 2015-2019) – GEF funds and co-finance
- Final co-finance report
- Cash advance requests and approvals
- UNDP Financial Authorizations and statements
- Annual workplans
- Annual inventories (equipment)
- Minutes /notes of National Steering Committee meetings (2014-2019)
- Budget revisions (annual)
- Mid-Term Review – Final report (combined with CPP Programme's MTR)
- UNEP terminal reporting (Final Report, financial report, budget revision, inventory)
- Internal reports from territorial teams to CCU (sample for each intervention area)

**Project Outputs and Outcome deliverables:**

- Methodologies approved (sample)
- Standards adopted (sample)
- Regulations (Decrees and Decree-Laws)
- Cooperation Agreements (sample) signed by AMA, CPP and a partner institution
- Compendium of maps showing SLM indicator monitoring over time
- Internal P2 closing Technical Report ("Informe Técnico de Cierre")
- Press releases
- Videos of documentaries, spots and news reportages concerning P2 sites and activities
- Info-Communication Strategy
- Publications (bulletins, flyers, booklets)
- Scientific articles

**Other official information:**

- National Climate Change Plan ("Tarea Vida")
- National Environment Strategy 2015-2020
- National Environment Strategy 2021-2025
- Cuba's second report to the UNCCD (PRAIS 3, 2018): https://prais.unccd.int/node/208
- UNCCD – Cuba's Land Degradation Neutrality targets (2020): https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/ldn_targets/2020-08/Cuba%20LDN%20Country%20Commitments.pdf
- CPP-OP15 Facebook page: https://es-la.facebook.com/MSTenCUBA/
- News sites and institutional websites (see below)
- Scholarly articles on SLM, water and soil management in Cuba

**Other references:**

- News article 9 Oct 2022: http://www.cubadebate.cu/especiales/2022/10/09/cuando-la-braveza-de-la-tierra-puede-contra-los-embates-de-la-naturaleza-fotos/
- Article on soils (2017): https://revistas.um.es/agroecologia/article/view/330321/229281
- Article on water use in agriculture (2014): http://portal.amelica.org/ameli/journal/394/3941748010/3941748010.pdf
- Federation of Cuban Women: https://cubaplatform.org/federation-cuban-women

# ANNEX VI. KEY PROJECT RESULTS

## (1) Water productivity trends in project intervention areas

| Baseline (BL) | Target | Result 2018 | % change from BL | % diff from Target | Result 2019 | % change from BL | % diff from Target | Result 2020 | % change from BL | % diff from Target | Result 2021 | % change from BL | % diff from Target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pinar del Rio** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tobacco: 2,976 m3/t | Tobacco: 2,609 m3/t | Tobacco: 1,661 m3/t | ↓ 44.18% | ↓ 36.33 | Tobacco: 1,530 m3/t | ↓ 48.6% | ↓ 41.35 | Tobacco: 1,454 m3/t | ↓ 51.14% | ↓ 44.27 | same | | |
| Rice: 5,788 m3/t | Rice: 3,946 m3/t | Rice: 3,500 m3/t | ↓ 39.53 | ↓ 11.3 | Rice: 3,185 m3/t | ↓ 44.97 | ↓ 19.28 | Rice: 3,089 m3/t | ↓ 46.63 | ↓ 21.71 | as | | |
| Beans: 6,472 m3/t | Beans: 4,959 m3/t | Beans: 4,444 m3/t | ↓ 31.33% | ↓ 10.38% | Beans: 4,612 m3/t | ↓ 28.74% | ↓ 7% | Beans: 4,981 m3/t | ↓ 23% | ↑ 0.44% | 2020 | | |
| Maize: 7,284 m3/t | Maize: 5,364 m3/t | | | | Maize: 4,931 m3/t | ↓ 32.3% | ↓ 8.07% | Maize: 4,734 m3/t | ↓ 35% | ↓ 11.74% | | | |
| **Havana-Matanzas - Artemisa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Potato: 279 m3/t | Potato: 256 m3/t | | | | Potato: 227 m3/t | ↓ 18.64% | ↓ 11.33% | Potato: 221,7 m3/t | ↓ 20.54% | ↓ 13.4% | same as 2020 | | |
| **Havana-Matanzas - Mayabeque** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rice: 6,967 m3/t | Rice: 4,479 m3/t | Rice: 1,783 m3/t | ↓ 74.41% | ↓ 60.19% | Rice: 3,018 m3/t | ↓ 56.68% | ↓ 32.62% | Rice: 2,757 m3/t | ↓ 60.43% | ↓ 38.4% | Rice: 4,476 m3/t | ↓ 35.75% | none |
| Malanga: 1,195 m3/t | Malanga: 902 m3/t | Malanga: 1,907 m3/t | ↑ 59.6% | ↑ 111.4% | Malanga: 1,577 m3/t | ↑ 31.97% | ↑ 74.83% | Malanga: 1,183 m3/t | ↓ 1% | ↑ 31.15% | Malanga: 1,723 m3/t | ↑ 44.2% | ↑ 91% |
| Potato: 315 m3/t | Potato: 225 m3/t | Potato: 153 m3/t | ↓ 51.43% | ↓ 32% | Potato: 291 m3/t | ↓ 7.62% | ↑ 29.3% | Potato: 289 m3/t | ↓ 8.25% | ↑ 28.44% | Potato: 316 m3/t | none | ↑ 40.44% |
| Plantain: 943 m3/t | Plantain: 752 m3/t | Plantain: 656 m3/t | ↓ 30.43% | ↓ 12.76% | Plantain: 828 m3/t | ↓ 12.2% | ↑ 10.1% | Plantain: 745 m3/t | ↓ 21% | ↓ 0.93% | Plantain: 836 m3/t | ↓ 11.35% | ↑ 11.17% |
| Maize: 8,671 m3/t | Maize: 3,100 m3/t | Maize: 2,479 m3/t | ↓ 71.41% | ↓ 20% | Maize: 1,436 m3/t | ↓ 83.44% | ↓ 53.68% | Maize: 6,670 m3/t | ↓ 23.08% | ↑ 115% | Maize: 5,191 m3/t | ↓ 40.1% | ↑ 67.5% |
| **Cauto River Basin** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rice: 9,429 m3/t | Rice: 5,587 m3/t | | | | Rice: 2,425 m3/t | ↓ 74.28% | ↓ 56.6% | Rice: 3,061 m3/t | ↓ 67.5% | ↓ 45.2% | same | | |
| Plantain: 1,823 m3/t | Plantain: 1,046 m3/t | | | | | | | Plantain: 640 m3/t | ↓ 64.89% | ↓ 38.8% | as | | |
| Maize: 5,128 m3/t | Maize: 3,740 m3/t | | | | Maize: 5,115 m3/t | ↓ 0.25% | ↑ 36.76% | Maize: 2,690 m3/t | ↓ 47.5% | ↓ 28.1% | 2020 | | |
| **Guantanamo-Maisi** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sweet Potato: 1,441 | Sweet Potato: 1,137 | Sweet Potato: 1,300 | ↓ 9.8% | ↑ 14.33% | Sweet Potato: 670 m3/t | ↓ 53.5% | ↓ 41.07% | Sweet Potato: 680 m3/t | ↓ 52.8% | ↓ 40.2% | Sweet Potato: 482 m3/t | ↓ 66.55% | ↓ 57.6% |
| Plantain: 1,757 m3/t | Plantain: 1,023 m3/t | Plantain: 1,500 m3/t | ↓ 14.63% | ↑ 46.63% | Plantain: 980 m3/t | ↓ 44.22% | ↓ 4.2% | Plantain: 920 m3/t | ↓ 47.64% | ↓ 10% | Plantain: 701 m3/t | ↓ 60.1% | ↓ 31.48% |
| Maize: 10,235 m3/t | Maize: 8,700 m3/t | Maize: 9,200 m3/t | ↓ 10.11% | ↑ 5.75% | Maize: 2,500 m3/t | ↓ 75.57% | ↓ 71.26 | Maize: 2,480 m3/t | ↓ 75.77% | ↓ 71.5% | Maize: 1,186 m3/t | ↓ 88.4% | ↓ 86.37 |

**(2) Replication sites achieved during P2**:

| Area de intervención | Municipio | | Unidad Productiva | Tipo de sitio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Llanura Sur de Pinar del Rio | Sandino | 1 | Finca de semillas | Polígono |
| | Los Palacios | 2 | Finca Cultivos varios Cubaquivir (UEB) | Polígono |
| | Consolacion del sur | 3 | CPA Julito Diaz | Polígono Provincial |
| | Consolacion del sur | 4 | Finca Cascajales | No poligono |
| | Pinar del Rio | 5 | CPA Roberto Amaran | Polígono Provincial |
| | San Luis | 6 | CCSF Cuco Barcelo | Polígono |
| | San Juan y Martinez | 7 | CCSF Antonio Maceo | Polígono |
| | San Juan y Martinez | 8 | CCS Jaime Venas | Polígono |
| | Guane | 9 | CPA Pedro Rodriguez | Polígono |
| Llanura Habana-Matanzas | Guira de Melena | 10 | Cooperativa Vietnam Heroico | No polígono |
| | Guira de Melena | 11 | CPA Niceto Perez | Polígono Provincial |
| | Guira de Melena | 12 | Finca Santa Ana | No polígono |
| | Guira de Melena | 13 | Fincas Rebeca 1 y 2 | No polígono |
| | Artemisa | 14 | UBPC Gregorio Careaga, fregat Nena 2 | poligono |
| | Bejucal | 15 | El Roble | No polígono |
| | San Jose de las Lajas | 16 | CCS 13 de Marzo | Polígono |
| | San Jose de las Lajas | 17 | El Mulato | No polígono |
| | San Jose de las Lajas | 18 | La Chiveria | No polígono |
| | Jaruco | 19 | Los Guayaberos | No polígono |
| | Nueva Paz | 20 | El Tejar | Polígono |
| | Guines | 21 | CPA Humberto Hernandez | Polígono Provincial |
| | Guines | 22 | CPA Rosa Elena Simeón | No polígono |
| | Guines | 23 | La Torre | No polígono |
| | Batabanó | 24 | 1er Mayo | Polígono |
| | Batabanó | 25 | La Otmara | No polígono |
| | Quivican | 26 | San Antonio | No polígono |
| | Quivican | 272 | San Andrés | No polígono |
| | Quivican | 28 | San Ignacio | No polígono |
| | Matanzas | 29 | UBPC Mocha (fca Sem.) | Polígono |
| | Colón | 30 | UBPC Gispert | Polígono |
| | Perico | 31 | CCS La Argelina | Polígono |
| | Perico | 32 | Finca "Cayo Piedra" | No polígono |
| | Jovellanos | 33 | UBPC El Coronel | Polígono |

| Area de intervención | Municipio | | Unidad Productiva | Tipo de sitio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pedro Betancourt | 34 | UEB Álvaro Barba | Polígono |
| | Limonar | 35 | Fca Sem. Horacio Rodriguez | poligono |
| Cuenca Cauto | Río Cauto | 36 | CCS Los Silva | poligono |
| | Cauto Cristo | 37 | Area de manejo forestal, Pestán | poligono |
| | Cauto Cristo | 38 | Finca de semilla (Puente Guillen) | poligono |
| | Jiguaní | 39 | CCS Abrahan Martinez | poligono |
| | Bayamo | 40 | CCS General Ramos (*) | poligono |
| | Guisa | 41 | CCS Braulio Coroneaux | poligono |
| | Majibacoa | 42 | CCS Cuba Va (*) | poligono |
| | Contramaestre | 43 | CCS Jesus Mendez | poligono |
| | Julio A. Mella | 44 | CCSF Paquito Borrero | poligono |
| | San Luis | 45 | Autoconsumo Emp. Agrop. San Luis | poligono |
| | Palma Soriano | 46 | CCS Carlos Montalban | poligono |
| | Calixto García | 47 | CPA José Santi Blancar | poligono |
| | Urbano Noris | 48 | CCS La Cuchilla | poligono |
| Franja Costera Sur Guantánamo-Maisí | El Horno | 49 | CCS Lino Alvarez | No poligono |
| | Guantánamo | 50 | CCS Mariana Grajales | Polígono Provincial |
| | Maisí | 51 | UBPC Jóse A. Cantillo | poligono |
| | San Antonio del Sur | 52 | UBPC 28 de Enero | poligono |
| | Manuel Tames | 53 | UEB Ciro Frías | poligono |
| | Niceto Pérez | 54 | UEB Niceto Perez | No poligono |
| | Niceto Pérez | 55 | UBPC 1º de mayo | poligono |
| Camagüey | Sierra de Cubitas | 56 | Finca “El Alacrán” | No poligono |
| | Camagüey | 57 | UBPC Victoria II | poligono |
| | Sierra de Cubitas | 58 | CCS Camilo Cienfuegos | poligono |

(*) These sites are also listed as project demonstration sites.

**(3) Sites that gained recognition in an SLM category during P2:**

| No. | Sitio | Provincia | Área (ha) | Categoría |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Finca "Tierra Brava" CCS Niceto Pérez, Los Palacios. SD | Pinar del Río | 22 | Con MST |
| 2. | UBPC "Eliomar Noa Moreira", Municipio Imias. SD | Guantánamo | 1778.3 | Iniciada |
| 3. | CPA "Roberto Amarán" SR. Polígono de Conservación de Suelo, Agua y Bosque. | Pinar del Río | 201.56 | Iniciada |
| 4. | UBPC Victoria 2, Empresa Agropecuaria Camagüey, SR Polígono de Conservación de Suelo, Agua y Bosque. | Camagüey | 403 | Iniciada |
| 5. | Finca Tony Márquez, CCSF Enrique Campos Caballero, Matabajo. SD | Guantánamo | 28 | Iniciada |
| 6. | Finca Los Barzagas CCS Mariana Grajales Cuello, SR Polígono de Conservación de Suelo, Agua y Bosque. | Guantánamo | 14 | Iniciada |
| 7. | Finca "El Alacrán", CCS Camilo Cienfuegos, Sierra de Cubitas. SR | Camagüey | 26.64 | Iniciada |
| 8. | Finca "Finca Cascajal" CCS Lenin Municipio Consolación Del Sur. SR | Pinar del Río | 5.25 | Iniciada |
| 9. | Finca "Cayo Piedra" CCS "José Martí" Municipio Perico. SR | Matanzas | 46 | Iniciada |
| 10. | Finca Santa Ana, CCS Frank País, Empresa Agropecuaria Güira de Melena, Municipio Güira de Melena. SR | Artemisa | 19.33 | Iniciada |
| 11. | Fincas Rebeca 1 y 2, CCS Niceto Pérez, Empresa Agropecuaria Güira de Melena. SR | Artemisa | 21.68 | Iniciada |
| 12. | Finca El Mulato, CCS Orlando Cuellar, Tapaste, Municipio San José de las Lajas. SR | Mayabeque | 14 | Iniciada |
| 13. | Finca la Victoria, CCS Braulio Coroneaux, SR Polígono de Conservación de Suelo, Agua y Bosque, Municipio Guisa. | Granma | 2.2 | Iniciada |
| 14. | CPA Julito Díaz, SR Polígono de Conservación de Suelo, Agua y Bosque, Consolación del Sur. | Pinar del Rio | 348.67 | Iniciada |
| 15. | Finca Los Hermanos Velázquez CCS Cuba Va, Localización Blanca Rosa, Municipio Majibacoa. SD | Las Tunas | 13.42 | Iniciada |
| 16. | Finca "Manolo", CCS "Ramón Gómez García". Municipio Sandino. SD | Pinar del Rio | 12.5 | Iniciada |
| Total | | | 2956.55 | |

SR: Replication site

SD: Demonstration site

# ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

**Name: Téa García-Huidobro C.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Profession** | Biochemist |
| **Nationality** | Chilean / British |
| **Country experience (professional)** | • Europe: Switzerland<br>• Americas: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela. |
| **Education** | • (Sep 1998–Aug 1999) Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Technology<br>• (Sep 1992–Aug 1995) Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Biochemistry |

**Short biography**

Ms. Téa García-Huidobro, a biochemist, began her professional life as a researcher in molecular and cell biology. After obtaining a Masters in Environmental Management (Imperial College, London, 1999), she began working for the Government of Chile on sustainable natural resource management and has dedicated herself to environmental issues ever since. In her time with the Chilean Government, she focused on public policies, regulations and tools for biodiversity conservation and institutional capacity development. She widened her project management and oversight skills after joining the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Panama to manage a portfolio of Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded projects, mainly for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Téa was then Regional Programme Coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), where she continued to drive the conservation and sustainable development agenda from IUCN's Regional Office in Costa Rica. In 2017, she became an international consultant, specialising in project drafting, reporting, compilation analyses and independent evaluations. After a period at IUCN headquarters in Switzerland, in the temporary position of Special Advisor to the Acting Director General, she returned to consulting and is now undertaking external evaluations for UNEP's Evaluation Office.

**Key specialties and capabilities cover**:

- Policy-making in biodiversity-related issues and under international conventions
- Multi-stakeholder governance, coordination and consultations
- Strategic and operational planning
- Portfolio management, oversight, and fundraising
- Analytical skills, quality control, capacity for synthesis

**Selected assignments and experiences**

**Only independent international consultancies:**

| Dates | Location | Contractor | Position - *Role* | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sep. 2022 – Feb. 2023 | Cuba & home-based | UNEP Evaluation Office | International consultant - *External Evaluator* | Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in Cuba ("Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management"), executed by Cuba's Environment Agency. |
| Jun. – Sep. 2022 | home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Project formulation* | Formulation of a project proposal for DEFRA's Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, destined for the Moskitia (Honduras), Selva Maya (Belize, Guatemala) and Trifinio (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras) regions |
| Jul. 2021 – Mar. 2022 | home-based | UNEP Evaluation Office | International consultant - *External Evaluator* | Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in Brazil, Chile and Madagascar ("Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE): Conserving Earth's Most Irreplaceable Sites for Endangered Biodiversity"), executed by BirdLife International. |
| May – Dec. 2021 | home-based | UNEP Evaluation Office | International consultant - *External Evaluator* | Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in 73 countries ("Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD"), executed by UNEP. |
| May – Aug. 2019 | home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Compilation analysis* | Preparation of project closure documents that met donor requirements and provided an impact narrative for Ecosystem-based Adaptation interventions in six Mesoamerican countries. |
| Feb. – May 2019 | Cuba & home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Project formulation* | Formulation of a GEF-funded project concept under GEF-7 for Cuba ("Strengthening synergies between conservation and livelihoods on the north-eastern coast") in Spanish and English. |
| Dec. 2018 – Apr. 2019 | Guatemala & home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Project formulation* | Strategic advice, technical inputs and facilitation of consultations for the preparation of a GEF-7 project concept for Guatemala ("Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration"). |
| Sep. 2018 – May 2019 | El Salvador & home-based | UNEP Evaluation Office | International consultant - *External Evaluator* | Terminal Evaluation of UNEP-GEF project in El Salvador ("Contributing to the Safe Use of Biotechnology"), executed by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. |
| Jun. - Oct. 2018 | home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Compilation analysis* | Preparation of 12 case studies on Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Governance for Adaptation, covering 7 transboundary pilot sites across 6 Mesoamerican countries (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico and Panama). |
| Feb. – Jul. 2018 | Guatemala & home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Project formulation* | Strategic advice and technical review and revision of a project proposal to the Green Climate Fund ("Adaptation in the Guatemalan Highlands") with budgetary adjustments to raise cost-efficiency. |

| Dates | Location | Contractor | Position - *Role* | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aug. – Oct. 2017 | home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Project formulation* | Preparation of a project concept for 6 countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) to present to the BMUB-IKI 2018 call. |
| Apr. – Jun. 2017 | home-based | IUCN | International consultant - *Compilation analysis* | Preparation of the final Technical Overview and Completion Report for a project ("Governance, Forests and Markets") funded by DFID, spanning 5 Mesoamerican countries: Guatemala, Honduras Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama. |
| Oct. 2005 | Costa Rica + home-based * | Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock, Govt. of Costa Rica | International consultant - *External Reviewer* | Strategic review of the draft National Biosafety Framework of Costa Rica (regulatory policy and analysis), requested by the State Phytosanitary Service's Biotechnology Programme and facilitated through UNEP. |

***** home-based in Chile. All other references to home-based are in Costa Rica.

# ANNEX VIII. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

| ***EVALUATION QUESTIONS***<br>*Questions in light red correspond to Key Strategic Questions for the SLM portfolio review* | Civil Society | Economic actors | Govt: Ministries, Institutes, Companies, | Govt: P2 coordination | Govt: CPP coordination | UNEP GEF Task Manager | UNEP FMO | Indicators | Potencial Data Sources | Evaluation Criteria & Key Strategic Questions (KSQ) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **STRATEGIC RELEVANCE** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. To what extent were project objectives and implementation strategies consistent with: (a) UNEP's mandate and policies at the time? (b) the GEF Land Degradation focal area, strategic priorities and operational programme (OP15)? (c) national environmental priorities? | | | | | | | | degree of alignment with UNEP, GEF and national policies | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc, including Letters of Endorsement; UNEP policies, 2014-2017 Mid-Term Strategy and POW; GEF-3 programming priorities | A.1 A.2, A.3 |
| 2. Why did UNEP choose this project? How was UNEP's CPP co-implementation role defined? | | | | | | | | indication of active vs passive choices | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc | KSQ 1a<br>A.1 |
| 3. To what extent were efforts made to ensure the project was complementary to other interventions (CPP and non-CPP) so that synergies could be optimized and duplication of effort avoided? | | | | | | | | indication of synergies and complementarities achieved | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; workshop reports | A.4<br>F. |
| 4. To what extent were project objectives realistic, given the 5-year timeframe, budget, baseline situation and the national context? | | | | | | | | quality of project design; project delivery trends and performance; % of targets achieved within approved timeframe | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; periodic reports; amendments; MTR; terminal reporting | B.<br>C.<br>D.3 |
| 5. Would the same results have been otained in the absence of GEF support? | | | | | | | | indications of increment between baseline and alternative scenario | interviews /questionnaires | D.2 |
| **EFFECTIVENESS** | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***Delivery of Outputs*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. How successful was the project in delivering its Outputs? *(see comment)* | | | | | | | | project delivery trends and performance againsts targets and indicators; indications of availability /useability of Outputs | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; workshop reports; mission reports; MTR; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories; technical publications | D.1<br>F. |
| 7. To what extent did project Outputs contribute to achieving expected Outcomes and Intermediate States? (i.e., do causal pathways have a sound technical logic?) | | | | | | | | indication of closeness to project's Intermediate States; views on causal relationship between Outputs and Outcomes | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; MTR; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | D.3<br>KSQ |
| 8. To what extent did project results contribute to CPP Outcomes and Objectives? | | | | | | | | meaures of benefits attained at project sites; indication of closeness to CPP's Outcomes and Intermediate Objectives | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; MTR; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | D.3<br>KSQ |
| 9. To what extent is there a sense of ownership over project Outputs and results? | | | | | | | | indications of degree of ownership achieved; indication of sustainability /continuity of project results | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; workshop reports; terminal reporting; news stories | D.1 D.2<br>I.3, I.6 |
| 10. Were UNEP tools or methodologies (a) used or upscaled? or (b) developed that could be used in other SLM work (within or beyond UNEP)? | | | | | | | | # of UNEP tools and methodologies identified | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; institutional websites and documents; technical publications | KSQ 3.b<br>D.1 |
| 11. Did the project face any technical or political constraints in generating its Outputs? If yes, please explain. Were these identified, communicated and overcome opportunely? (i.e. before affecting the project) - *see sister Q37* | | | | | | | | # and type of constraints identified | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; mission reports; terminal reporting | C.<br>D.1<br>I.5 |
| ***Outcomes*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. To what extent were project Outcomes achieved, namely: (a) Individuals and institutions have the human and material capacities to undertake SLM emphasizing in water management. (b) Strengthened biophysical and information management system adjusted to user interests for better land use decision making. (c) Comprehensive management model for monitoring IWRM / SLM increases agricultural production in four intervention areas, with replication potential to | | | | | | | | project delivery trends and performance againsts targets and indicators;<br>% total expenditure | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; workshop reports; mission reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | D.2, D.3<br>H.1- H.3 |
| 13. To what extent, and in what ways, was the project an important initiative for SLM in Cuba? What was the project's most significant contribution to SLM? | | | | | | | | level of agreement on project's significance;<br># of positive news stories mentioning SLM;<br># of oficial documents mentioning the project | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | D.2, D.3<br>KSQ |
| 14. To what extent can achieved Outcomes be directly attributed to project actions? | | | | | | | | level of confirmation or agreement on degree of attribution; | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; workshop reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | D.1 D.2<br>I.3<br>KSQ |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Likelihood of Impact*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. To what extent did the project help to consolidate the SLM concept, as a means for different government institutions, as well as the public and private sectors, to align priorities? | | | | | | | | indications of SLM acceptance and uptake; # of different sectors co-financing the project | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | D.1 D.2, D.3 H.1 H.3 I.6 |
| 16. To what extent has the project helped to promote institutional changes, changes in behavior or perception, policy changes, and new opportunities? Were these changes or new decisions prompted by increased scientific evidence/knowledge or | | | | | | | | indications of catalytic effects; relevance of acquired scientific evidence/knowledge or capacity in change /decision processes | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | KSQ 4.c D.3 |
| 17. Has SLM been mainstreamed beyond the original scope of work? If yes, please specify | | | | | | | | indications of catalytic effects | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | D3 |
| 18. Are there areas of work that continued after the project ended? How likely are those areas of work to continue over the medium and longer term? | | | | | | | | # of work areas ongoing beyond project duration | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | D.3 H.3 I.6 |
| 19. How much degraded land has been improved (measured in hectares)? | | | | | | | | # of hectareas under improved management | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | KSQ 4.a |
| 20. What follow-up initiatives, if any, are needed to sustain the project's impact, replicate or upscale this experience? | | | | | | | | type of follow-up initiatives identified | interviews /questionnaires; terminal reporting; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | D.3 KSQ |
| 21. Did the project result in any unplanned positive effects? Did it lead to any unintended negative effects? If yes, please explain | | | | | | | | # of unplanned effects and value ascribed to them (+ve /-ve) | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; correspondence between UNEP and project team; terminal reporting | D.3 |
| 22. Are there any particular innovations and best practices coming from the project? *(see also Q54)* Were there any gaps or potentials in innovation not realized? | | | | | | | | # of innovations and best practices identified; # of missed innovation opportunities or gaps identified | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; institutional websites and documents; terminal reporting | KSQ 3.c D.3 |
| **SUSTAINABILITY** | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***Socio-political*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23. In the absence of external support from UNEP and GEF, is there sufficient government or stakeholder commitment to continue using SLM to guide management decisions? | | | | | | | | indications of commitment levels; # of government policies and/or staff allocations aimed at SLM; # of stakeholder plans aimed at SLM | interviews /questionnaires; institutional websites and documents (e.g. relevant plans); Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | H.1 |
| 24. How likely are the government and other stakeholders to continue with individual capacity development efforts for implementing SLM? | | | | | | | | likelihood of individual capacity building efforts; # capacity development plans | interviews /questionnaires; capacity building plans (if available); Cuba's national report to the UNCCD | |
| 25. What are the key factors that contributed to the sustainability of project results and impacts? *(see comment)* | | | | | | | | # and type of key factors identified | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; institutional websites and documents; terminal reporting | KSQ 4.f H.1-3 I.6 |
| ***Financial*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26. To what extent is the continuity of project results and their impact dependent on continued financial support? | | | | | | | | indications of financial dependency; institutional budgets and/or staff allocations; # of new financial mechanisms | interviews /questionnaires; institutional websites and documents; institutional budgets (if available) | H.2 |
| 27. How likely are adequate financial resources (GEF or non-GEF) to be made available for SLM in Cuba? | | | | | | | | level of likelihood; # and volume of financing commitments | interviews /questionnaires; institutional websites and documents; institutional budgets (if available) | |
| ***Institutional*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28. How likely are the plans, programmes, structures, capacities or collaborations strengthened by the project (either at the site or national level) to remain in place over time for continued support to SLM efforts? | | | | | | | | indications of likelihood of capacities remaining in place; # institutional plans, policies, budget, agreements and/or staff allocations aimed at | interviews /questionnaires; terminal reports; institutional websites and documents; plans, programmes, budgets or agreements (if available) | H.3 |
| 29. How likely are the government and other stakeholders to continue with institutional capacity development efforts for SLM? | | | | | | | | views /ratings on likelihood of capacities remaining in place; # of plans, programmes, budget or staff allocated to SLM | interviews /questionnaires; terminal reports; capacity building plans (if available); | |
| 30. Are there complementary frameworks, mechanisms or processes that already exist that could contribute to the sustainability of SLM efforts? | | | | | | | | # of complementary frameworks, mechanisms or processes identified | interviews /questionnaires; terminal reports; MTR; NSC minutes; institutional websites and documents | |

| FACTORS AFFECTING PROJECT PERFORMANCE | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Preparation and Readiness:*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31. Were measures taken at project inception to address: (a) weaknesses or over/under-estimations in project design? (b) changes in circumstances /project context? (c) efficient project start-up? | | | | | | | | # and type of adjustments made at project inception | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and AMA; project or UNEP Task Manager inception report (if available) | I.1<br>B.<br>C.<br>F. |
| 32. Were execution resources (funding, staff and facilities), specific roles and responsibilities, and management arrangements, confirmed prior to initiating project implementation? | | | | | | | | indications of confirmation of institutional arrangements and resources | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; UNEP Task Manager inception report (if available) | I.1 I.2 |
| ***Project Management and Supervision:*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 33. How effective and efficient was project management by AMA? How well did they adapt to changes during the project lifetime? | | | | | | | | indications of appropriateness of UNEP's project management; project delivery trends and performance | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; amendments; NSC minutes; correspondence between UNEP and project team; terminal reporting | I.2 |
| 34. To what extent did the project's management ensure productive partner relations, coordination and communications? | | | | | | | | indications of value ascribed to PMT's and country teams' partnership management. | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; correspondence between UNEP and project team; MTR; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | I.2, I.3 |
| 35. To what extent did the National Steering Committee (NSC) provide guidance and oversight, and contribute to effective project implementation? | | | | | | | | indications of value ascribed to Committee roles; # and type of Committee recommendations /guidance | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; correspondence between UNEP and project team | I.2, I.3 |
| 36. To what extent did the project team respond to the guidance/recommendations provided by: (a) the National Sterring Committee (NSC)? (b) the UNEP GEF Task Manager? | | | | | | | | indications of project team responsiveness; degree of implementation of guidance/ recommendations | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; correspondence between UNEP and project team | I.2, I.3 |
| 37. Did the project face any operational or institutional constraints that influenced its implementation? If yes, please explain. Were these identified, communicated and overcome opportunely? (i.e. before affecting the project) - *see sister Q11* | | | | | | | | # and type of constraints identified; # and type of remedial actions taken | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; correspondence between UNEP and project team; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | I.2, I.6<br>H.1<br>D.1 |
| 38. How effective and efficient was UNEP's project supervision as GEF Agency? (includes monitoring, reporting, risk management, and participation in Steering Committee meetings) | | | | | | | | indications of value ascribed to UNEP's supervisory role; # and type of decisions /recommendations involving UNEP Task | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; correspondence between UNEP and project team; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | I.2<br>F. |
| 39. Did UNEP provide technical support? If so, what kind? Was it timely and effective? | | | | | | | | indications of value ascribed to UNEP's technical support | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; mission reports; terminal reporting | D.2<br>A.1<br>F. |
| 40. Was the UNEP GEF Task Manager aware of the other SLM projects being implemented at the same time? If yes, were there any opportunities to share | | | | | | | | # of other SLM projects (in UNEP's portfolio) which linkages were established | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; correspondence between UNEP and project team | KSQ 2.a<br>I.2 |
| ***Stakeholder Participation and Collaboration*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 41. To what extent did the project achieve effective stakeholder participation and/or collaboration? | | | | | | | | level of, and value ascribed to, sectoral engagement; # and type of participatory activities | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; workshop reports; NSC minutes; correspondence between UNEP and project team; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | I.3 |
| 42. To what extent were stakeholders (local or national) involved in: (a) project design; (b) the sharing of lessons learnt from the project; or (c) the sharing of expertise and technical knowledge, or the pooling of resources? | | | | | | | | quality of project design; degree of stakeholder involvement; # and type of shared lessons, knowledge or resources | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; periodic reports; NSC minutes; correspondence between UNEP and project team; workshop reports; terminal reporting | I.3, I.7<br>B.<br>F. |
| 43. What was the level/nature of practitioner-scientist interface? | | | | | | | | # and type of practitioner-scientist interactions | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; periodic reports; NSC minutes; workshop reports; institutional websites and documents; terminal reporting | KSQ 3.a<br>I.3 |
| 44. Were the best partnerships leveraged and also sustained (both in terms of the project, and of UNEP's network toward SLM)? Were the most appropriate | | | | | | | | # of partnerships sustained over life of project | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; periodic reports; NSC minutes; institutional websites and documents | KSQ 4.b +c |
| ***Human Rights and Gender Equity*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 45. To what extent were gender issues and the inclusion of minority groups considered in the project's activities and results? (especially in intervention areas) | | | | | | | | indications of gender considerations; # of gender-related stakeholders involved | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | I.4, I.5 |
| 46. To what extent was the success of the project dependent on gender equity and/or considerations of gender roles ? Was the project able to innovate in the way it addressed gender equity? If so, how? | | | | | | | | linkages between involvement of gender-related stakeholders and project performance | interviews /questionnaires; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | KSQ 3.d<br>I.4 |
| 47. To what extent did the project address human rights and human wellbeing (e.g. access to land and resources, human health, rights to healthy environment)? | | | | | | | | indications of human rights considerations; # of minority /community groups represented | interviews /questionnaires; workshop reports; institutional websites and documents; Cuba's national report to the UNCCD; news stories | KSQ 3.e<br>I.4 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Country Ownership and Driven-ness*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 48. To what extent did the national government (AMA and other agencies), provincial actors and local stakeholders take ownership and provide leadership in project processes? | | | | | | | | indications of process ownership and leadership exercised by stakeholders | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | H.1 I.3, I.4, I.6 |
| 49. To what extent did the involvement of various stakeholders: (a) enrich the work of the project? (e.g. in the quality of Outputs, in consensus-building, in accelerating progress, in recognising human rights), or (b) open new avenues for NPCDD /UNCDD implementation or for increased stakeholder participation? | | | | | | | | indications of value ascribed to stakeholder inputs and collaboration | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; ; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | I.3, I.4, I.6, I.7 |
| 50. How were project partners who stood out as champions supported and empowered? | | | | | | | | # of champions identified; type of support provided to these champions | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; ; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | KSQ 4.b |
| 51. How much of the success of the project depended on production and consumption cycles and the economic system? How much influence did the project have on this? (de-coupling economic growth from land and ecosystem degradation) | | | | | | | | use of economic indicators linked to water use | interviews /questionnaires; workshop reports; institutional websites and documents; | KSQ 4.d |
| ***Communications and Public Awareness*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 52. To what extent did the project achieve effective communications (a) internally, amongst P2 staff and between CPP projects, or (b) externally, through public awareness and dissemination activities? | | | | | | | | # and type of communications /outreach activities; level of effectiveness ascribed to internal /external communications | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; correspondence between CPP project teams; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents; news stories | I.7 |
| 53. How successful was the project in its knowledge management approach? (exchange of learning among /with project partners and beneficiaries). What were the main challenges and successes relating to knowledge management? | | | | | | | | # and type of successes and challenges identified concerning knowledge management | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; workshop reports; terminal reporting; institutional websites and documents | I.7 |
| 54. Was UNEP involved in sharing or communicating on innovations and best practices coming from the project? *(see also Q22)* Was the project connected to any networks (e.g. WOCAT ) or knowledge management platforms for sharing? | | | | | | | | # and type of communications /exchange activities by UNEP | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; institutional websites and documents; news stories | KSQ 3.c I.7 |
| **EFFICIENCY** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 55. Were any time-saving or cost-saving measures applied, in order to maximize results within the approved timeframe and budget, or to lower costs? *(see comment)* . Did these measures involve project co-financing? If so, which | | | | | | | | indications of time- or cost-savings; # and extent of workplan and budget revisions | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence among project partners; periodic reports; terminal reporting | F. |
| 56. Were additional resources (cash or in-kind) leveraged by the project, beyond those already committed at project approval? (e.g. through synergies with other interventions) | | | | | | | | % of confirmed additional co-finance; new co-finance budgetary allocations; indications of unquantified additional co-finance | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; periodic reports; MTR; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | F. A.4 |
| 57. Were there events /activities that could have been sequenced differently for better results delivery? (coherency of project worklan). | | | | | | | | # and type of workplan revisions and their justifications | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | F. |
| 58. What obstacles did the project face that led to the need to extend its original duration? Did the delay in implementation affect project Outcomes? Could these delays have been avoided? | | | | | | | | # and type of obstacles identified; project delivery trends vs planned timelines | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; periodic reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | |
| **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT** | | | | | | | | | | |
| 59. Were GEF financial resources disbursed by UNEP in a timely manner? If not, what were the obstacles faced? (financial, administrative, managerial) | | | | | | | | # and date of UNEP disbursements; timeliness of disbursements | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; periodic reports; terminal reporting | E. |
| 60. Were administrative processes (procurements, cooperation agreements, etc.) conducted efficiently and in a timely manner by AMA and/or UNDP-Country Office? | | | | | | | | # and type of administrative issues appearing in reports /minutes | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP, project team and UNDP-Country Office; periodic reports; terminal reporting | |
| 61. Were co-financing commitments met as programmed and made available in a timely manner? | | | | | | | | % of co-financing achieved | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between PMT and co-financiers; periodic reports; terminal | |
| 62. Were communications with the UNEP Fund Management Officer (in Nairobi) fluid and timely? Was the FMO involved in adaptive management decisions? | | | | | | | | # and type of fund management issues appearing in reports /minutes | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence with FMO; NSC minutes | |
| 63. Did any irregularities arise in procurements, use of financial resources and human resource management? If yes, describe these irregularities, together with any measures taken to correct/prevent them. | | | | | | | | indications of documented irregularities or interrupted procurement/disbursement processes | interviews; correspondence between UNEP, PMT and/or partners; periodic reports; NSC minutes | |

| MONITORING AND REPORTING | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 64. To what extent was the project M&E plan viable, Outcome-based and included SMART indicators? *(see comment)* | | | | | | | | quality of project design; indications of viability /clarity of M&E plan; indicator achievement | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; MTR; periodic reports; terminal reporting | |
| 65. Were M&E responsibilities clearly defined across project teams? Did the project include an M&E budget? Were project stakeholders involved in monitoring? | | | | | | | | quality of project design; indications of viability /clarity of M&E roles; % of M&E expenditures | interviews /questionnaires; ProDoc; project or UNEP Task Manager inception report (if available); correspondence between UNEP and AMA; periodic reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | G.1 |
| 66. How did project teams monitor the participation of disaggregated groups (gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities) in | | | | | | | | indications of disaggregated monitoring in reports (e.g. in participant lists) | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; terminal reporting | G.2<br>I.4 |
| 67. Did monitoring lead to adaptive management and contribute to resolving implementation problems? | | | | | | | | views on, and evidence of, technical or management decisions based on monitoring; # adaptive management decisions | interviews /questionnaires; correspondence between UNEP and project team; periodic reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | G.2 |
| 68. Were the required progress, expenditure and terminal reports prepared satisfactorily by the global and national project teams and submitted on time? Were all reporting requirements met? | | | | | | | | # of progress, expenditure and terminal reports submitted; approval rates of reports | interviews /questionnaires; periodic reports; NSC minutes; terminal reporting | G.3 |

# ANNEX IX. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project**
Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems of Country Pilot Partnership Program on Sustainable Land Management (GEF ID **8003**)

## Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

### 1. Project General Information

Table 2: Project Summary

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GEF Project ID:** | 8003 | | |
| **Implementing Agency:** | UNEP | **Executing Agencies:** | Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) |
| **Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):** | SDG 6 "Ensure the availability of water and its sustainable management and sanitation for all", with its specific goals 6.3.2, 6.4.1, 6.4.2 and 6.5.1<br>SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote Sustainable use of terrestrial Ecosystems, sustainably manage Forests, combat desertification, and Halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss ", with its goals 15.3.1 | | |
| **GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7[21])** | This project belongs to a GEF 3 programme in Cuba which precedes GEF Core Indicators, which are retrofitted only until GEF 6. | | |
| **Sub-programme:** | Healthy and Productive Ecosystems | **Expected Accomplishment(s):** | EA(b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making |
| **UNEP approval date:** | | **Programme of Work Output(s):** | PoW 2018-2019 |
| **GEF approval date:** | 04 May 2015 | **Project type:** | FSP |
| **GEF Operational Programme #:** | OP15 (GEF 3) | **Focal Area(s):** | Land Degradation |
| | | **GEF Strategic Priority:** | LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural<br><br>resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape |

[21] *This does not apply for Enabling Activities*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Expected* start date:** | ?? | **Actual start date:** | 21 September 2015 |
| ***Planned* operational completion date:** | 30 Sept 2020 | **Actual operational completion date:** | 31 March 2021 |
| ***Planned* project budget at approval:** | USD 44,805,673 | **Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:** | 44,775,616 |
| **GEF grant allocation:** | USD 2,444,500 | **GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021:** | USD 2,414,443.27 |
| **Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:** | USD 55,500 | **Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:** | USD 59,000 |
| ***Expected* Full-Size Project co-financing:** | USD 24,544,380 | **Secured Full-Size Project co-financing:** | USD 42,361,173 |
| **Date of first disbursement:** | 14 Jan 2016 | **Planned date of financial closure:** | Dec 2021 |
| **No. of formal project revisions:** | 7 (routine budget revisions) | **Date of last approved project revision:** | 12. April 2021 |
| **No. of Steering Committee meetings:** | Yearly | **Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:** | Last: 6 May 2021 / Next: 13 April 2022 |
| **Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*** | Oct 2019 | **Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):** | 13. Oct 2019 |
| **Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*** | Oct-Dec 2021 | **Terminal Evaluation (actual date):** | April – Oct 2022 |
| **Coverage - Country(ies):** | Cuba | **Coverage - Region(s):** | Latin America and Caribbean |
| **Dates of previous project phases:** | Cuba's Country Pilot Partnership Programme<br>**Project #1:** Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory Systems & Awareness Building/Sustainable Land Management in Severely Degraded Ecosystems – **Status: Finalized**<br>• **Project #5:** Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of Cuba CPP – **Status: Finalized (Started with Project #1)**<br>• **Project #2:** This project | **Status of future project phases:** | Cuba's Country Pilot Partnership Programme<br>**Project #3:** Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms / Sustainable Land Management in Dry land Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas– **Status: Nearing Completion**<br>Project #4: Validation of SLM Models at Landscape Scale – Status: Under review by UNDP as lead agency, with UNEP co-implementing |

## 2. Project Rationale

1. This project is the second of five GEF projects within Cuba´s Country Pilot Partnership Program (CPP), which was included in UNEP's 2005 Work Programme and approved in 2008. Projects 1 and 5 and 3 were implemented by UNDP. Project 2 by UNEP and project 4 will be co-implemented by both with UNDP as lead agency. The CPP has the objective of strengthening the implementation of Cuba´s National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought (NAPCD). The CPP consists of 5 projects to be implemented sequentially and was initiated in 2008 through Projects #1 and #5 (see Table 1).

2. These five projects combined constitute national actions to strengthen the capacities for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and field demonstrations in the intervention areas located in three main regions of Cuba: the Southwestern Lowlands of Pinar del Rio and the Havana-Matanzas

Plains in the Central region; North of Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus, and to the East, the coastline of Maisí-Guantanamo and the Cauto River Basin.

3. The project under evaluation, *Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems / SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems*, constitutes Project #2 of the CPP. This 5-year project will build upon the advances achieved in Project #1 in satisfying fundamental capacity needs, and will focus more specifically on the development of the capacities required to ensure that key stakeholders (decision-makers, technicians and producers) have adequate access to useful information on SLM emphasizing in water resources management.

## 3. Project Results Framework

5. The project's objective was intended to achieve *'Strengthened coordination of information and monitoring systems for management of water resources based on an SLM approach* (CEO Endorsement Request, 2014).

6. The CEO Endorsement document for the GEF project 8003 notes that the project design was carried out in the context of the CPP, which is led by UNDP. The 'programme document' is the UNEP ProDoc for the PIMS project 3005 and this addresses the entire programme and project sequencing. A Theory of Change for this project is provided as Appendix 18 of the UNEP ProDoc. More examination of all the project design and results documents will be carried out early in the Evaluation Inception phase to ensure a common agreement on the results that are being evaluated.

7. It is noted that the formulation of outcomes in the results framework does not meet evaluability requirements: they do not reflect the uptake or application of outputs ('network for coordination' and 'comprehensive management model). None of the outcomes have the verbs needed to identify the project's intended level of ambition.

8. The project was delivered through four components with associated outcomes, see Table 2 below. It is noted that component four is not a results component, rather it refers to the project monitoring and adaptive management. Performance in this area will be assessed under the evaluation criteria Monitoring and Reporting as well as in the Factors Affecting Performance/Quality of Project Supervision and Management.

Table 3: Results statements (CEO Endorsement, June 2014)

| | |
|---|---|
| Component 1: Individuals and institutions have the human and material capacities to undertake SLM emphasizing in water management | |
| Outcome 1: | 1.1 Systems for planning, regulating, decision-making and coordination mainstream SLM considerations<br>1.2 Key stakeholders reflect awareness of SLM and of the CPP |
| Outputs | 1.1 Territorial plans and programmes related to use of water and agricultural production mainstream SLM considerations<br>1.2 Technical standards and regulations on use and management of water mainstream SLM considerations<br>1.3 Increased SLM awareness of decision makers at national, provincial and municipal level<br>1.4 Increased SLM knowledge of resource managers of key institutions and agencies at national, provincial and municipal levels, and local producers |
| Component 2: Strengthened biophysical and information management system adjusted to user interests for better land use decision making | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Outcome 2: | 2.1 A network for coordination of information among key institutions in the four intervention areas for integrated water resources management and SLM<br><br>2.2 Long term monitoring and evaluation system for integrated management of water resources modernized and generating updated information for SLM |
| Outputs | 2.1 Integration of data bases and monitoring systems<br>2.2 Strategy for dissemination of information to end users<br>2.3 Strengthened hydrometric network, water quality laboratories and early warning systems<br>2.4 Water availability assessments in four intervention areas<br>2.5 Monitoring of water use and management in four intervention areas |
| Component 3: Comprehensive management model for monitoring integrated water resources management / SLM increases agricultural production in four intervention areas, with replication potential to other areas | |
| Outcome 3: | 3.1 A comprehensive management model for monitoring integrated water resources management / SLM increases agricultural production in four intervention areas, with replication potential to other areas |
| Outputs | 3.1 Integrated water resources management model and action plans in four intervention areas<br>3.2 Increased efficiency in water use for agricultural production<br>3.3 Monitoring and evaluation of action plans, impacts and lessons learned<br>3.4 Upscaling of the management model to new geographical areas |
| **NOT A RESULTS COMPONENT**<br>**Component 4: Project monitoring and evaluation, adaptive management and lessons learned** | |
| Outcome 4: | **4.1 The project is subject to effective monitoring, adaptive feedback and evaluation** |
| Outputs | 4.1 Project monitoring system operational and providing six-monthly reports on progress in achieving project output and outcome targets<br>4.2 Mid-term and final evaluations<br>4.3 Project best practices and lessons learned |

## 4. Executing Arrangements

9. UNEP is the Implementing Agency for this project. The work was managed within the GEF Biodiversity Unit, which is part of the Biodiversity and Land Branch of the Ecosystems Division. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) is named as the Executing Agency.

## 5. Project Cost and Financing

Table 4: Project Financing at Design (CEO Endorsement, June 2014)

| Item | GEF Financing | Co-Financing | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Component 1: Individuals and institutions capacities** | USD 376,416 | USD 3,495,838 | USD 3,872,254 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Component 2: Strengthened biophysical and information management system** | USD 887,028 | USD 9,407,365 | USD 10,294,393 |
| **Component 3: Comprehensive management model** | USD 942,618 | USD 10,329,858 | USD 11,272,476 |
| **Component 4: Project monitoring and evaluation** | USD 122,398 | USD 84,100 | USD 206,498 |
| **Total Project Costs** | **USD 2,328,460**[22] | **USD 23,317,161** | **USD 25,645,621** |

### 6. Implementation Issues

9. The project did carry out a Mid Term Review.

10. The original implementation period was extended by 6 months from 30 Sept 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

### 7. Objective of the Evaluation

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[23] and the UNEP Programme Manual[24], the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, GEF and the main project partners, inlcudin NEPAD. Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

### 8. Key Evaluation Principles

Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

**The "Why?" Question.** As this is a Terminal Evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "*why?*" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) needs to go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance was as it was (i.e.

[22] UNEP Project Management Costs of USD 116,040 make the GEF grant total of 2,444,500
*23 https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies*
*24 https://wecollaborate.unep.org*

what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

**Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association:** In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

**Communicating evaluation results.** A key aim of the Evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant(s) should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the Main Evaluation Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an Evaluation Brief or interactive presentation.

## 9. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TE.

This project evaluation is part of a review of UNEP's portfolio of Sustainable Land Management projects and the strategic questions will be designed at the portfolio level for each of the projects being evaluated under that theme **(Questions for Justine to re-formulate)**

For Cuba – what, if any, is the relationship between GEF 8003 and GEF 4158 (also in UNEP's GEF LD/BD Unit)

1. **Level of continuity, integrative learning and growth of SLM projects at design phase.**
   a. Why did UNEP choose this project?
   b. Were learnings from Terminal Evaluations of previous projects absorbed into this project's design?

2. **Level of sharing of project results and learnings among the UNEP project teams (within the LD Unit, but even across the Sub-programmes, if relevant) of technically relevant projects[25] being implemented at the same time.**

a. Were the task manager and the project team at UNEP (of the project you are evaluating) aware of the other SLM projects being implemented at the same time? If yes, were there any opportunities to share information?

3. **The extent to which project teams (UNEP and Executing Agencies) are working within a common technical framework towards SLM.**

a. What was the level/nature of practitioner-scientist interface?

b. Were (a) tools or methodologies previously developed by UNEP used/upscaled, or (b) were UNEP tools and methodologies developed that could be used in other SLM work (within or beyond UNEP)?

c. Are there any particular innovations and best practices coming from the project and how is UNEP sharing these (was the project connected to any networks (e.g. WOCAT[26]) and knowledge management platforms for sharing)? (Were there any gaps or potentials in innovation not realized?)

d. To what extent did the success of the project depend on gender equity and/or considerations of gender roles[27]? Were there any particular innovations the project was able to achieve in addressing gender equity?

e. Did the project address human rights and human wellbeing (e.g. access to land and resources, human health, rights to healthy environment)?

4. **Project contributions to a common vision for SLM based on the global strategic priorities for land degradation neutrality.**

a. Did the project focus on the most degraded areas or areas of high value (in terms of its global importance and human dependence)? How much of the degraded land has been improved (was it measured in ha)?[28]

b. How were project partners who stood out as champions supported and empowered? Were the best partnerships leveraged (and also sustained, both in terms of the project, and in terms of UNEP's network toward SLM)?

c. In what ways did the project ensure that increased scientific evidence/knowledge or capacity led to changed behaviour/decision-making (if at all)? Were the most appropriate stakeholders targeted?

d. How much of the success of the project depended on production and consumption cycles and the economic system and how much influence did the project have on this? (decoupling economic growth from land and ecosystem degradation)

[25] For instance, between the five projects that were all coming to completion in 2021 and are part of this review, or any UNEP projects relevant to the specific project under evaluation.
[26] WOCAT is a global network on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) that promotes the documentation, sharing and use of knowledge to support adaptation, innovation and decision-making in SLM. https://www.wocat.net/en/
[27] Considering the significance of gender issues in SLM, especially at the land-use level.
[28] Please provide your comment also on the quality of improvement (e.g. actual rehabilitation or restoration, or at land use plan level?)

e. How did the project address it's **key** assumptions/drivers (included at design or noted by the evaluator at TE)?

f. Are there any **key** factors that contributed to the sustainability of project results and impacts (any highlighted examples of transformative effects, innovation and social uptake, championship and changed behaviour, financial and institutional commitments)?

**5. Are there any other considerations coming from the Terminal Evaluation of this project that you would like to highlight for the portfolio review?**

Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report:

Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:

What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[29]).

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:

What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:

What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:

What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:

What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

## 10. Evaluation Criteria

All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria. A weightings table in excel format will be provided by the Evaluation Manager to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The Evaluation Consultant(s) can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

### *A. Strategic Relevance*

[29] *This is not applicable for Enabling Activities*

The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

***i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy[30] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities***

The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[31] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

***ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities***

Donor, including GEF, strategic priorities will vary across interventions. GEF priorities are specified in published programming priorities and focal area strategies. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

***iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities***

The Evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

***iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence[32]***

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[33], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and

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*[30] UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents*

*[31] http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm*

*[32] This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.*

*[33] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.*

instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Country ownership and driven-ness

### *B. Quality of Project Design*

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[34] should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):*

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

### *C. Nature of External Context*

At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[35]). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

### *D. Effectiveness*

#### *i. Availability of Outputs[36]*

The Evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Preparation and readiness

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*[34] In some instances, based on data collected during the evaluation process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Evaluation Report.*

*[35] Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.*

*[36] Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)*

- Quality of project management and supervision[37]

### *ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes[38]*

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[39] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Communication and public awareness

### *iii. Likelihood of Impact*

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC *(i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact),* the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

The Evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionally affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

1. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[40] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration

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*[37] In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.*

*[38] Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)*

*[39] All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.*

*[40] The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.*

component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Country ownership and driven-ness
- Communication and public awareness

### *E. Financial Management*

Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The Evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project/Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

### *F. Efficiency*

Under the efficiency criterion the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships,

data sources, synergies and complementarities[41] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)
- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

### *G. Monitoring and Reporting*

The Evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

#### *i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting*

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[42] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities.. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

#### *ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation*

The Evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups (including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities) in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

As this is a GEF 3 project there will be no retrofitting against GEF Core Indicator Targets.

#### *iii. Project Reporting*

UNEP has a centralised project information management system (ANUBIS) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager and the consultant(s) will be granted access to ANUBIS. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

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*[41] Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.*

*[42] SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.*

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g disaggregated indicators and data)

### *H. Sustainability*

Sustainability[43] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

#### *i. Socio-political Sustainability*

The Evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the Evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

#### *ii. Financial Sustainability*

Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where a project's outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

#### *iii. Institutional Sustainability*

The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Evaluation will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)
- Communication and public awareness
- Country ownership and driven-ness

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*[43] As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)*

## *I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues*

*(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the evaluation criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the evaluated project should be given.)*

### *i. Preparation and Readiness*

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The Evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the Evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

### *ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision*

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects[44], it may refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

### *iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation*

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the Executing Agency. The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program occurring since the MTR should be reviewed. *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval).*

### *iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality*

The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

*[44] For GEF funded projects, a rating will be provided for the Project Management and Supervision of each of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. The two ratings will be aggregated to provided an overall rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision*

People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[45].

In particular the Evaluation will consider to what extent project-implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

The completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas should be reviewed. (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent).

***v. Environmental and Social Safeguards***

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements[46] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and r*eport* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

The Evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

Implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

***vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness***

The Evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long-lasting impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gendered and marginalised groups.

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*[45]The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y*

*[46] For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.*

***vii. Communication and Public Awareness***

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

The project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

## Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the Evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

A desk review of:

- Relevant background documentation;
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
- Project deliverables: [TM to list notable items];
- Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project *(where appropriate);*
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects *(where appropriate).*

**Interviews** (individual or in group) with: Under consultation, list of contacts will be provided to Evaluation Consultant

- UNEP Task Manager (TM); (No previous TMs)
- Project management team, including the Project Manager within the Executing Agency, where appropiate;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
- Project partners, including [list];
- Relevant resource persons;
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

**Surveys** [provide details, where appropriate]

**Field visits** To be coordinated with programme partners on the ground.

Other data collection tools [provide details, where appropriate]

## 11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

The Evaluation Team will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

An **SLM Portfolio Brief** will be prepared to bring together key findings across a number of UNEP projects addressing SLM and reaching operational completion over a period of 3-4 years (2019 – 2022). This will be prepared for wider dissemination throughout UNEP. This final details of this Brief, and the contribution to be made by this project evaluation process, will be agreed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

**Review of the Draft Evaluation Report**. The Evaluation Consultant(s) will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Task Manager and Project Manager, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward the revised draft report (corrected by the Evaluation Consultant(s) where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the Evaluation Consultant(s) for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the Evaluation Consultants and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first draft of the Main Evaluation Report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the Evaluation Consultant(s). The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 12 months.

## 12. The Evaluation Consultant

For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Team will consist of an Evaluation Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager, Janet

Wildish, in consultation with the UNEP Task Managers, Robert Erath, Fund Management Officer, Bwiza Wameyo-Odemba and Finance Assistant, Solomon Kinuthia, and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Health and Productive Ecosystems Sub-programmes, Marieta Sakalian. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of 6 months (01 April 2022 to 31 Oct 2022) and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 8 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of Sustainable Land Management is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English and Spanish is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Evaluation Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Office of UNEP for overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables, above. The consultant will ensure together that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

FOR SINGLE CONSULTANTS

In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

*Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:*

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

*Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:*

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the Evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

*Reporting phase, including:*

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager

- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

*Managing relations, including:*

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

## 13. Schedule of the Evaluation

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 5: Tentative Schedule for the Evaluation

| Milestone | Tentative Dates |
|---|---|
| Evaluation Initiation Meeting | |
| Inception Report | |
| Evaluation Mission (where appropriate and feasible) | |
| E-based interviews, surveys etc. | |
| PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations | |
| Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer) | |
| Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team | |
| Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders | |
| Final Report | |
| Final Report shared with all respondents | |

## 14. Contractual Arrangements

Evaluation Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP /UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

**Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant:**

| Deliverable | Percentage Payment |
|---|---|
| Approved Inception Report (as per annex document #9) | 30% |
| Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document #10) | 30% |
| Approved Final Main Evaluation Report | 40% |

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g PIMS, Anubis, Sharepoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

**Annex: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Evaluation**

The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available from the Evaluation Manager, are intended to help Evaluation Managers and Evaluation Consultants to produce evaluation products that are consistent with each other and which can be compiled into a biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. The biennial summary is used to provide an overview of progress to UN Environment and the UN Environmental Assembly.

This suite of documents is also intended to make the evaluation process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognised that the evaluation needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the evaluation process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation Consultants in order to produce evaluation reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link provided by the Evaluation Manager during the Inception Phase and use those versions throughout the Evaluation.

**List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:**

| Document # | Name |
|---|---|
| 1 | 00_Tools Description and Mapping (Word file) |
| 2 | 00a_UNEP Glossary Results Definitions (PDF file) |
| 3 | 00b_List of Documents Needed for Evaluations (Word file) |
| 4 | 01_Evaluation Criteria (Word file) |
| 5 | 02_Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix (Word file) |
| 6 | 03_Evaluation Ratings Table ONLY (Word file) |
| 7 | 04_Weighed Ratings Table (Excel file) |
| 8 | 05_Project Identification Table ONLY (Word file) |
| 9 | 06_Inception Report Structure and Contents (Word file) |
| 10 | 07_Main Evaluation Report Structure and Contents (Word file) |
| 11 | 08_TOC Reformulation Justification Table ONLY (Word file) |
| 12 | 09_Quality of Project Design Assessment (Word file) |
| 13 | 09a Quality of Project Design Assessment Template.xlsx (Excel file) |
| 14 | 10_Stakeholder Analysis Guidance Note (Word file) |
| 15 | 11_Gender Methods Note for Consultants (Word file) |
| 16 | 12_Safeguards Methods Note for Consultants (Word file) |
| 17 | 13_Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations (Word file) |
| 18 | 14_Financial Tables (Word file) |
| 19 | 15_Likelihood of Impact.xlsm (Excel file) |
| 20 | 15a_Likelihood of impact Test Case (Excel file) |
| 21 | 16_Recommendations Quality Guidance Note (Word file) |
| 22 | 16a_In Report Template Presenting Recommendations and Lesson Learned (Word file) |
| 23 | 17_TE-MTE GEF Cover Page Prelims and Style Sheet Main Evaluation Report (Word file) |
| 24 | 18_TE-MTE Non GEF Cover Page Prelims and Style Sheet Main Evaluation Report (Word file) |
| 25 | 19_Quality of Evaluation Report Assessment FINAL ONLY (Word file) |
| 26 | 20_Evaluation Methodology Structure (Word file) |
| 27 | Process 1_Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants (Word file) |
| 28 | Process 2_Template for Attestation Letter (Word file) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 29 | Process 3_Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form (Word file) |
| 30 | Process 4_Guidelines for Field Work During Coronavirus (Word file) |
| 31 | Process 5_Evaluation Consultants Team Roles (Word file) |
| 32 | Process 6_ Template for Reference Checks (Word file) |

# ANNEX X. GEF PORTAL QUESTIONS

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| ***Question:*** What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[47], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[48]). |
| ***Response:*** *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)*<br><br>Core Indicator Targets do not apply in the case of this GEF-3 project. |
| ***Question:*** What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)* |
| ***Response:*** *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*<br><br>*Paragr. 296.* This project has been enormously successful in stakeholder engagement and achieved high levels of cooperation, both of which are key elements in SLM. This is particularly evident in the government sector, which in Cuba includes large state-owned companies as well as competent authorities. Public institutions in charge of environment, agriculture, water resources, meteorology, education, land use planning and research are all contributing to implementing SLM and the country's National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought. Effective collaboration exists between these entities, having broken down silos to create a more collegiate and coordinated way of operating in the field, share information and datasets for the monitoring of SLM and water resources, and encourage farmers to adopt SLM and IWRM practices. In fact, the project's strengths in *stakeholder engagement* are largely behind the strong sense of ownership and commitment that prevails over the SLM model.<br><br>*Paragr. 297.* The project has also achieved the ample participation of farmers, cooperatives and the country's main agricultural associations, ensuring that its main beneficiaries from the non-governmental sector also took part. Farmers (including women) were not only given technical assistance and training in this project, but also due recognition as local leaders and the main agents of change. This participation has been so effective that a number of farmers from across the country are now recognised as "SLM champions" and act as spokespersons for SLM and role models to be followed. Engagement of civil society involved the country's main agricultural associations, ANAP, ACTAF and ACPA, but less information is available regarding their specific roles. It also involved a unique community-based water management body (the Güines Community of Irrigators) that exists since 1884 as a direct project beneficiary and partner in achieving a more efficient use of water resources in the Güines municipality of Mayabeque.<br><br>*Paragr. 298.* In this project, an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to land management was achieved. Cuba's approach to SLM was even taken across borders and shared with at least three Latin American and Caribbean countries (namely, Ecuador, Panama and Dominican Republic). Through south-south cooperation, these countries benefitted from knowledge exchanges and technical assistance from Cuba. Further details on key stakeholders (background information) are provided in paragraphs 72-76, 77-81 and 120 of the Terminal Evaluation Final Report, while findings |

[47] The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. .(i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

[48] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

regarding *Stakeholder participation and Cooperation* are described in paragraphs 132, 135-137, 180, 188-193 and 228-231.

***Question:*** What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

***Response:*** *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*

*Paragr. 299.* The project carried out a number of gender-responsive actions and was proactive in its inclusion of women. At the level of project management, a large proportion of the project team, including the territorial teams acting in each project intervention area, was made up of women who occupied positions as coordinators, administrators and technical specialists. The acquisition of new equipment and technologies in Mayabeque Provincial and at the central level (at EIPHH) allowed young female and male graduates alike to take part in the monitoring and hydrometry of surface and groundwater, and the technical formation of INRH staff, respectively. The project was careful to ensure equal participation and access to these new technologies, encouraging young women to specialise in SLM topics and use their skills to become advocates and resource persons for SLM and the rational use of water resources in agriculture for SLM.

*Paragr. 300.* Most of the project's gender-related activities were for awareness-raising and outreach to increase understanding of the gender dimensions of SLM. The project put together an Info-Communication Strategy that was inclusive and gender-responsive, with a strong focus on social factors relevant for information and knowledge management, communications and environmental education. At each project intervention site, a gender champion was appointed to coordinate talks and awareness-raising activities with local actors, producers, and surrounding communities.

*Paragr. 301.* In working with beneficiary groups in the field, the project purposefully included women in its activities and encouraged farmers to do the same in their farming operations and businesses. Workshops and meetings were carried out to discuss the relevance of gender to project activities the role of women in the conservation of natural resources and efficient use of water, and the differential roles of men and women in agricultural activities and to highlight how female leaders and producers were contributing to SLM across Cuba.

*Paragr. 302.* Specific gender results were obtained in relation to the number of producers and water managers that implement SLM measures with an emphasis on water. This Outcome indicator showed important increases with respect to baseline values, and was reported with sex-disaggregated figures only for one intervention area, Guantánamo-Maisi, where the total number of producers and water managers, and the proportion of women, all increased year on year. Other examples of the project's gender-responsive measures can be found in paragraphs 146 and 186-187.

***Question:*** What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

***Response:*** *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*

*Paragr. 303.* The UNEP Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist completed at project approval did not prompt the need for a Safeguards Plan. In this checklist, a positive response is given to the question of whether the project will respect internationally proclaimed human rights, stating that "the project will assist Cuba in strengthening capacities of the national and local

governments and stakeholders to reverse land degradation trends, ensuring sustained ecosystem services and meeting national priorities and goals for food production and water supply/quality".

*Paragr. 207 y 208.* Also consonant with applying Environmental and Social safeguard principles, the project intentionally focused on Cuba's most degraded areas, those already evidencing advanced levels of desertification, and areas of high productive and demonstrative value that presented deficiencies in water management. In this way, the four selected interventions areas ensured a representative spread across the country. The CPP Programme Document states: *The intervention areas are among those prioritized in the National Plan of Action for Combat of Desertification Drought, as suffering from particularly severe problems of land degradation. The 5 areas eventually defined were selected as covering a wide diversity of geographical, climatic and land use conditions and suffering from a wide diversity of land degradation processes, thereby maximizing their replication potential*.

***Question:*** What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

***Response:*** *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*

*Paragr. 304.* There are numerous examples of positive outcomes in the field of knowledge management in this project. These can be viewed as either outward-facing and beneficiary-orientated, for knowledge to flow between sectors, or inward-facing, for learning and knowledge exchange within project teams. One best practice of the latter type was bringing project teams together to review, at least once a year, the Lessons Learned and Good Practice from that year. Integrating this cyclical M&E exercise created a learning process for the project team. Conclusions and recommendations were drawn up, and best practice was noted and then propagated onto other projects (namely, P3 and P4) so as to continue implementing what works best in the field and for programme delivery.

*Paragr. 305.* Another inward-facing project practice relates to Adaptive Management. There were needs that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and hurricanes affecting project intervention areas that led to changes in workplans and required adaptability. One of the project Outcomes was conceived in support of adaptive management and M&E tasks and helped to build a base of M&E practice.

*Paragr. 306.* With beneficiary-oriented knowledge management, the project generated important changes in data management for SLM, in how monitoring and research are coordinated and in the dissemination of SLM and its practices and champions. In data availability and exchange there were important digital innovations in this project, from mobile applications to data platforms to modernised monitoring. Further details are provided in the Terminal Evaluation Final Report, paragraphs 141-142, 212-217, 228-229 and 235-236.

The project was able to raise public awareness, strategically and widely, and with this, amplify the project's interventions and key messages about SLM. Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 provided for increased SLM awareness of decision makers and knowledge of resource managers, while Output 3.5 (which was added as part of the TOC revision exercise) created inclusive communities of practice for IWRM /SLM (involving women, youth and elders and multiple sectors). These results continue to grow as interest in SLM expands across the country, and experience in SLM consolidates across a larger group of adepts. More and more benefits are being disseminated as SLM, as it relates to food systems and water resource management and becomes more widely practiced.

An "Info-Communication Strategy" was designed and implemented (Output 2.2) for the dissemination and exchange of information (on SLM indicators, water quality, weather forecasts, maps, informative videos, etc.) considering different end users. This Output was intended for specific groups of data users, i.e., stakeholders who had a degree of technical specialisation or an

interest in particular datasets and technical information. As a complement to this Output, public awareness campaigns and information dissemination to the wider public were also carried out. The CPP Programme has an official Facebook page that was used by P2. State media played a critical role, with news and television channels producing numerous short documentaries and news stories about the successes of SLM across Cuba. Raising the awareness of the general public on SLM and IWRM can therefore be considered an additional project Output.

The improved use of weather prognostics and soil data, through the development of two novel digital tools, also proved strategic for farmers. One allows farmers to receive regular guidance, from the competent authority, on when and when not to irrigate, based on rainfall predictions, crop types, irrigation technique, and soil moisture calculations. The other is a mobile phone application that acts as an early warning system to prepare for extreme weather events (cyclones and drought periods) and uses rainfall predictions to aid farmers to better programme their activities (planting, harvesting, grass-cutting, etc.). Both of these tools have been well received and represent an innovation in terms of how government agencies provide public services and interact with their user groups.

A further mobile phone application was also developed by the MINAG as a geo-referenced tool to assist in decision-making. Once the data sets for over 15 variables (soil type, agro-productivity, salinity, drainage, etc.) were digitalised and introduced into Geographic Information Systems (GIS), agrochemical laboratories were also required to digitalize their records and begin using mobile phone-based geo-referencing when taking samples. This means that biophysical, hydrologic, climatic, economic and social data are now available, digitally on the go, for over 200 sites covering > 200,000 hectares (and counting). These datasets, which are monitored and updated annually, are not only relevant to farmers and government specialists, but also for investment decisions and territorial planning, as they facilitate the identification, and hence protection, of the most productive agricultural areas.

Other innovations relate to the modernization of monitoring systems, through the acquisition of new equipment, tools and means of transport that now allow natural resource managers to better track provincial water use, needs and quality. Supporting the operations of biophysical monitoring networks was key, as it allowed fresh data to be obtained and to prompt the development of data sharing mechanisms, including mobile applications and a platform that facilitates the exchange of SLM data and information, considering both exchange with the general public, and exchange between competent authorities.

*Paragr. 306.* There was also attention paid to information sharing for the wider public (see paragraphs 145 and 165 in the Terminal Evaluation Final Report) and even the possibility of knowledge exchange with other countries, giving rise to south-south cooperation whereby Cuba shared its know-how and provided technical assistance to other countries. There was very little use of web-based international exchange and dissemination through knowledge-sharing platforms, such as WOCAT, in part due to restrictions to internet access faced by Cuba.

*Paragr. 307.* On the more educational side, having an SLM Masters and SLM integrated into various curricula thanks to partnerships with state universities is a worthy example of a knowledge and learning deliverable. Involving school children with an interest in environmental or agricultural issues at project demonstration sites and learning centres or as part of official acts, is also a means for learning and therefore an element of knowledge management for educational purposes.

***Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?***

***Response:***

*Paragr. 19.* The project scored 5.82 out of 6, which demonstrates performance at a 'Highly Satisfactory' level.

*Paragr. 6.* This is an outstanding project in terms of performance. It exhibited many strengths and demonstrated high performance in a number of key areas, with results that span all the way from new policies, regulations and procedures, improved data management for SLM and a modernised hydrometric monitoring system, to increased yields, water use efficiency and crop diversity on farms, an enhanced educational offer in SLM, and a growing community of practice for SLM. The project's conception as one of five projects under a 10-year country programme was a unique set-up in Cuba that had a significant influence on the project's performance. This set-up created strong enabling conditions that undoubtedly contributed to its success in tackling land degradation and made sense in terms of the change processes needed to achieve SLM.

*Paragr. 7.* By building on its predecessor (Project 1), the project permeated more readily into national plans and programmes, land use planning processes, farm-level practices, schools and post-graduate programmes, and the general perception of project beneficiaries. In doing so, the project also created enabling conditions for its successor, Project 4. In this project, state support has been consistent, coherent, and integral. Several SLM facets are being supported and stimulated directly by the Cuban state, with different competent authorities assisting with the technical, political, social, economic and financial aspects of SLM. Delivering SLM integrally is undoubtedly a best practice that has allowed the Cuban state to achieve significant results at scale.

*Paragr. 8.* The project's highest performance ratings were those for Strategic Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability, boosted by similarly high scores for Stakeholder participation and Cooperation, Country ownership and Driven-ness, Communication and Public awareness and Preparedness and Readiness. In fact, the project scored "Highly Satisfactory" under the majority of evaluation criteria. Findings point to a very successful project that achieved transformative changes both at the institutional and farm level. The way competent authorities, farmers, cooperatives and water managers work together to achieve SLM and conserve water resources was significantly improved by this project.

*Paragr. 9.* The project's performance is deeply influenced by its embedment in a wider programme and cannot be readily separated from the contributions made by other CPP Programme projects. This design as part of a continuum not only brought coherence to the project, but also added to its Strategic Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability. The project was able to achieve lasting, impactful and politically relevant results, in a shorter period of time (5 ½ years) than one might otherwise expect.

*Paragr. 10.* In terms of Strategic Relevance, the project was fully aligned with UNEP's, GEF's and Cuba's environmental priorities and strategies. As encouraged by UNEP, capacity building and south-south cooperation were noteworthy features in this project. The project (and the CPP Programme) offered a convincing platform through which to implement Cuba's National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought. By design, the project was intended to be complementary with other relevant GEF and non-GEF interventions. Even outside of the CPP Programme, timely and fruitful synergies were created with other interventions (especially BASAL, Manglar Vivo and INFOGEO), that led to joint actions, mutual reinforcement and cost-savings. In addition, significant volumes of government co-financing were mobilised that almost doubled the project's initial co-financing commitment. Good levels of Preparedness and Readiness were seen at project start-up, and during execution, adaptive management helped to counteract workplan delays caused by unavoidable external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Altogether, this resulted in very high Efficiency levels.

*Paragr. 11.* The project demonstrated outstanding Effectiveness, in part thanks to its continuation of the work of Project 1. By building on pre-existing efforts, institutional arrangements and partnerships effectively, the project overperformed on almost all of its Outcome targets and delivered a suite of relevant, timely and science-based Outputs that display high levels of user ownership. These Outputs have contributed to institutional strengthening, coordination,

biophysical monitoring, awareness raising, information and knowledge sharing, improved agricultural and water management practices and critically important achievements for farmers.

*Paragr. 12.* The project was extremely effective in lifting barriers to SLM and integrated water resource management (IWRM) -the special ingredient in this project-, while highlighting the integral nature and benefits of these management approaches. IWRM principles and practices were seamlessly combined with sustainable (or conservation) agriculture and improved farming practices to drive SLM and address the drivers of land degradation. One crucial factor behind this was the use of on-farm demonstrative SLM experiences as 'proof of concept'. Making this work required extensionist support and technical assistance (including new equipment) and involved inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary teams. By seeing notable short-term results in crops, water availability, income and even resilience levels, the use of scientific evidence, data and new techniques was able to translate into behaviour change and shifts in perception on the part of producers.

*Paragr. 13.* The project therefore achieved its three Outcomes amply, by improving human and material capacities for SLM with an emphasis on water, meeting biophysical monitoring and information management needs, and propagating, through applied science and beyond initial selected sites, knowledge of how to increase water use efficiency, restore water and soil quality, improve yields and food security, and integrate conservation objectives and climate change factors into agricultural production. There are farmers who no longer see themselves as producers, but as "agro-ecosystem managers".

*Paragr. 14.* The project even generated catalytic effects (almost a snowball effect) with results beyond those initially planned, such as universities taking up SLM in their curricula, including an SLM Masters' degree, even outside of project intervention areas. There is no doubt that the project is highly likely to reach its intended impact, especially because results boast very high Sustainability levels due to the successful uptake of SLM and aspects of IWRM, at various scales and across sectors. High levels of socio-political sustainability (with evident interest in expanding the SLM community of practice and fully institutionalising the government's innovative and official SLM recognition scheme) were matched by significant institutional sustainability (with soil and water resource management now supported by new policies, laws, regulations and instruments). Financial sustainability was marked by increased access to economic incentives and financial products for SLM and by the extent to which government agencies and state companies continue to budget for SLM.

*Paragr. 15.* Another key strength in this project is the extent to which Stakeholder participation and Cooperation were achieved. The inclusion of multiple sectors and the search for balanced solutions were integral to the project's design, and to effective SLM. Multi-stakeholder participation was indeed used to drive integrated land management approaches. Farmers, producer groups and water managers were given due recognition as key project stakeholders and even as "SLM champions". The multi-stakeholder approach extended also to project management and technical assistance, as project execution responsibilities were spread across several competent authorities. This resulted in a strong sense of teamwork, a multi-disciplinary outlook on SLM and a common understanding of the country's land degradation needs and challenges. This good practice was both effective and representative of the SLM institutionality, and showed how factors related to Quality of Project Management and Supervision influenced the project's impact.

*Paragr. 16.* The multi-stakeholder approach also served to increase Country ownership and Driven-ness. The diverse groups that this project effectively brought together (ministries, water and sugar companies, agricultural and forestry institutes, planning entities, universities, municipal governments, bank and insurance companies, producer groups and cooperatives) all remain engaged and committed to SLM and IWRM, resulting in a considerable degree of country ownership and driven-ness. Communication and Public awareness were also prominent in this project. The project dedicated important resources to outreach, sensitization and awareness-

raising activities. The gender-sensitive and inclusive manner in which the project encouraged public participation was conducive to dialogue and exchange, rather than one-way knowledge transmission. Feedback channels were also established, in particular with farmers and producer groups.

*Paragr. 17.* The project's abundant strengths were accompanied by certain areas in need of improvement. These were minor issues relating to project Monitoring and Reporting, which is distinct from SLM monitoring, where improvements were notorious. Project indicator monitoring implied a learning curve for project teams, and even when indicator values were above target, their consistency varied depending on the project intervention area. Documentation that supported results (means of verification that corroborated Outputs and indicators) was available upon request, rather than systematically filed and accessible for evaluation purposes. Project information management therefore is an area that would benefit from further strengthening.

*Paragr. 18.* Often in unsuspecting or subtle ways, the project was Responsive to Human rights and Gender equality. Either directly or indirectly, the project addressed issues of human health, the role of women, and the right to a healthy environment. By practicing conservation /organic agriculture, becoming more involved with their local communities, and creating conditions that improved human wellbeing, some of the farmers who adopted SLM were able to attend to the needs of marginalized groups. There are stories from the field on how diversifying agricultural production increased food security and created new income streams for rural families in ways that benefitted women and youth, boosted the nutrition of marginalised children, and in some areas, even slowed the trend of migration away from rural areas.

# ANNEX XI. SPANISH TRANSLATION.

## RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

### Antecedentes del Proyecto

1. El proyecto de tamaño grande del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA) y el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial (GEF por sus siglas en inglés) para Cuba "*Creación de capacidades para la coordinación de la información y los sistemas de monitoreo/MST en áreas con problemas de gestión de recursos hídricos del Programa piloto de Asociación de País sobre el Manejo Sostenible de Tierras*" (GEF ID 8003) finalizó en 2021 y ahora está sujeto a una evaluación final. Esta evaluación busca revisar el desempeño del proyecto (en términos de relevancia, eficacia y eficiencia) y determinar los resultados e impactos (reales y potenciales) del proyecto, incluida la sostenibilidad de sus resultados.

2. Este proyecto es el segundo de cinco proyectos dentro del Programa piloto de Asociación de País (CPP por sus siglas en inglés) de Cuba, financiado por el tercer ciclo de reabastecimiento del GEF (GEF-3) bajo su Programa Operativo (OP) #15 para el Manejo Sostenible de Tierras (MST). El CPP-OP15 de Cuba es denominado "*Apoyo a la Implementación del Programa Nacional de Lucha contra la Desertificación y la Sequía de Cuba*", un programa de USD 89,4 millones (USD 10 millones del GEF y USD 79,4 millones en cofinanciamiento) que fue aprobado en 2008 (GEF ID 2437) y todavía se está ejecutando. El CPP-OP15, en Cuba conocido más simplemente como OP15, tiene al Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD) como agencia líder del GEF, a cargo de los Proyectos 1, 3 y 5, y al PNUMA como agencia co-implementadora, a cargo del Proyecto 2 (este proyecto). El Proyecto 4, el último de la cohorte, comenzará en 2023 y será implementado conjuntamente por el PNUD y el PNUMA.

### Esta Evaluación

3. El proyecto actualmente en evaluación, Proyecto 2, fue ejecutado entre septiembre de 2015 y marzo de 2021 por la Agencia de Medio Ambiente de Cuba (AMA), bajo delegación el Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente (CITMA) como la Agencia Nacional Ejecutora del proyecto, y con la estrecha participación de una serie de instituciones gubernamentales clave, en particular del Ministerio de Agricultura. El proyecto tuvo un enfoque nacional, así como acciones directas en cuatro regiones de demostración (de las cinco regiones del OP15, véase la Figura 2) donde las partes interesadas provinciales y del sector privado desempeñaron un papel clave.

4. Como se establece en los Términos de Referencia de la evaluación, esta Evaluación Final tuvo dos propósitos principales: (i) proporcionar evidencia de los resultados para cumplir con los requisitos de rendición de cuentas, y (ii) promover la mejora operativa, el aprendizaje y el intercambio de conocimientos a través de los resultados y lecciones aprendidas entre los equipos de la AMA, PNUMA, PNUD y otros socios nacionales. Este último grupo considera tanto a aquellos con roles en el campo, especialmente en relación con el MST y la gestión de los recursos hídricos, como a aquellos involucrados en la implementación de la Convención de las Naciones Unidas para Combatir la Desertificación (UNCCD).

5. Esta evaluación también buscó responder una serie de preguntas derivadas de una revisión de la cartera de proyectos en MST que estaba llevando a cabo el PNUMA. Esta revisión externa involucró una cohorte de cinco proyectos PNUMA-GEF ejecutados en Cuba, Kenia, Madagascar, Serbia y Albania, que estaban pasando por Evaluaciones Finales en momentos similares. Su objetivo es resaltar los puntos en común, las prioridades y las ventajas comparativas para el PNUMA en el área temática del GEF de degradación de la tierra y MST, particularmente con miras al desarrollo y la implementación de futuras propuestas.

## Hallazgos y conclusiones clave

6. Este es un proyecto sobresaliente en términos de desempeño. Exhibió muchas fortalezas, demostró un **alto desempeño** en varias áreas clave y alcanzó una calificación general de "Altamente Satisfactorio". Sus resultados abarcan desde nuevas políticas, regulaciones y procedimientos, mejor gestión de datos para el MST y un sistema de monitoreo hidrométrico modernizado, hasta mayores rendimientos, eficiencia en el uso del agua y diversidad de cultivos en las fincas, una oferta educativa mejorada en MST y una creciente *comunidad de práctica* para el MST. La concepción del proyecto como uno de cinco proyectos, bajo un programa de país de 10 años, fue una configuración única en Cuba que tuvo una influencia significativa en el desempeño del proyecto. Esta configuración creó fuertes condiciones habilitadoras que sin duda contribuyeron a su éxito en la lucha contra la degradación de la tierra y tuvo sentido en términos de los procesos de cambio necesarios para lograr el MST.

7. Al basarse en su predecesor (Proyecto 1), el Proyecto 2 penetró más fácilmente en los planes y programas nacionales, los procesos de planificación del uso de la tierra, las prácticas a nivel de finca, las escuelas y los programas de posgrado, y la percepción general de los beneficiarios del proyecto. Al hacerlo, el proyecto también creó condiciones propicias para su sucesor, el Proyecto 4. En este proyecto, **el apoyo estatal ha sido consistente, coherente e integral**. Varias facetas del MST están siendo apoyadas y estimuladas directamente por el estado cubano, con diferentes autoridades competentes asistiendo en los aspectos técnicos, políticos, sociales, económicos y financieros del MST. Impulsar el MST de una manera integral es sin duda una buena práctica que ha permitido al estado cubano lograr resultados significativos a mayor escala.

8. Las calificaciones de desempeño más altas del proyecto fueron las de *Pertinencia estratégica*, *Eficacia*, *Eficiencia* y *Sostenibilidad*, impulsadas por puntajes igualmente altos para *Participación y Cooperación de las partes interesadas*, *Apropiación e Impulso del país*, *Comunicación y Conciencia pública* y *Preparación y Disposición*. De hecho, el proyecto obtuvo una calificación de **"Altamente Satisfactorio" en la mayoría de los criterios de evaluación**. Los hallazgos apuntan a un proyecto muy exitoso que logró cambios transformadores tanto a nivel institucional como de finca. Este proyecto mejoró significativamente la forma en que las autoridades competentes, los agricultores, las cooperativas y los administradores del agua trabajan juntos para lograr el MST y conservar los recursos hídricos.

9. El desempeño del proyecto está profundamente influenciado por su integración en un programa más amplio y no puede separarse fácilmente de las contribuciones hechas por otros proyectos del Programa OP15. Este diseño como parte de un continuo no solo le dio coherencia al proyecto, sino que también agregó a su *Relevancia Estratégica*, *Eficiencia*, *Efectividad* y *Sostenibilidad*. El proyecto pudo lograr resultados duraderos, de impacto y

políticamente relevantes, en un período de tiempo más corto (cinco años y medio) de lo que cabría esperar.

10. En términos de *Relevancia estratégica*, el proyecto estuvo totalmente alineado con las prioridades y estrategias ambientales del PNUMA, el GEF y de Cuba. Alentado por el PNUMA, la creación de capacidades y la cooperación sur-sur fueron características notables en este proyecto. El proyecto (y el Programa OP15) ofrecieron una plataforma convincente a través de la cual implementar el Programa de Acción Nacional de Cuba para Combatir la Desertificación y la Sequía. Por diseño, el proyecto pretendía ser complementario con otras intervenciones relevantes del GEF y de otros donantes. Además de otros proyectos del Programa OP15, se crearon también sinergias oportunas y fructíferas con otras intervenciones (especialmente BASAL, Manglar Vivo e INFOGEO), que llevaron a acciones conjuntas, refuerzo mutuo y ahorros en los costos. Además, se movilizaron volúmenes significativos de contrapartida del gobierno que casi duplicaron el compromiso de cofinanciamiento inicial del proyecto. Se observaron buenos niveles de *Preparación y Disposición* al inicio del proyecto, y durante su ejecución, el manejo adaptativo ayudó a contrarrestar los retrasos en el plan de trabajo causados por factores externos inevitables, como la pandemia de COVID-19. En su conjunto, esto resultó en niveles de *Eficiencia* muy altos.

11. El proyecto demostró una ***Eficacia*** **sobresaliente**, en parte gracias a la continuación del trabajo del Proyecto 1. Al basarse, de forma efectiva, en esfuerzos, arreglos institucionales y alianzas preexistentes, el proyecto **superó casi todas las metas de sus Resultados** y entregó un conjunto de Productos relevantes, oportunos y basados en la ciencia que muestran **altos niveles de apropiación por parte de sus usuarios**. Estos Productos han contribuido al fortalecimiento institucional, la coordinación, el monitoreo biofísico, la sensibilización, el intercambio de información y conocimientos, la mejora de las prácticas agrícolas y de gestión del agua, y al alcance de logros de alta importancia para los agricultores.

12. El proyecto fue extremadamente efectivo en **eliminar las barreras al MST y la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos (GIRH)** -el ingrediente especial de este proyecto-, al mismo tiempo que destacó la naturaleza integral y los beneficios que conllevan estos enfoques de gestión. Los principios y las prácticas de la GIRH se combinaron a la perfección con la agricultura sostenible (o de conservación) y las prácticas agrícolas mejoradas para impulsar el MST y abordar las causas de la degradación de la tierra. Un factor crucial detrás de esto fue el uso de experiencias demostrativas de MST en fincas como "**prueba de concepto**". Lograr esto requirió del apoyo de extensionistas y asistencia técnica (incluidos nuevo equipamiento) e involucró a equipos interinstitucionales y multidisciplinarios. Al ver resultados notables a corto plazo en los cultivos, la disponibilidad de agua, los ingresos e incluso en los niveles de resiliencia, el uso de evidencia científica, datos y nuevas técnicas pudo traducirse en cambios de comportamiento y cambios en la percepción por parte de los productores.

13. Por lo tanto, el proyecto logró ampliamente sus tres Resultados, mejorando las capacidades humanas y materiales para el MST con énfasis en el agua, satisfaciendo las necesidades de monitoreo biofísico y gestión de la información, y propagando, a través de la ciencia aplicada y más allá de los sitios seleccionados inicialmente, el conocimiento de cómo aumentar la eficiencia en el uso del agua, recuperar la calidad del agua y del suelo,

mejorar los rendimientos agrícolas y la seguridad alimentaria, e integrar objetivos de conservación y factores del cambio climático en la producción agrícola. Hay agricultores que ya no se ven a sí mismos como productores, sino como "administradores de agroecosistemas".

14. El proyecto incluso generó **efectos catalíticos** (casi un efecto de bola de nieve) con resultados más allá de los inicialmente planificados, como universidades (incluso algunas fuera de las áreas de intervención del proyecto) que incorporaron el MST en sus planes de estudio, incluida una maestría en MST. No hay duda sobre la probabilidad de que el proyecto alcance el impacto previsto, especialmente porque los resultados cuentan con niveles de *Sostenibilidad* muy altos, debido a la adopción exitosa del MST y de aspectos de la GIRH, en varias escalas y entre sectores. Los altos niveles de sostenibilidad sociopolítica (con un interés evidente en expandir la comunidad de práctica de MST e institucionalizar plenamente el innovador esquema del gobierno de reconocimiento oficial en MST) se combinaron con una sostenibilidad institucional significativa (con la gestión de los suelos y los recursos hídricos ahora respaldada por nuevas políticas, leyes, reglamentos e instrumentos). La sostenibilidad financiera estuvo marcada por un mayor acceso a incentivos económicos y productos financieros para el MST y por la medida en que las agencias gubernamentales y las empresas estatales continúan presupuestando el MST.

15. Otra fortaleza clave en este proyecto es la medida en que se lograron la *Participación y Cooperación de las partes interesadas.* La inclusión de múltiples sectores y la búsqueda de soluciones equilibradas fueron parte integral del diseño del proyecto y de un efectivo MST. De hecho, la participación de múltiples partes interesadas sirvió de motor para impulsar enfoques integrados de gestión de la tierra. Los agricultores, grupos de productores y administradores del agua recibieron el debido reconocimiento como actores clave del proyecto e incluso como "campeones del MST". El enfoque de múltiples partes interesadas se extendió también a la gestión del propio proyecto y la asistencia técnica, ya que las responsabilidades de ejecución del Proyecto 2 se distribuyeron entre varias autoridades competentes. Esto resultó en un fuerte sentido de trabajo en equipo, una perspectiva multidisciplinaria sobre el MST y una comprensión común de las necesidades y desafíos de la degradación de la tierra en el país. Esta buena práctica fue efectiva y representativa de la institucionalidad del MST, y mostró cómo factores relacionados con la *Calidad de la Gestión y Supervisión del Proyecto* tuvieron una influencia positiva en el impacto del proyecto.

16. El enfoque de múltiples partes interesadas también sirvió para aumentar la *Apropiación e Impulso del país*. Los diversos grupos que este proyecto reunió de manera efectiva (ministerios, empresas del agua y del azúcar, institutos agrícolas y forestales, entidades de planificación, universidades, gobiernos municipales, bancos y compañías de seguros, grupos de productores y cooperativas) siguen comprometidos e involucrados con el MST y la GIRH, resultando en un grado considerable de *apropiación e impulso de país*. La *Comunicación y Conciencia pública* también fueron prominentes en este proyecto. El proyecto dedicó importantes recursos a actividades de divulgación, sensibilización y concienciación. La forma inclusiva y sensible al género en la que el proyecto alentó la participación pública favoreció el diálogo y el intercambio de ideas, en lugar de una transmisión de conocimientos de una sola vía. También se establecieron canales de retroalimentación, en particular con agricultores y grupos de productores.

17. Las abundantes fortalezas del proyecto fueron acompañadas por ciertas áreas que necesitaban mejoras. Estos fueron aspectos menores relacionados con el *Monitoreo y los Informes* del proyecto, que es distinto al monitoreo del MST, donde las mejoras fueron notorias. El seguimiento de los indicadores del proyecto implicó una curva de aprendizaje para los equipos del proyecto. Incluso cuando los valores de los indicadores estaban por encima de las metas, su consistencia variaba según el área de intervención del proyecto. La documentación que respaldaba los resultados (medios de verificación que corroboran los Productos y los indicadores) estaba disponible previa solicitud, en lugar de archivada sistemáticamente y accesible para fines evaluativos. Por lo tanto, la gestión de la información del proyecto es un área que se beneficiaría de un mayor fortalecimiento.

18. A menudo de manera inconsciente o sutil, el proyecto fue responsivo a los derechos humanos y a la igualdad de género, abordando ya sea directa o indirectamente, temas de salud humana, el papel de la mujer y el derecho a un medio ambiente saludable. Al practicar la agricultura de conservación /orgánica, involucrarse más con sus comunidades locales y crear condiciones que mejoraron el bienestar humano, algunos de los agricultores que adoptaron el MST pudieron atender a las necesidades de grupos marginados. Hay historias de campo sobre cómo la diversificación de la producción agrícola aumentó la seguridad alimentaria y creó nuevas fuentes de ingresos para las familias rurales de manera que benefició a las mujeres y los jóvenes, impulsó la nutrición de niños marginados y, en algunas áreas, incluso desaceleró la tendencia a migrar lejos de zonas rurales.

19. Según los resultados de la evaluación, el proyecto obtuvo una **puntuación de 5,82 sobre 6**, lo que demuestra un desempeño en un nivel "Altamente Satisfactorio". En la sección de Conclusiones se incluye una tabla de calificaciones contra todos los criterios de evaluación (ver Tabla 13). Este informe también brinda respuestas a las "Preguntas Estratégicas Clave" que constituyen un conjunto de preguntas derivadas de la revisión de la cartera de proyectos en MST de PNUMA (ver Tabla 12) que comprende este proyecto y otros cuatro proyectos UNEP-GEF.

## Lecciones Aprendidas

20. **Lección 1:** Compartir las responsabilidades de gestión y ejecución de proyectos entre varias autoridades competentes es un medio eficaz tanto para operativizar como para institucionalizar el MST.

21. **Lección 2:** Un enfoque de asociación de país a largo plazo (>10 años), basado en una cohorte de proyectos temáticamente distintos, puede generar resultados que están más allá del alcance de un proyecto aislado o de un programa a corto plazo.

22. **Lección 3:** La integración de las cuestiones de género por parte de los equipos de proyecto tiene su propia curva de aprendizaje, pero un buen primer paso para poder demostrar resultados de género es la recopilación de datos sobre los beneficiarios del proyecto desglosados por sexo.

23. **Lección 4:** La gestión de datos del proyecto es un activo vital para un Monitoreo y Evaluación (M&E) eficaz y debe quedar prescrito e incorporado desde el inicio de un proyecto.

## RECOMENDACIONES

Las recomendaciones se hacen teniendo en cuenta que el Proyecto 4, el último de la cohorte del Programa OP15, iniciará su implementación a principios del 2023. Este proyecto, que tendrá tanto al PNUMA como al PNUD como agencias GEF, buscará ampliar el MST a nivel de paisaje y asumirá algunas de las tareas de M&E programático previamente realizadas por el Proyecto 5. Por lo tanto, estas recomendaciones pretenden ser útiles para esta próxima intervención y para la conclusión del Programa OP15 que le seguirá.

| **Recomendación #1:** | **Preparar una estrategia o plan de género para guiar y potenciar las acciones relacionadas con el género y la presentación de informes sobre género en el marco del Proyecto 4.** |
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| **Retos /problemáticas a ser abordadas por la recomendación:** | Esta recomendación fue formulada por primera vez por la Revisión de Medio Tiempo del Programa OP15 y revivida por el equipo del Programa durante un ejercicio de informe final al finalizar el P2. El equipo señaló la necesidad de "una estrategia de género que posibilite una mayor sensibilización, capacitación y empoderamiento". Este elemento no fue expresamente incluido como recomendación en la Revisión de Medio Tiempo, sino que se mencionó en su Resumen Ejecutivo. No dio lugar a una "respuesta de la gerencia" y aún tiene que diseñarse como parte del Proyecto 4, sin embargo, se reconoce como un elemento necesario para planificar y mostrar resultados en materia de género.<br><br>La Estrategia o Plan de Género debería:<br>- Tener un objetivo claro que sirva al Programa OP15 y al Proyecto 4.<br>- Ser inclusivo y considerar los roles y perspectivas de género tanto de mujeres como de hombres.<br>- Incluir indicadores y metas a alcanzar al final del Proyecto 4 que combinen indicadores cuantitativos y cualitativos, expresados como indicadores de proceso (p. ej., número de actividades realizadas relacionadas con género) e indicadores de impacto (p. ej., cambios en las actitudes sobre la igualdad de género).<br>- Establecer responsabilidades para implementar e informar sobre los indicadores y objetivos específicos. |
| **Nivel de prioridad:** | Oportunidad de mejora |
| **Tipo de recomendación** | A nivel de proyecto |
| **Responsabilidad:** | Programa OP15 (Director y equipo), con apoyo de los *Task Managers* de PNUMA y PNUD. |
| **Marco de tiempo propuesto para implementación:** | Estrategia o Plan de Género → Dentro de 6 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4. |

| **Recomendación #2:** | **Hay mucho que ganar con el fortalecimiento de la práctica de M&E para el Proyecto 4 y el cierre del Programa OP15. Proyecto 4 debería contar con un marco común para la gestión de la información y la presentación de informes de mayor impacto que también represente las contribuciones del Proyecto 5.** |
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| **Retos /problemáticas a ser abordadas por la recomendación:** | La cuantificación, verificación y comunicación consistentes de resultados, a través de una mejor gestión de la información del proyecto, es un área que necesita de mayor fortalecimiento. Se ha obtenido una buena experiencia a través del Proyecto 5 y los demás proyectos anteriores en la que se puede confiar para elevar la gestión de datos del proyecto (diferente a la gestión de datos para el MST) al siguiente nivel.<br><br>Los buenos principios de M&E de Cuba pueden traducirse en una sólida práctica de M&E mediante el desarrollo de los cinco productos recomendados aquí, centrados en la información y los datos del proyecto. Estos cinco aspectos podrían ser valiosos para el Resultado 7 del Componente 2 del Proyecto 4. Tener un marco claro de M&E, respaldado por el PNUMA y el PNUD, será especialmente relevante considerando que el Proyecto 4 será implementado conjuntamente por ambas agencias de la ONU. El inicio de Proyecto 4 representa una oportunidad para implementar estas recomendaciones que también pueden beneficiar el proceso de evaluación final del Programa OP15.<br><br>**Las buenas prácticas en la gestión de la información para el M&E del proyecto implicarían:**<br><br>**(i) Un entendimiento común de los indicadores del proyecto para una mayor coherencia en la presentación de los informes del proyecto.** Al inicio del proyecto, los equipos del proyecto deberían reunirse para revisar conjuntamente el marco de resultados, dilucidar el alcance de cada indicador (o adoptar una interpretación), definir qué datos se incluyen en cada caso y acordar cómo distinguir entre indicadores similares. El resultado de esta deliberación conjunta debería registrarse para consumo interno y alimentar el Marco de M&E que se menciona a continuación.<br>→ Producto: Marco de resultados revisado y con anotaciones.<br><br>**(ii) Medios de verificación fácilmente disponibles para procesos de evaluación interna y externa.** En esta Evaluación Final, los numerosos logros del proyecto se describieron en informes y entrevistas, pero algunos indicadores no pudieron ser corroborados de inmediato a través de pruebas documentales. Se proporcionaron pruebas adicionales si se solicitaban oficialmente y éstas no estaban en manos del PNUMA. Se espera que los avances en MST derivados del proyecto sean visibles y medibles a través de los productos e indicadores del proyecto, por lo que los materiales relacionados deberían estar archivados y disponibles para su verificación. El uso de un repositorio y canales acordados para sistematizar los documentos de respaldo y obtener autorización para su uso público o para compartirlos, ayudaría a corroborar los resultados más rápidamente y, por lo tanto, facilitaría los procesos de evaluación.<br><br>→ Producto: Repositorio y canales acordados.<br><br>**(iii) La recopilación y el análisis de datos para la comunicación de impacto.** La gestión de la información del Proyecto 4 se beneficiaría al prestar más atención a los aspectos de comunicación en relación con los resultados. Más allá de los indicadores del proyecto, la posibilidad de obtener y analizar datos propios del proyecto para una *'comunicación de impacto'* es una forma poderosa de exhibir el proyecto. Los indicadores y otras |

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| | variables podrían usarse para desarrollar mensajes clave que destaquen las contribuciones[49] más notables del proyecto (y del Programa) al desarrollo sostenible. Igualmente se podrían desarrollar infografías. Esto significa recopilar datos desglosados para varios grupos de beneficiarios y sitios. También significa una mayor posibilidad de reconocer las contribuciones realizadas por el MST a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible y a las metas del país ante la UNCCD (incluido el tener 465 000 ha de bosques en restauración para el 2030) y a sus informes, así como a otros compromisos nacionales e internacionales.<br>→ Producto: Acuerdos internos sobre uso de datos para la comunicación de impacto.<br>**(iv) Fichas de datos de los principales sitios del proyecto con información básica y sistematizada.** La información básica para los sitios en cada área de intervención sería: Nombre y tamaño (ha) del sitio; sitio original o de replicación; municipios; número de fincas y tamaño (ha); tipo de negocio; tipo de prácticas de MST que se aplican (incluidas las prácticas específicas de gestión del agua). Datos más sistematizados o analizados, incluyendo series temporales (para mostrar cambios en el tiempo), podrían ser: número y tipo de beneficiarios; participación de mujeres, jóvenes, ancianos; número de hectáreas bajo MST; pagos asegurados a través de incentivos financieros. Tener una ficha de datos para cada sitio principal facilitaría enormemente la comprensión de las áreas de intervención del proyecto.<br>→ Producto: Ficha de datos para cada sitio del proyecto.<br>**(v) Uso de formatos comunes de informes por parte de los equipos territoriales para facilitar el flujo de información comparable, oportuna y confiable.** Esta medida puede ahorrar una cantidad considerable de tiempo en los ejercicios de informes periódicos y mejorar la eficiencia en la gestión del proyecto. (Esto ya fue notado por los equipos del Proyecto 2 como la lección aprendida #10).<br>→ Producto: Formato acordado para informes internos.<br>**Para integrar estas mejoras en el Proyecto 4, se recomienda preparar un marco de M&E para reunir estos cinco elementos y organizar las necesidades de gestión de la información del proyecto como una función del M&E del proyecto (y del programa).** |
| **Nivel de prioridad:** | Oportunidad de mejora |
| **Tipo de recomendación** | A nivel de proyecto |
| **Responsabilidad:** | Programa OP15 (Director) y PNUMA (*Task Manager*), involucrando a personal de gobierno asignado a la ejecución del Proyecto 4. |

[49] p. ej., m3 de agua ahorrados en comparación con prácticas anteriores; # mujeres o jóvenes que acceden a nuevos puestos de trabajo; # hectáreas y fincas que están avanzando y/o aplicando MST, y # que están oficialmente reconocidas; # hectáreas en proceso de restauración.

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| **Marco de tiempo propuesto para implementación:** | (i) Marco de Resultados revisado y con anotaciones → Dentro de 3 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4<br>(ii) Repositorio y canales creados → Dentro de 6 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4<br>(iii) Acuerdos internos → Dentro de 12 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4.<br>(iv) Fichas de datos → Dentro de 6 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4.<br>(v) Formato acordado para reportes internos → Dentro de 3 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4 . |

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| **Recomendación #3:** | **Buscar formas de demostrar cómo las organizaciones de la sociedad civil han integrado el MST y la gestión sostenible del agua y que estas instituciones no solo son conscientes de los beneficios del MST sino que también promueven activamente su práctica.** |
| **Retos /problemáticas a ser abordadas por la recomendación:** | La adopción de prácticas de MST y GIRH por parte de agricultores, cooperativas y unidades productivas fue evidente en este proyecto, con la participación y el apoyo también de organizaciones de la sociedad civil como ACTAF y ANAP. Sin embargo, aún no está claro hasta qué punto estas asociaciones, incluidos otras entidades no gubernamentales como ACPA y FCM, han integrado el MST y la GIRH a un nivel más político. Estas organizaciones de la sociedad civil, todas nombradas dentro del ProDoc como actores clave, contribuyen al desarrollo sostenible de Cuba mediante la promoción de la agroecología (agricultura de conservación), la resiliencia climática, la seguridad alimentaria y el empoderamiento de las mujeres.<br><br>Aquellas interesadas en el MST podrían introducir sus modelos de gestión de la tierra y de los recursos hídricos en sus programas de trabajo, o hacer que el liderazgo de la asociación se comprometa a apoyar el MST o a firmar un acuerdo de cooperación con la AMA, para mostrar la intención de promover formal y activamente estos modelos en su quehacer. Cualquiera de estos sería una clara indicación de una aceptación institucional por parte de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y, por lo tanto, un medio para mostrar que el MST se extendió no solo a nivel de la membrecía individual sino también de las estructuras de gobernanza y dirección estratégica de la organización. |
| **Nivel de prioridad:** | Oportunidad de mejora |
| **Tipo de recomendación** | A nivel de proyecto + Socios |
| **Responsabilidad:** | Programa OP15 y la Agencia Nacional de Ejecución (AMA /CITMA) |
| **Marco de tiempo propuesto para implementación:** | Indicación escrita y formal de la adopción institucional del MST por parte de al menos una asociación o federación → Dentro de 12 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4. |

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| **Recomendación #4:** | **Promover la visibilidad internacional y en Internet del OP15, a partir del intercambio de conocimientos y la difusión del enfoque cubano en el MST.** |

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| **Retos /problemáticas a ser abordadas por la recomendación:** | El enfoque efectivo de Cuba para la gestión del conocimiento se centró en los beneficiarios de la isla y el uso de redes internas (domésticas), y muy poco en el intercambio de conocimientos a través de Internet, en parte debido a las limitaciones de acceso a Internet vinculadas al embargo a Cuba. En consecuencia, la visibilidad internacional del proyecto (y del Programa) es baja, al igual que el uso que se hace de los mecanismos internacionales de intercambio de conocimientos (plataformas virtuales, seminarios web, conferencias, etc.).<br><br>Por lo tanto, la gestión del conocimiento podría mejorarse mediante la promoción de una mayor visibilidad internacional y en Internet, y un mayor alcance fuera de Cuba. Cuba tiene una gran cantidad de conocimientos, metodologías e historias para compartir y una amplia experiencia disponible que podría ser de beneficio para otras naciones y profesionales que enfrentan problemas de degradación de tierras similares a los de Cuba. Un esfuerzo concertado a favor del **intercambio internacional de conocimientos** sería un activo para el Programa OP15 y podría ser apoyado por el PNUMA y/o el PNUD, especialmente si es necesario superar las barreras de Internet. Algunas de las plataformas a considerar, que manejan contenido en español, son: WOCAT, Panorama Soluciones y el Barometro del Reto de Bonn de Restauración.<br><br>Este intercambio también tiene **aspectos comunicacionales** que, si se usan estratégicamente, pueden ayudar a lograr un mayor impacto mediante el uso de términos y lenguaje que resuenen en las comunidades de práctica globales. Esto significa que las historias y prácticas de Cuba se pueden narrar desde diferentes ángulos, utilizando diferentes términos y datos para transmitir la misma historia. La elección del lenguaje dependerá del enfoque preferido (género, restauración, biodiversidad, cambio climático, etc.). En términos de cambio climático, la Revisión de Medio Tiempo ya señaló la necesidad del Programa OP15 de explotar y resaltar su relación con el cambio climático. Aunque no se comunique de esta manera, el MST en Cuba incluye la adaptación basada en ecosistemas, la agricultura climáticamente inteligente y la restauración del paisaje, términos que son ampliamente utilizados en el ámbito internacional. Es igualmente importante utilizar los datos del proyecto para respaldar la comunicación de impacto (cantidad de puestos de trabajo creados, cantidad de hectáreas restauradas, etc.), que se relaciona con el Marco de M&E anterior. Si el Programa OP15 es capaz de calcular las toneladas de carbono equivalente que se secuestran, o las emisiones que se evitan, a través de las acciones del MST, este sería un elemento estratégico y una variable clave para introducir en su gestión de datos y práctica de M&E. |
| **Nivel de prioridad:** | Oportunidad de mejora |
| **Tipo de recomendación** | A nivel de proyecto |
| **Responsabilidad:** | Programa OP15 |
| **Marco de tiempo propuesto para implementación:** | Al menos 2 casos o métodos cubanos publicados en una plataforma internacional de intercambio de conocimientos → Dentro de 12 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4. |

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| **Recomendación #5:** | **Para facilitar la presentación de informes a dos agencias GEF durante la ejecución del Proyecto 4, estas agencias deberían considerar la posibilidad y los medios para que la Agencia Nacional de Ejecución agregue contenidos en español y documentos adjuntos a los informes periódicos del proyecto.** |
| **Retos /problemáticas a ser abordadas por la recomendación:** | Dados algunos de los desafíos de informes que enfrentó el equipo del Proyecto 2, permitir que el próximo proyecto incluya una sección sobre 'Factores de éxito y aprendizaje' o una sección de 'Logros y desafíos clave' en español, como un apéndice a los informes PIR y HYPR, facilitaría en gran medida la presentación de informes de progreso por parte del equipo del Proyecto 4. El núcleo de los informes permanecería en inglés y las secciones más sucintas se complementarían con narraciones más detalladas en español proporcionadas como anexos. Ambas agencias del GEF deberían promover la práctica de incluir también documentos de respaldo (sobre actividades del proyecto, contenidos web, documentos oficiales o preliminares, intercambios de correos electrónicos, etc.). Para facilitar la presentación de informes al PNUMA, estos documentos de respaldo deberían, en la medida de lo posible, subirse sistemáticamente en ANUBIS, especialmente aquellos relacionados con los Productos e indicadores del proyecto. |
| **Nivel de prioridad:** | Oportunidad de mejora |
| **Tipo de recomendación** | A nivel de proyecto |
| **Responsabilidad:** | PNUMA (junto a PNUD) |
| **Marco de tiempo propuesto para implementación:** | Acuerdo entre PNUMA y PNUD, comunicado al Programa OP15, sobre la inclusión de información complementaria en español en los reportes del Proyecto 4 → Dentro de 6 meses de haber iniciado la ejecución del Proyecto 4. |

# ANNEX XII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

| | UNEP Evaluation Office Comments | Final Report Rating |
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| **Substantive Report Quality Criteria** | | |
| ***Quality of the Executive Summary:***<br>The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations. | Final report:<br>Acts as informative stand alone representation of report contents. Very readable consolidation of key findings and conclusions.<br>Provides reference to tales for a) Ratings Table and b) Strategic Questions – this is appropriate as the Exec Summary is already on the longer side, given its detail. | **6** |
| ***I. Introduction***<br>A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.)<br>Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings? | Final report:<br>All elements covered well and concisely. This section situates this project within the Country Pilot Partnership Programme for SLM. | **6** |
| ***II. Evaluation Methods***<br>A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.).<br>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) | Final report:<br>A helpful description of the methods used and the limitations faced, such as Hurricane Ian. | **5.5** |

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| are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.<br>The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described.<br>It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.<br>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement? | | |
| ***III. The Project***<br>This section should include:<br>• *Context:* Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses).<br>• *Results framework*: Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)<br>• *Stakeholders:* Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics<br>• *Project implementation structure and partners:* A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners<br>• *Changes in design during implementation:* Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order<br>• *Project financing:* Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing | Final report:<br><br>All elements covered clearly and in appropriate detail. This section includes a summary of key findings from the Mid Term Review. | **6** |
| ***IV. Theory of Change***<br>The *TOC at Evaluation* should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors.<br>This section should include a description of how the *TOC at Evaluation*[50] was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the | Final report:<br><br>Detailed and exhaustive discussion of causal pathways, including connection with the CPP programme. | **6** |

[50] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

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| project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the *TOC at Evaluation. The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.*<br>Check that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) has been included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there was no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic was made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions. | | |
| ***V. Key Findings***<br><br>**A. Strategic relevance:**<br>This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation[51]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed:<br><br>i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)<br>ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities<br>iii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities<br>iv. Complementarity with Existing Interventions | Final report:<br><br>All elements covered well and incorporates some questions that were posed to support the preparation of a 'portfolio brief' on SLM.<br><br>Some of the detail on Complementarity is in the Exec Summary with reference to projects outside the CPP Programme here. | **6** |
| **B. Quality of Project Design**<br><br>To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively summarized? | Final report:<br><br>Good section on project design providing a summary of possible improvements in future designs. | **5.5** |

[51] A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

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| **C. Nature of the External Context**<br><br>For projects where this is appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[52]), and how they affected performance, should be described. | Final report:<br><br>Appropriate assessment of nature of external context, including history of hurricanes that occurred during project implementation | **6** |
| **D. Effectiveness**<br>**(i) Outputs and Project Outcomes:** How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention.<br><br>The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly. | Final report:<br><br>An integrated discussion of output provision which incorporates some of the cross-cutting issues and is supported with visual material.<br><br>A strong discussion of outcome level results which is supported by data collected during project implementation. | **6** |
| **(ii) Likelihood of Impact:** How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact?<br>How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed?<br>Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups. | Final report:<br><br>An extensive and well-informed discussion of the project's likelihood of impact | **6** |
| **E. Financial Management**<br><br>This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table.<br>Consider how well the report addresses the following:<br>• *Adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures<br>• *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used<br>• *communication* between financial and project management staff | Final report:<br><br>Complete discussion, supported by detail presented in Annex III. | **6** |
| **F. Efficiency**<br><br>To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based | Final report: | **6** |

[52] Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

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| assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including:<br><br>• Implications of delays and no cost extensions<br>• Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe<br>• Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc.<br>• The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint. | A detailed discussion on efficiency, especially highlighting instances of synergies | |
| **G. Monitoring and Reporting**<br><br>How well does the report assess:<br><br>• Monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)*<br>• Monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)*<br>• Project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports)* | Final report:<br><br>This section covers all the sub-categories. Note that the detail around monitoring appears in a previous section as SLM monitoring.<br><br>As this criterion is about monitoring the progress of the project there is much less detail available. | **5** |
| **H. Sustainability**<br><br>How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including:<br><br>• Socio-political Sustainability<br>• Financial Sustainability<br>• Institutional Sustainability | Final report:<br><br>Good discussion of sustainability | **6** |
| **I. Factors Affecting Performance**<br><br>These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are **integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate**. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes:<br><br>• Preparation and readiness<br>• Quality of project management and supervision[53]<br>• Stakeholder participation and co-operation | Final report:<br><br>This section picks up on aspects of cross-cutting issues that haven't already been discussed throughout the report. It focuses, appropriately, also on the GEF Portal questions | **6** |

[53] In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

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| • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity<br>• Environmental and social safeguards<br>• Country ownership and driven-ness<br>• Communication and public awareness | | |
| ***VI. Conclusions and Recommendations***<br><br>**i. Quality of the conclusions:** The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section.<br>It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report. | Final report:<br><br>A detailed conclusions section that integrates the findings against the main evaluation criteria into a readable narrative. | **5.5** |
| **ii) Quality and utility of the lessons:** Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful. | Final report:<br><br>Lessons are appropriate and useful | **6** |
| **iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations:**<br><br>To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when.<br>At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given.<br>Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.<br>In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an | Final report:<br><br>Recommendations are appropriate and actionable given that a 4th project is being designed. | **6** |

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| effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.<br>Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase. | | |
| ***VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality*** | | |
| **i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete? | Final report:<br><br>Excellent. | **6** |
| ii) **Quality of writing and formatting:** Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines? | Final report:<br><br>Excellent: manages a great deal of detail and some complexity in a very neat and accessible style. | **6** |
| **OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING** | | **6** |

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

| **Evaluation Process Quality Criteria** | **Compliance** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Independence:** | | |
| 1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office? | **Y** | |
| 2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection? | **Y** | |
| 3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office? | **Y** | |
| 4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office? | **Y** | |
| 5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate? | **See comment below** | |
| 6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office? | | **N** |
| 7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager? | **N/A** | |
| **Financial Management:** | | |
| 8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? | **Y** | |
| 9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office? | **Y** | |
| 10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? | **Y** | |
| **Timeliness:** | | |
| 11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point? | | **N** |
| 12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? | **Y** | |
| 13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel? | **Y** | |
| **Project's engagement and support:** | | |
| 14. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference? | **Y** | |
| 15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents? | **Y** | |
| 16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness? | **Y** | |
| 17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions? | **Y** | |
| 18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation? | **Y** | |
| 19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established? | **Y** | |

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| 20. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders provide comments on the draft evaluation report? | **Y** | |
| **Quality assurance:** | | |
| 21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed? | **Y** | |
| 22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed? | **Y** | |
| 23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments? | **Y** | |
| 24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports? | **Y** | |
| **Transparency:** | | |
| 25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office? | **Y** | |
| 26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments? | **Y** | |
| 27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments? | **Y** | |
| 28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office | **Y** | |
| 29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments? | **Y** | |
| 30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate? | **Y** | |

**Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.**

| **Process Criterion Number** | **Evaluation Office Comments** |
|---|---|
| 5 | Paras 44 -47 of the report summarise how respondents were identified and reached and the composition of the sample of respondents is shown in Table 2. |
| | |