



Enabling Activity Project Implementation Report

(01 July 2021 – 30 June 2022)

Project Title:	Enabling Activities to review and update the National Implementation Plan of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
GEF ID:	5180
UNIDO ID:	120077
GEF Replenishment Cycle:	GEF-5
Country(ies)	Ecuador
Region:	LAC - Latin America and Caribbean
GEF Focal Area:	Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
Implementing Department/Division:	ENV / IPM
Executing Agency(ies):	Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica
Project Duration (months):	12
Extension(s):	2
GEF Project Financing:	USD 205,000
Agency Fee:	USD 20,500
Co-financing Amount:	USD 235,000
Date of EA Approval:	12/13/2012
UNIDO Approval Date:	3/13/2013
Actual Implementation Start Date:	7/1/2013
Cumulative disbursement as of 30 June 2022:	USD 190,407.69
Original Project Completion Date:	12/13/2037
Project Completion Date as reported in FY21:	6/30/2022
Current SAP Completion Date:	7/31/2022
Expected Project Completion Date:	9/30/2022 Confirmed
Expected Financial Closure Date:	12/31/2022
UNIDO Project Manager¹:	Mr. Alfredo Cueva

¹ Person responsible for report content

I. Overview of project status

Please refer to the explanatory note at the end of the document and select corresponding ratings for the current reporting period, i.e. FY22. Please also provide a short justification for the selected ratings for FY22.

In view of the GEF Secretariat's intent to start following the ability of projects to adopt the concept of adaptive management², Agencies are expected to closely monitor changes that occur from year to year and demonstrate that they are not simply implementing plans but modifying them in response to developments and circumstances. In order to facilitate with this assessment, please introduce the ratings as reported in the previous reporting cycle, i.e. FY21, in the last column.

Overall Ratings ³	FY22	FY21
Global Environmental Objectives (GEOs) / Development Objectives (DOs) Rating	<i>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>
<i>To date, UNIDO has received the draft reviewed and updated NIP, and we are awaiting for the final version after consultation with main stakeholders. This NIP will guide implementation of the SC in Ecuador.</i>		
Implementation Progress (IP) Rating	<i>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</i>
<i>After a long period of stalling, the project is finally coming to a highly satisfactory end. As indicated, UNIDO has already received the draft reviewed and updated NIP. We look forward to closing the project this year.</i>		
Overall Risk Rating	<i>Low Risk (L)</i>	<i>Moderate Risk (M)</i>
<i>The only remaining risk is NIP consultation, finalization and official approval before submission to SC Secretariat. This risk is low</i>		

1. Using the previous reporting period as a basis, please elaborate on progress, challenges and outcomes of **project implementation activities**.

As reported during FY21, the contract signed between UNIDO and the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador in 2016 and amended in 2017 was stalled and could not be executed beyond 11 September 2017 due to issuance of the Executive Decree No. 135 ("Rules for optimization and austerity of public spending").

After exchanges between the Ministry and UNIDO, the Ministry agreed to return the remaining funds (USD 65,140.18) back to UNIDO, in order to add them to the project funds under UNIDO custody. UNIDO would then use the total amount to hire another entity to execute the remaining project activities without adherence to Executive Decree No. 135 that applies to Ecuadorian public entities only. The Covid-19 pandemic and a fusion between the Ministry of Environment and the National Water Secretariat delayed even more completion of this devised way forward.

² Adaptive management in the context of an intentional approach to decision-making and adjustments in response to new available information, evidence gathered from monitoring, evaluation or research, and experience acquired from implementation, to ensure that the goals of the activity are being reached efficiently

³ Please refer to the explanatory note at the end of the document and assure that the indicated ratings correspond to the narrative of the report

Fortunately, with the change of government in Ecuador on 24 May 2021, the newly designated officials at the renamed Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) of Ecuador took immediate and effective actions to resume the execution of this project. On 4 June 2021, the MAATE transferred back to UNIDO the USD 65,140.18, as agreed with the previous Government.

MAATE and UNIDO discussed then and agreed on the corresponding actions with the new GEF Operational Focal Point of Ecuador. He then requested UNIDO to continue execution of this project through a subcontract with an autonomous entity that enjoys the trust of both UNIDO and MAATE of Ecuador. After consultations with potential entities and agreement with MAATE, UNIDO approved a subcontract with the Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU), which holds the Basel Convention Coordinating Centre and the Stockholm Convention Regional Centre, for Latin America and the Caribbean (BCCC-SCRC).

Finally, with the remaining funds available (around USD 120,000), the new contract No. 3000095936 with LATU was issued by UNIDO on 14 December 2021, which was countersigned by LATU on 21 December 2021. This contract has been executed efficiently and expeditiously through year 2022 within an expected term of maximum nine months.

Despite the execution effectivity and efficiency, the three-month delay in signing the contract (due to bilateral required formalities between LATU and MAATE) has resulted in an updated expected completion within the agreed-upon nine months, until September 2022. Thus far, UNIDO has received the draft reviewed and updated NIP, and is awaiting for the final version that will come after consultation with the main stakeholders. This means that the NIP review and update will be completed by September 2022, at the latest. Closing the project financially will take additional three months, until end of December 2022.

2. Please elaborate on progress, challenges and outcomes of **stakeholder engagement**, using the previous reporting period as a basis.

In November 2017, the Kick-Off Meeting for the NIP Review and Update Project for the Stockholm Convention was held in Quito. Main actors related to the management of POPs in Ecuador, who were willing to collaborate along the development of the project, participated at the event. Prior to this meeting, the national project coordinator carried out limited preliminary work due to issuance of the Executive Decree No. 135, which stalled the project.

The entry in office of the new Government in May 2021 change this situation. It opened a window of opportunity for finalizing this NIP Review and Update Project in a reasonable time.

In retrospect, the joint decision by UNIDO and the MAATE to invite LATU, which holds the Regional Center for the Basel and Stockholm Conventions located in Uruguay, to become an executing partner for the project, was a very good one.

Having worked in the past with both the MAATE and UNIDO, LATU did understand the requirements of both organizations. In addition, it implemented the required tasks with demonstrated high efficiency and effectiveness, which has allowed reactivation of national stakeholders' engagement through the execution of the project tasks. This will constitute an asset for implementing the NIP.

3. Using the previous reporting period as a basis, please report on the progress **achieved on implementing gender-responsive measures**, as documented in the project document.

The project was launched with due regard to UNIDO Gender Mainstreaming Policy, but due to the project paralysis there was no further action taken in this field until 2021.

The draft plan submitted in June 2022 states that gender mainstreaming and the effects of climate change are cross-cutting policies that should be integrated into capacity building actions within the

NIP, since they are vital for the implementation of activities to protect the environment and human health from the harmful effects of POPs (p. 83).

4. Using the previous reporting period as a basis, please elaborate on any **knowledge activities / products**, as outlined in the project document.

Due to the project paralysis until 2021, there was no action taken in this regard. Since project reactivation in 2022, several meetings have taken place to identify knowledge activities and products related to the NIP. The draft reviewed and updated NIP includes several knowledge activities and products that will be executed by specific stakeholders. These issues are now under discussion, prior approval and endorsement by the MAATE.

II. Minor Amendments

1. Please briefly elaborate on any **minor amendments**⁴ to the approved project that may have been introduced during the reporting period or indicate as not applicable (NA).

Please tick each category for which a change has occurred and provide a description of the change in the related textbox. You may attach supporting documentation, as appropriate.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Results Framework	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Components and Cost	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Institutional and Implementation Arrangements	The Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) ceased to be the contractor by mutual agreement with UNIDO and both entities agreed to introduce LATU as project execution partner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial Management	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Implementation Schedule	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executing Entity	LATU was hired as Executing Entity to finalize this NIP review and update project
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Executing Entity Category	From a Government to a SC Regional Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor Project Objective Change	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safeguards	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Analysis	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase of GEF Project Financing Up to 5%	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Co-Financing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Location of Project Activities	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Others	

⁴ As described in Annex 9 of the *GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines*, **minor amendments** are changes to the project design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5%.

III. Project Risk Management

1. Please indicate any implication of the **COVID-19** pandemic on the progress of the project.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, working from home delayed the process of returning the funds to UNIDO. The fusion between the Ministry of Environment and the National Water Secretariat into the Ministry of Environment and Water executed by the previous government delayed even more completion of the devised way forward.

Nonetheless, despite the Covid-19 pandemic constraints still in place, the change of government in Ecuador (24 May 2021), introduced new officials and a new dynamic at the renamed Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE) of Ecuador. Indeed, on 4 June 2021 the MAATE transferred back to UNIDO the remaining funds as agreed with the previous Government and got very involved in the process to reactivate the project with the help of LATU as executing entity.

Due to the effectiveness of the vaccination campaign developed by the current government, Covid-19 has had less impact during 2022 and the project has almost concluded.

Despite this success, since June 2022 the number of Covid cases has increased again due to new, more infectious virus variants and the government is now considering to reestablish the working-from-home policy in public-sector organizations. However, since the draft NIP is now under consultation, this situation is not expected to hamper the finalization and submission of the NIP to the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention.

2. Please clarify if the project is facing delays and is expected to request an **extension**.

As already explained, the contract No. 3000095936 with LATU was issued by UNIDO on 14 December 2021, not in September 2021 as expected during the PIR FY21. This three-month delay was due to bilateral, required formalities set between LATU and MAATE.

This means that the NIP Review and update project will be completed by September 2022, at the latest. Closing the project financially will take additional three months, until end of December 2022.

Therefore, no further extension is expected.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. **Timing & duration:** Each report covers a twelve-month period.
2. **Responsibility:** The responsibility for preparing the report lies with the project manager in consultation with the division chief and director.
3. **Evaluation:** For the report to be used effectively as a tool for annual self-evaluation, project counterparts need to be fully involved. The (main) counterpart can provide any additional information considered essential, including a simple rating of project progress.
4. **Results-based management:** The annual project/programme progress reports are required by the RBM programme component focal points to obtain information on outcomes observed.

Global Environmental Objectives (GEOs) / Development Objectives (DOs) ratings	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed <u>all</u> its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as "good practice".
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to <u>achieve most</u> of its <u>major</u> global environmental objectives, and yields satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to <u>achieve most</u> of its major <u>relevant</u> objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modes overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environmental benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve <u>some</u> of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to <u>achieve only some</u> of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected <u>not</u> to achieve <u>most</u> of its major global environmental objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, <u>any</u> of its major global environmental objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Implementation Progress (IP)	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of <u>all</u> components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be presented as "good practice".
Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of <u>most</u> components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of <u>some</u> components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of <u>some</u> components is <u>not</u> in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of <u>most</u> components in <u>not</u> in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of <u>none</u> of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Risk ratings	
Risk ratings will assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale:	
High Risk (H)	There is a probability of greater than 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.
Substantial Risk (S)	There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face substantial risks.
Moderate Risk (M)	There is a probability of between 26% and 50% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only moderate risk.
Low Risk (L)	There is a probability of up to 25% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only low risks.