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Final evaluation of the project "Implementation of the Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Approach for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Caribbean Region of Colombia"

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Abstract

In response to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) requirement to perform a final evaluation of the projects financed by such, this report provides the results of the final evaluation of the project *Implementation of the Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Approach for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Caribbean Region of Colombia*, which was implemented and executed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The evaluation covered the period from the start of the implementation of the Project (October 2015) to December 2020 and used online semi-structured interviews and the review of documents as the main methods of compiling information. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, no field visits or face-to-face interviews were conducted, and as such more interviews were conducted.

The evaluation outcomes highlight the current relevance of the Project for the Colombian government (at national, regional and local level), FAO and the GEF, in reducing the degradation and fragmentation of the strategic ecosystems of the Colombian Caribbean, and in increasing and improving the provision of agricultural and forestry production goods and services. It was also found that the Project was highly effective in obtaining the expected outcomes, and exceeded – in some cases by far – the targets established. In addition, the processes and mechanisms implemented by the Project to involve the relevant stakeholders led to a very high appropriation of the Project, including the private sector. The above makes it possible to state it is likely that the achievements made will be sustained, once the Project ends. Due to the successes achieved, the evaluation identified good practices and lessons learned that could be useful for designing similar projects.

The main areas for improvement identified and translated into recommendations included improving the design of targets related to impact on policy instruments and the determination of the co-financing which will be provided by the Project partners; the institutionalisation of the Regional Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Strategy to ensure its replicability and the review of the GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool with regard to the evaluation of the effectiveness of protected areas that do not have any tourism activity and are not inhabited by indigenous groups.

Keywords: connectivity, biodiversity, evaluation of projects, Colombian Caribbean.

Contents

Tables and figures

Tables

Figures

Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ANDI	Asociación Nacional de Industriales [Colombian National Association of Manufacturers]
APROPAPUR	Asociación de Productores, Pescadores, Agricultores y Artesanos Agroecológicos de Purísima, Córdoba [Association of Agroecological Producers, Fishers, Farmers and Artisans of Purísima, Córdoba]
ASPROCIG	Asociación de Productores para el Desarrollo Comunitario de la Ciénaga Grande del Bajo Sinú [Association of Producers for the Community Development of Ciénaga Grande del Bajo Sinú]
CAR	Corporación Autónoma Regional [Regional Autonomous Corporation]
CARDIQUE	Corporación Autónoma Regional del Canal del Dique [Regional Autonomous Corporation of Canal del Dique]
CARSUCRE	Corporación Autónoma Regional de Sucre [Regional Autonomous Corporation of Sucre]
COCOMASECO	Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Río Acandí Seco [Community Council of the Acandí Seco River basin]
COCOMASUR	Consejo Comunitario de la Cuenca del Río Acandí, Tolo y Zona Costera Sur [Community Council of the Tolo and Acandí River basin, and Southern Coastal Zone]
COCOMAUNGUÍA	Consejo Comunitario Mayor del Bajo Atrato [Superior Community Council of Bajo Atrato]
CODECHOCÓ	Corporación Autónoma Regional del Chocó [Regional Autonomous Corporation of Chocó]
CORPOURABÁ	Corporación Autónoma Regional del Urabá [Regional Autonomous Corporation of Urabá]
CRC	Caribbean Region of Colombia
CSNR	Civil Society Nature Reserve
CVS	Corporación Autónoma Regional de los Valles del Sinú y San Jorge [Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valles del Sinú and San Jorge]
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFS	Field school
FS	Fauna Sanctuary
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IAvH	Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt [Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute]
INVEMAR	Instituto de Investigaciones Marino Costeras "José Benito Vives de Andreis" [José Benito Vives de Andreis Marine and Coastal Research Institute]
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MADR	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MADS	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NNP	National Natural Park
PA	Protected Areas
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PRODOC	Project Document
PROMIGAS	Promotora de la Interconexión de los Gasoductos de la Costa Atlántica [Atlantic Coast Gas Pipelines Interconnection Promoter]
PTC	Project Technical Committee
RIMD	Regional Integrated Management District

RSC	Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Regional Strategy Coordinator
RSSEC	Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity
SC	Steering Committee
SCD	Soil Conservation District
SEC	Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity
SENA	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje [National Training Service]
SFF	Fauna and Flora Sanctuary
SIAP	Intensificación Sostenible de la Producción Agropecuaria [Sustainable Intensification of Agricultural Production]
SILAP	Sistema Local de Áreas Protegidas [Local Protected Areas System]
SIRAP-Caribe	Sistema Regional de Áreas Protegidas del Caribe [Regional System of Protected Areas of the Caribbean]

Executive Summary

1. The Project *Implementation of the Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Approach for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Caribbean Region of Colombia* began in October 2015 and ended in January 2021. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed it with USD 6 052 114 and the project had USD 51 067 982 of pledged co-financing. The total budget set forth in the Project Document (PRODOC) was therefore USD 57 120 096. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations acted as implementing agency of the GEF.

2. The final evaluation of the Project adopted, as its main objective, that mentioned in the PRODOOC, which states the following: "[...] *to describe the impact the project has had, the sustainability of its outcomes and the degree of achievement of the outcomes in the long term. The FE [Final Evaluation], must also indicate the future actions needed to sustain the Project outcomes, expand on the impact it has had in subsequent phases, mainstream and up-scale its outputs and practices, and disseminate the information obtained among the authorities and institutions with competences relating to food sovereignty, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, peasant agricultural production and ecosystem conservation, to therefore ensure the continuity of the processes that the Project initiated."*

Method

3. The final evaluation covered the period from the start of the implementation of the Project (October 2015) to December 2020 and used semi-structured interviews and the review of documentation as the main methods of compiling information. The limitations the evaluation faced include the cancellation of field visits as a result of the global health crisis, caused by COVID-19. To compensate for this limitation, a higher number of interviews were conducted with local stakeholders linked to activities on the ground. In particular, stakeholders belonging to different sectors were sought (e.g. government, civil and private sector), to triangulate the information provided and therefore strengthen the evidence. In addition, the interview protocols included more questions related to the fieldwork, due to being established as one of the main sources of information of the evaluation. In total, 72 people were interviewed belonging to eight Departments of Colombia: Córdoba, Bogotá, Antioquia, Chocó, Bolívar, Magdalena, Sucre and Atlántico. In the first five departments, the Project intervention took place on the ground. The evaluation methodology integrated the Global Environment Facility (GEF) criteria and requirements.

Findings

Relevance

4. The findings of this final evaluation make it possible to state that the Project covered the needs and priorities of the national Government of Colombia, which considers environmental sustainability and green growth as cross-cutting axes of all of public management, under the motto *"Producir conservando y conservar produciendo"* [produce conserving and conserve producing]. At regional level, the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR) that participated in the Project highlighted the alignment of the Project with their institutional programmes, as they participated actively in the Project formulation phase and incorporated the problems that the Colombian Caribbean faces, into such, issues that the programmes also aim to tackle. The Project therefore contributed to the fulfilment of targets linked to the reduction of deforestation and the expansion of the coverage of protected areas in the country at national and regional level. In addition, the connection of the Project with the departmental governments resulted in

the inclusion of actions that aim at connectivity in their new development plans, and as such this also demonstrates the alignment of the priorities of the departments with the Project objectives. The Project relevance and alignment at municipal level arose during the Project implementation, by means of the consultation processes that took place. Some municipalities such as Montería and Acandí therefore participated actively upon recognising the importance of the Project for their municipalities; and in the case of Montería, it was appointed as a strategic partner of the Project. The Project also met the needs of the local communities, which include indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant communities, as it recognised the importance of conserving their natural environment to continue to make the most of the livelihood such provides them with.

5. The Project outcomes and strategy are in line and have contributed to the FAO priorities under Strategic Objective 2 and Priority Area 3 of the Country Programming Framework. In addition, the Project contributed to the fulfilment of objectives 1 and 2 of the focal area of biodiversity of the Global Environment Facility, which focus on increasing the sustainability of protected areas systems and on expanding the representation of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems and integrating the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in productive sectors on land and at sea.

Achievement of outcomes

6. The achievement of the Project outcomes was highly satisfactory due to most of the targets being met and, in some cases; their level of fulfilment was much higher than expected. In the case of Component 1, it is worth highlighting the large land and marine surface area that, directly and indirectly (approximately 3.5 million hectares), contributes to socio-ecosystem connectivity in the western region of the Colombian Caribbean. The preparation of the Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity (RSSEC) and the development of greater awareness about the importance of biodiversity among the population and the stakeholders that participated in the Project also stand out, as does the inclusion or alignment of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach in national, regional and departmental planning instruments. The number of trained officials (194) is also noteworthy considering that the target was to train 160. The target related to the impact on government planning instruments was 59% fulfilled, mainly due to problems with the design of the target *per se*. However, the Project managed to have an impact on other planning instruments not foreseen in the PRODOC.

7. With regard to Component 2, the 36 new protected areas that were created in the Project framework, which include those declared by the CAR, are noteworthy. This target, in particular, was 317% fulfilled. In addition, targets regarding areas under land use agreements, sustainable management and conservation were exceeded by far, and with sustainable production plans. All that was missing was the inclusion of sustainable production plans in the management plans of the RIMD of the Swamp Complex of Bajo Sinú and Lago Azul Los Manatíes.

8. In all of its outcomes and outputs, Component 3 reached a level of fulfilment equal to or above 100%. The activities of this Component made it possible for the local communities to incorporate the RSSEC in their local biodiversity conservation and sustainable production processes, in pursuit of the recovery or consolidation of connectivity in their territories. The fulfilment of the target regarding the area under conservation mosaics and sustainable use of natural resources is noteworthy, as it was 23.053% fulfilled.

9. The Project consequently contributed to the global environmental objectives detailed in the PRODOC, which refer to the incorporation or increase in socio-ecosystem connectivity in corridors defined by the Project in land and marine ecosystems; to improved conservation status

and management of coastal and marine ecosystems, forests, wetlands and swamps; to the establishment of a programme to monitor flagship species in each connectivity corridor with the participation of multiple government and community authorities; the restoration of riparian forests; and the incorporation of the RSSEC in national and regional planning instruments.

10. The Project also generated co-benefits in the participating communities by means of the implementation of the diverse agroecosystems model. In accordance with the measurements the Project took, this contributed towards increasing the diversity of crops that could be sown by the families and as such, an increase was recorded in: a) the consumption of vegetables and meat by 7%; b) the consumption of three or more daily meals by 19%; and c) storage of food by 19%. In addition, a 21% reduction in the use of agro-chemicals for the management of pests and diseases, and a 40% increase in the application of organic fertilisers as well as a 13% increase in the management of solid waste, among other practices, was recorded.

11. Furthermore, by means of sustainable production plans, the Project enabled some families to generate and retain economic income by selling their products in local and regional markets. According to the surveys conducted, 10% of families who earned less than the minimum salary in 2017 started to earn a minimum salary or more in 2020. Another co-benefit that the Project directly measured, upon its completion, was the recording of more carbon storage in the targeted areas. The structural and functional role of the diverse agroecosystems in the landscape and their contribution to biodiversity conservation, soil improvement and the recovery of ecosystem services and of biological corridors was also recognised.

Efficiency

12. As at September 2020, 98% of the budget granted by the GEF had been executed. In the first year of Project implementation, 69% under-spending was recorded, which gradually decreased until it reached 9% in 2020. Savings were recorded that mainly resulted from the difference in the exchange rate in the Colombian peso compared to the United States Dollar, which made it possible to expand the activities on land and, for some outputs, increase the fulfilment of their targets.

13. One hundred percent of the Project beneficiaries and partners acknowledged the high performance of FAO in the Project implementation and in the processes generated to ensure collaborative and effective work with the counterparts. Areas of opportunity were identified to improve FAO advice in the determination of balancing items and in the identification and monitoring of Project risks.

14. For its part, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), as Project executing partner, closely monitored the Project and in the Management and Steering Committees, it provided a comprehensive vision regarding other government initiatives. The areas for improvement identified mainly include a limited level of institutional accompaniment from the municipal authorities. The National Director of the Project actively participated in the Project and promoted the exchange of information with the Mesoamerican Corridor initiative. However, a limited strategic contribution was noted in terms of promoting active participation with the municipalities too. The other Project partners (e.g. Departments and CAR) participated in the Project on an ongoing basis. However, each of them had different levels of involvement. Some of the CAR mentioned the internalisation of the consultation and coordination processes executed by the Project, to perform their own activities, which is also considered a collateral effect of the Project.

Co-financing

15. As at November 2020, 54.5% of the co-financing pledged had materialised (27 884 226 USD). As previously mentioned, areas for improvement were identified in the determination of some of the balancing items during the Project formulation phase, given that, in some cases, these included activities that did not contribute to the objective of such, or, some balancing items were conditioned by the mining and energy royalties that the national government would transfer to them, which implied *per se* a higher risk of non-fulfilment. The low level of co-financing materialised was due to the difficulty in getting the government partners to ratify the balancing items, due to the changes in government. The partners primarily considered the balancing items unrealistic due to the high amounts pledged, and not in line with their government programmes. However, most of the partners showed ongoing commitment to the Project and to the best of their ability contributed to the fulfilment of their targets. It is noteworthy that the Project managed to connect new partners who overall contributed with additional co-financing of USD 842 996. In combination with the above, the high level of appropriation of the Project at local level, the new collaborations established and the savings of the Project contributed to no negative effect being recorded due to the low materialisation of the co-financing.

Monitoring and Evaluation

16. The Project designed and implemented a detailed Monitoring and Evaluation system, which was based on the PRODOC M&E Plan that made it possible to almost completely fulfil the M&E Plan. The missing activities relate to the lack of a periodic and complete report of the co-financing pledged**.** Although the monitoring of risks took place based on the PRODOC and the annual reports (PIR), the areas for improvement of the M&E system include the lack of a component that would make it possible to analyse and monitor the Project risks identified and identify new risks. The foregoing did not make a robust analysis of the effectiveness of the adaptive measures implemented possible, or the identification of new risks, some of which affected the level of fulfilment of one of the Project targets.

Involvement of Interested Parties

17. Another noteworthy success of the Project was the broad and diverse participation of the interested parties in the implementation that guaranteed a high level of appropriation of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach and, consequently, a direct contribution to the sustainability of achievements fulfilled. To this end, the Project implemented highly inclusive and participatory mechanisms and processes, which in turn included an ethnic, age and gender focus. These mechanisms and processes include the consultation processes performed on the different groups of stakeholders, which included Free, Prior and Informed Consent; the formalisation of the participation of the stakeholders by means of the conclusion of *Agreements for the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources* and of the establishment of contractual commitments and payments for the provision of services (e.g. the signing of Letters of agreement); the creation of communication collectives composed of young people; and training, among which the Field Schools for Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity are noteworthy.

18. The actions that facilitated and promoted the involvement of stakeholders in the aforementioned processes and mechanisms include: the appointment of promoters and technical facilitators who belonged to the community itself; training of the stakeholders on matters of administration and accounting, the organisation of cultural events that reinforced the identity of the communities and, in the case of indigenous communities, the use of their native

language in the training provided and in the development of educational and informative materials.

19. The Project therefore contributed to strengthening the links between the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and their territories, which guaranteed their full and effective participation. To this end, these groups were effectively consulted in compliance with the applicable national norms and standards, as well as FAO and GEF guides related to working with ethnic communities.

20. The participation and involvement of the private sector, by means of different companies and professions, in the Project was also noteworthy. This participation made it possible to adopt the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach as a guide for obligatory investments (compensations) and voluntary investments (corporate social responsibility) that some companies located in the Project intervention area have to make. The Project also contributed to the creation of formal associations of community stakeholders and producers.

Capacity-building and knowledge management

21. The training programme prepared by the Project contributed to capacity-building on an individual scale, as there was evidence of the development of technical capacities, but also of a change in values, behaviours and attitudes in pursuit of the conservation of biodiversity. It also contributed to the development of skills on an organisational scale, as some organisations have a mandate and a team that can perform its duties. In addition, the participating institutions have a platform to exchange information and knowledge. There is also a favourable environment given that some institutions have a policy framework that is aligned with the RSSEC and an associated public budget to implement the planning instruments that the Project worked on. It is worth highlighting the high effectiveness of the Field Schools organised, which were based on the needs and interests of the beneficiaries, and on the activities that they had been completing since before the Project started, which favoured the extensive appropriation of the knowledge acquired.

22. With regard to knowledge management, the Project generated a Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Strategy, and the technical and geographical information from this was systematised in an Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform, which in turn contains the biodiversity flagship species monitoring programme for each socio-ecosystem corridor. The Project is in the process of producing 19 publications that systematise the main outputs, methodologies and lessons learned, generated during its implementation. In addition, it performed nine tours to exchange experiences among different Project stakeholders.

Social and environmental guarantees

23. The risk of the Project having a negative social or environmental impact was assessed as moderate during the formulation of the Project and this rating did not change during the implementation of such**.** No negative environmental or social effects resulting from the Project were detected and the necessary measures were taken to avoid any negative collateral effects. However, it is not clear whether the measures implemented by the Project coincide with those established in the environmental and social commitment Plan, as the Project did not have access to this Plan. It is therefore not known whether the mitigation measures and actions included in the Plan were fulfilled, as the Project was not aware of them.

Gender

24. After the Project Mid-Term Review, the Project actions were strengthened to include the gender perspective. Although the Project did not have an exclusive strategy for calling upon and promoting the participation of women, it did manage to increase and strengthen self-esteem, knowledge and the empowerment of some of the female participants. In addition, the RSSEC highlights women and young people as key stakeholders in its development and implementation, and its content shows the use of neutral language, in most cases. The Diploma in socio-ecosystem connectivity includes the gender perspective in the rights, identity and territory module.

Sustainability

25. A high level of Project appropriation was identified among most of the beneficiaries, due to the continuity they are giving to some of its actions, by means of new initiatives and voluntary work. Social sustainability is also being maintained in the collaborations initiated by the Project with the programmes and projects of other government and civil authorities.

26. The connectivity concepts and actions extracted from the RSSEC, or aligned with such, have been included in some national, regional and municipal planning and development instruments, which will contribute to the continuity of the Project achievements, and as such contribute towards institutional sustainability.

27. The companies Urrá, Cerromatoso and PROMIGAS submit investment plans that contribute to the financial sustainability of the actions undertaken by the Project, and these are complemented by the expected budget that the government authorities receive for the execution of their planning instruments that the Project worked on.

28. For its part, the likelihood of the environmental sustainability of the Project achievements is based on the effectiveness and success of the resource conservation and sustainable use actions that the Project implemented; the institutional strengthening achieved by means of the RSSEC and of the planning instruments worked on, capacity-building and awareness-raising of the communities and key stakeholders with regard to the importance of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity.

Progress towards impact

29. With regard to the progress towards impact, it was found that most of the targets proposed in the GEF tracking tool were met and several of these were doubled or quadrupled. Among these targets, it is worth highlighting the improved effectiveness of the management of protected areas under intervention, the large area with biodiversity conservation actions in productive systems and sectors, the restoration of riparian forests and sectorial policies that now include elements of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity. A possible area for improvement was detected in the METT tool to measure the effectiveness of protected area management. Due to the co-benefits the Project generated, some people interviewed mentioned that the Project contributed to improving their quality of life.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1 - Relevance. The Project continues to be relevant for the Colombian Government, as it aligns with two of the axes cutting across all of public management, which are environmental sustainability and green growth, as well as the objective "to harmonise agricultural production with the conservation and efficient use of natural resources". In addition, the Project responded to the needs of the local communities. It also remains relevant for the GEF, in accordance with the objectives and

outcomes of the focal area of biodiversity. In addition, it is in line with and has contributed to the FAO priorities under Strategic Objective 2 and Priority Area 3 of the Country Programming Framework.

Conclusion 2 - Achievement of outcomes. The Project was extremely successful in the achievement of its outcomes and outputs, in many cases exceeding the targets detailed. It is worth highlighting the 1,451,622 ha, which were intervened by the Project by means of the declaration of new protected areas and the improvement of existing protected areas; the configuration of conservation mosaics and sustainable production in an area of 559,948 ha, and the designation of ecosystem corridors, as well as the planning instruments that the Project worked on.

Conclusion 3 - Co-benefits generated. In accordance with the data that the Project measured, this contributed to improving food and nutrition security in the intervened communities and to the use of good practices in the maintenance of mixed vegetable gardens and other activities. In addition, it enabled some families to generate and retain economic income by means of the sale of their products in local and regional markets. It furthermore contributed towards increasing carbon storage in the intervened areas and towards the recognition of the contribution of the diverse agroecosystems to the conservation of biodiversity, improvement of soil, and the recovery of ecosystem services and of biological corridors.

Conclusion 4 - Efficiency. Upon evaluating the achievements of the Project and the resources invested in such, it is considered that the Project was implemented in a cost-effective manner. The Project savings and the appropriation of the beneficiary partner(s) of the Project contributed towards extending the activities on the ground and for some outputs increasing the fulfilment of their targets. All of the beneficiaries and partners of the Project interviewed recognised the high performance of FAO.

Conclusion 5 - Co-financing. The partners showed ongoing commitment to the Project and there was no effect on the fulfilment of Project targets although, as at November 2020, 54.5% of the co-financing pledged had materialised. Areas for improvement were identified in the determination of the balancing items during the Project formulation phase.

Conclusion 6 - Monitoring and evaluation. A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation system was designed and executed, mainly to monitor the Project progress and the use of the budget. However, the system needed to be complemented by a component that would enable the analysis and monitoring of the Project risks identified and the identification of new risks as well as the analysis of adaptation measures implemented, and have a periodic report of the co-financing.

Conclusion 7 - Involvement of the interested parties, including the ethnic approach. The Project achieved a very extensive participation of stakeholders from different sectors, among which it is worth highlighting the social and private sectors. To this end, it implemented involvement processes and mechanisms that were highly inclusive and effective. The mechanisms and processes were complemented by a strategy covering multiple approaches, which was very successful in including an ethnic and age focus. The interaction and coexistence achieved generated trust among the social stakeholders, which contributed to the reconstruction of the social fabric in some intervened areas.

Conclusion 8 - Capacity-building and knowledge management. Capacities were developed on an individual scale, which included technical capacity-building but also a change in values, behaviours and attitudes in pursuit of the conservation of biodiversity. And on an organisational scale, as some organisations have a mandate and a useful team to perform their duties. There is also a favourable environment, as a policy framework was developed that is aligned with the RSSEC and has a public budget. The Project produced and systematised information that was very useful for socio-ecosystem connectivity, including successful experience exchange tours.

Conclusion 9 - Social and environmental guarantees. There was no change in the assessment of the environmental and social risk of the Project during its implementation**.** No negative environmental or

social effects resulting from the Project were detected either and it was found that the necessary measures were taken to avoid any negative collateral effects. However, it is not known whether the mitigation measures and actions included in the social and environmental commitment Plan were fulfilled, as the Project did not have access to them.

Conclusion 10 - Gender. After the Project Mid-Term Review, the Project actions were strengthened to include the gender perspective. Although the Project did not have a strategy for calling upon and promoting the participation of women, it did manage to increase and/or strengthen, in some cases, the self-esteem, knowledge and empowerment of some of the women. The content of the RSSEC highlights the role of women in its development and execution, and uses neutral language, in most cases. The Diploma in socio-ecosystem connectivity includes the gender perspective in its module on rights, identity and territory.

Conclusion 11 - Sustainability. The sustainability of the Project achievements and benefits in the social, institutional, economic and environmental sphere is highly likely. The high degree of appropriation of the Project by the beneficiaries and partners, the formalisation of the achievements by means of declarations, plans and planning instruments is noteworthy, as is the availability of financing mechanisms for the continuity of important actions.

Conclusion 12 - Progress towards impact. It was found that the Project managed to make progress towards the impact foreseen, as indicated by the fulfilment of the targets set in the GEF tracking tool, and an improvement was therefore recorded in the effectiveness of the management of intervened PA, a broad surface area with biodiversity conservation actions in productive sectors and systems, the restoration of riparian forests and the sectorial policies that now include elements of biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity. Other impacts were also generated in some participating families, such as the greater availability of healthy and varied food. Some people interviewed mentioned that the Project contributed to improving their quality of life.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - For FAO, MADS, NNP and CAR. An area for improvement was identified in the design of targets of similar projects, which are related to the impact on government policy instruments. To this end, it is suggested that the necessary consultations be made with the authorities responsible for approving or authorising government instruments, to determine the feasibility of the Project having an impact on these instruments, taking into account the government process to follow and the time that said process requires, and if possible, it is suggested that these authorities be included as co-financing partners of the Project, to establish a formal commitment for their fulfilment.

Recommendation 2 - For MADS and NNP. To ensure that the Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity, which was a key output in the Project, continues to be a reference for other areas of the Caribbean and can be replicated in other regions of the country, it is recommended that the RSSEC be formalised as an institutional instrument of MADS and NNP. It is also suggested that MADS define and include the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach in its policy, and that the updated Caribbean Regional System of Protected Areas (SIRAP-Caribe) be monitored to ensure its alignment with the Institutional Strategic Plan of the NNP.

Recommendation 3 - For the GEF. Given that two protected areas did not fulfil their target for improved effectiveness in their management, as they did not have any tourism or they were not inhabited by indigenous groups, it is suggested that the GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) include guidelines on what to do in these cases so as not to affect the rating of protected areas that do not comply with these characteristics, which depend on the nature of each protected area and, where applicable, analyse the convenience of adjusting the tool.

Recommendation 4 - For FAO, MADS, NNP and CAR. On considering the areas for improvement found to better identify the co-financing during the Project formulation, and the low level of fulfilment of the co-financing recorded, it is suggested that the methodological guide given to the project partners be strengthened to improve their identification and include a review phase with them to make sure that their fulfilment is feasible.

Recommendation 5 - For MADS and NNP. It is recommended that the inclusion of the proposals prepared by the Project be monitored so that the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach is effectively incorporated into the municipal land use instruments and the sustainability of the Project achievements is therefore strengthened. In addition, it is recommended that the ten plans that were designed and implemented in the RIMD Lago Azul Los Manatíes and RIMD Swamp Complex of Bajo Sinú be included in the update of their respective management plans, or be formalised by means of some other institutional mechanism, to ensure the continuity of their application and the sustainability of their benefits.

Recommendation 6 - For FAO, MADS and NNP. It is suggested that an engaging strategy be included in future projects that is also aligned with the priorities of the agricultural sector to promote their more active involvement in these kinds of projects. In this same regard, it is proposed that the MADS present the highly successful outcomes of this Project to the relevant authorities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in a high level meeting, and propose partnerships to give continuity and expand the benefits obtained with this Project in the areas of agriculture, livestock and food security.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

30. The final evaluation of the Project, which is considered in the Project Document (PRODOC) and takes place in line with the Global Environment Facility requirements, serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, the evaluation serves to report to the donor (GEF), to the national and regional governments that are stakeholders and counterparts in the execution and to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in its capacity as Implementing Agency. At the same time, this exercise also serves to record lessons learned, given that in the process of rating the achievement of objectives, the achievement of the outcomes and the progress towards the impact of the Project to date, the final evaluation also makes it possible to identify measures to consolidate the sustainability of the Project outcomes.

1.2 Foreseen users

31. The users foreseen for this evaluation are shown in Table 1, along with the foreseen uses.

Table 1 - Users and uses of the evaluation

Users	Foreseen uses
Project Team and Technical Committee	These authorities can analyse the findings, recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluation to jointly agree upon the route to take to ensure the sustainability of the Project outcomes; up-scale their impact in successive phases; and capitalise and share the good practices and technical outputs of the Project.
The MADS, NNP, MADR, SIRAP-Caribe, INVEMAR, departmental governments and Regional Corporations, and other Project partners, as well as the local beneficiary communities.	The knowledge and experience acquired in the design and execution of this Project, as well as the evaluation results, will enable these institutions to improve the design and execution of similar interventions in the future. In addition, it will enable them to improve the scope and sustainability of the outcomes after the Project ends.
GEF	It will be able to use the evaluation conclusions and recommendations to contribute to strategic decision-making regarding similar future interventions and as an input for future evaluations of their interventions.
The FAO Representation in Colombia (FAOCO)	It will be able to use the main outcomes of the evaluation as input for its next strategic planning, and for the design and execution of new projects financed and not financed by the GEF.
The FAO-GEF Coordination Unit at the headquarters	It will be able to use the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluation to improve the design and implementation of future projects from the FAO-GEF portfolio at global and national level. It will also be able to consider the good practices to nurture the management and distribution of knowledge, and share them with the FAO-GEF community.

Other donors, government institutions and organisations	Resume the recommendations and lessons learned to support other projects focused on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by means of socio-ecosystem connectivity in Colombia and the Caribbean.

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

32. The main objective of the final evaluation is that mentioned in the PRODOC, which states the following: "[...] *to describe the impact the project has had, the sustainability of its outcomes and the degree of achievement of the outcomes in the long term. In addition, the FIE [Final Independent Evaluation] must indicate the future actions needed to sustain the project outcomes, expand on the impact it has had in subsequent phases, mainstream and up-scale its outputs and practices, and share the information obtained with the authorities and institutions that have competences relating to forestry management, policies and regulations to therefore ensure the continuity of the processes that this project initiated*".

33. Other aspects of the evaluation that are detailed in the PRODOC are translated into specific objectives that are framed in the following evaluation criteria: relevance, achievement of outcomes (effectiveness), sustainability and progress towards impact; efficiency, implementation and completion; monitoring and evaluation; commitment of the interested parties. In addition, the evaluation covers the following aspects; environmental and social guarantees, gender, ethnic focus, co-financing, knowledge management; capacity-building and the need to monitor the evaluation findings.

34. The evaluation is guided by the evaluation questions detailed in Table 2, and Annex 2 shows the evaluation matrix that includes the evaluation sub-questions.

Table 2 - Evaluation questions

Relevance (requires rating)	Have the Project outcomes been (and are they still) consistent with the spheres of activity/operational strategies of the GEF programme, the national priorities and the FAO Country Programming Framework?
Achievement of the Project outcomes (requires rating)	What intentional and involuntary outcomes has the project achieved, and to what extent did these contribute to the achievement of the project objectives with regard to the sustainable management of the strategic ecosystems of the CRC (environmental objective); to sustainably improving the provision of goods and services (development objective) and to implementing a socio-ecosystem connectivity strategy (specific objective)?
Capacity-building and knowledge management (under achievement of outcomes)	Were the capacity-building activities based on real needs, were they relevant to the sector/beneficiaries and did they capitalise on existing capacities? Did the capacity-building activities have an integrated approach (individual, organisational and favourable environment level)? What evidence is there of the beneficiaries having acquired more capacities in terms of local environmental governance and do the institutions make informed decisions on this matter? Have knowledge management activities and outputs been produced

	and shared, and has this improved the contribution to the outcomes?
Efficiency, implementation and execution of the Project (requires rating)	Have the modalities and quality of implementation/execution, the institutional structure and the governance of the Project, the financial, technical and operational resources and procedures available helped or hindered the achievement of the Project outcomes and objectives?
Co-financing	To what extent has the foreseen co-financing materialised and how has lower than expected co-financing affected the Project outcomes?
Monitoring and Evaluation (requires rating)	To what extent has the M&E plan and its implementation been efficient and contributed to the Project outcomes?
Involvement of the interested parties (requires rating)	How have other stakeholders been involved, such as civil society, the population of black and indigenous communities, or the private sector, in the design or the implementation of the Project, and how has this affected the Project outcomes? How have different age groups been engaged in the design and implementation of the project and how has this affected the project outcomes?
Social and environmental guarantees	To what extent have environmental and social matters been taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the Project? What was the impact of the measures taken during the implementation of the Project, with regard to social and environmental guarantees (link to other sections)?
Gender	To what extent have gender-sensitive considerations been taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the Project? To what extent has the Project ensured equality in terms of participation and benefits, contributing to the empowerment of women, youth and other vulnerable groups?
Sustainability (requires rating)	How sustainable are the outcomes achieved to date, at an environmental, social, financial and institutional level?
Progress towards impact	What preliminary signs of impact can be identified as a result of the contribution of the Project?
Lessons learned	What lessons can be learned from the design, implementation and management of the Project that can be of use for present and future activities in the reduction of *the degradation and fragmentation of the strategic ecosystems of the Caribbean Region of Colombia, with a socio-ecosystem connectivity approach* or other present and future projects?
	Implement a socio-ecosystem connectivity strategy that includes inter-institutional articulation, territorial planning, social participation with an intercultural vision, the effective management of existing protected areas (PA), the creation of new PA and the promotion of sustainable production models.

35. The final evaluation covers the period from the start of the implementation of the Project until December 2020, with a main emphasis on the period subsequent to the mid-term review (MTR), which took place from May to October 2018. The evaluation encompasses the activities performed in the four components of the Project and considers the recommendations resulting from the MTR. The evaluation examines the performance, the achievements, impact, progress, and the difficulties as well as good practices of the Project on a national, regional, local and inter-institutional level.

36. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team did not carry out fieldwork. However, online interviews were conducted with people located in eight departments of Colombia: Antioquia, Bolívar, Chocó, Córdoba, Sucre, Atlántico, Bogotá and Magdalena. It is important to mention that the Project was implemented in seven conservation mosaics that are located in the first five municipalities listed, particularly in the area that covers the western area of the Colombian Caribbean. The other departments listed (Atlántico, Bogotá and Magdalena) correspond to the location of the offices of some of the people interviewed. Figure 5 shows the location of the conservation mosaics and the total area of influence of the Project.

1.4 Method

37. This evaluation is a final or "summative" evaluation, which takes place upon completion of the projects to analyse different aspects of their execution. To this end, different methods are used that make it possible to obtain robust evidence, which substantiates the assignment of a final rating for the Project in the different aspects evaluated. The consultations with the interested parties followed ethical guidelines to guarantee the safe, non-discriminatory and respectful participation of those involved and to ensure that all of those who participated in the evaluation are aware of the purpose of the evaluation, that their participation is voluntary and that all of the information is confidential.

38. The evaluation followed the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and adopted a consultative and transparent approach throughout the process. In particular, the process was implemented in close collaboration with the FAO Representation in Colombia and the Project Steering Committee. In addition, the evaluation considers the GEF requirements and criteria, in order to facilitate the comparison with its reports and contribute to the programme selection process. Due to the foregoing, the assessment of the different aspects of the Project takes place by means of the assignment of a rating based on the GEF scale (appendix 3).

39. The evaluation takes into account the Theory of Change (ToC), which was adjusted by the evaluation team, based on that proposed by the MTR, with an emphasis on the chain of outcomes. The ToC is used to capture the causal relationship between inputs, expected outputs detailed in the framework of outcomes of the Project, outcomes to which these should contribute and conditions under which they should occur. The adjusted ToC includes assumptions and possible co-benefits and served to analyse the Project design and strategy. The mapping of stakeholders and the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2), included in the Evaluation Inception Report were reopened to include the list of people interviewed and to respond to the key evaluation questions.

40. The contribution that the Project made to the objectives detailed in the GEF and FAO Gender Equality Policy was assessed. As a reference to evaluate the work performed with the local

communities, the FAO Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Manual, the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and the GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement were also used. To evaluate capacity-building, both at the level of favourable environment and of individuals, the OED Framework was used[1]. In particular, the results of the first and second survey implemented by the Project, and the interviews conducted, were used to measure the level of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of the beneficiaries.

41. To respond to the question about sustainability, four main principles were assessed: i) appropriation by the beneficiaries; ii) availability of resources, iii) sufficient capacities of the stakeholders involved; and iv) favourable social and institutional environment (with regard to the FAO capacity-building framework). With regard to the appropriation by the beneficiaries, the strategy the Project followed for access to local markets was also assessed.

42. The triangulation of the information was a key process in obtaining sound and verifiable evidence that supports the findings and recommendations resulting from this evaluation.

43. The methods used in this evaluation are:

i. Documentation review. An exhaustive documentation review took place of the documents the Project produced, including the annual and half-yearly progress reports, the technical outputs resulting from the direct work of the Project implementing team and of the consultancies hired, MTR report, the annual operating plans, the co-financing reports, the minutes of the steering and technical committees, the reports from the inspection visits and missions that took place, the tools used to monitor the Project and national strategic documents and documents of the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR) and of the five departmental and local governments participating in this Project, among other information. This review provided the input to analyse each of the evaluation criteria shown in the evaluation matrix, including the progress towards the outcomes, and made it possible to define more targeted questions that were prepared during the remote interviews conducted with the interested parties. The bibliography lists the external documents consulted.

ii. *Gathering of information*. To collect the opinions, perspectives, data and observations about the implementation of the Project from the implementing parties, beneficiaries and other national, regional and local stakeholders, semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted remotely. Interview protocols were prepared and different communication tools were used to conduct the interviews, such as conference calls via *Meet* and *Zoom* and mobile phone and landline, or *WhatsApp* calls. Interviews were conducted with 71 people, 21 of which were from the Department of Córdoba, 17 from Bogotá, nine from Antioquia, seven from Chocó, five from Bolívar, four from Magdalena, three from Sucre and two from Atlántico (Appendix 1: list of people interviewed). The criteria to select the people interviewed were based on having a representation of each sector that participated in the Project. The list of people interviewed therefore included the national, regional, departmental and municipal government sector; non-governmental organisations, international agencies, beneficiaries, academia and the private sector. The information-gathering phase took longer than initially planned, spanning from June to December 2020. Insofar as possible, an attempt was made to use up-to-date information that covered the period until the end of this phase. However, this was not possible in some cases.

[1] http://www.fao.org/3/ca5668en/ca5668en.pdf

1.5 Limitations

44. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to visit and make direct observations in the Project intervention areas. To compensate for this limitation, a higher number of interviews were conducted with local stakeholders linked to activities on the ground. In particular, stakeholders belonging to different sectors were sought (e.g. government, civil and private sector), to triangulate the information provided and therefore consolidate the evidence. In addition, the interview protocols included more questions related to the fieldwork, due to being established as one of the main sources of information of the evaluation.

2. Background and context of the project

45. Colombia is the third largest economy in South America, bestowed with abundant natural resources and listed as the second country with the most biodiversity in the world after Brazil, as it houses 10% of the natural wealth of the plant and 52% of its land is still composed of forests (DNP, 2017). It is one of the countries in the region predicted to have positive economic growth (estimated before the 2020 health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic), which in 2019 reached 3.3%, and that corresponds to a substantial increase compared to 1.4% in 2017 and 2.7% in 2018, according to FEDESARROLLO (2020). At that time, the mid-term estimates predicted a progressive recovery to 4.1% at the end of the mandate of the current administration.

46. The GDP per capita increased by 3 709 United States Dollars (USD) in 2006 to 6 498 USD in 2019, which reflects an improvement in the living conditions of the population, particularly of the middle class. Despite these positive figures, the levels of inequality between the regions, and between the urban and rural areas and the ethnic minorities, continue to be extremely high.

47. In monetary terms, it is estimated that 27.8% of the Colombian population lives in poverty and around 7.9% live in extreme poverty. In the rural areas, the level of dissatisfaction with the basic needs stands at around 33% (compared to 12.5% in the urban areas) and the poverty level is over 64% (DANE, 2019). According to the United Nations 2019 Human Development Report, Colombia has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.761, and ranks as number 79 among 189 countries (UNDP, 2019). At the end of 2019, the rate of unemployment was 10.5% (DANE, 2019). However, this indicator does not reflect the problems linked to labour informality in the country (56.6%), as well as the levels of income discrimination between men and women.

48. The country has always maintained positive growth, which has enabled the Government of Colombia to direct the economic policies and public investment towards addressing the problems of poverty, inequality in the territories and rural and urban areas, and to seek a lasting solution to the armed conflict.

49. Colombia is characterised as being a heterogeneous country due to its geography, with different levels of regional development and various environmental, cultural and social conditions. However, the gaps in the development of the territory reflect, among other aspects the poverty traps, the complexity of the relations between the countryside and the city, the socio-environmental conflicts and structural conditions that affect the five large natural regions it is divided into: Caribbean Region (CRC), Pacific Region, Andean Region, Orinoco Region and Amazon Region (Figure 1).

50. In this sense, one of the greatest challenges of the government is to achieve levels of socioeconomic growth and of sustainable development, by recognising and making the most of international support and the different economic, environmental, social, institutional and regional development initiatives and opportunities. These initiatives must have sound public institutions and promote the active participation of public, business, social and community stakeholders from each territory.

51. Although there has been a sound environmental and legislative institutional structure since the Political Constitution of 1991, this is being put to the test given the exacerbation of the socio-environmental challenges in the post-conflict period (CGR, 2017).

52. In effect, the priority areas for the implementation of sustainable development actions and the consolidation of peace in Colombia are areas of great importance and socio-environmental

sensitivity. Over 90% of the priority municipalities for peace-building have economies that are associated with illegal activities (e.g. mainly deforestation and illegal crops), where unsustainable productive models predominate that worsen the poverty and extreme poverty conditions. In addition, these are territories that have some type of protection or regulation for the use of natural resources, with substantial percentages covered by some form of legal status (e.g. National Natural Parks - NNP, forest reserve, indigenous reservation, etc.).

53. According to the National Unified Registry of Protected Areas (RUNAP, 2020), on 25 June 2020, a record number was reached of 1 342 areas under some status of protection, representing 31 407 280 hectares. These include 59 National Natural Parks and other national, regional and civil society protected areas. This progress results from the National Development Plans (PND) and from the international commitments made by the country in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi Targets.

The Caribbean Region of Colombia (CRC)

54. The Caribbean Region of Colombia (CRC) has a surface area of 146 084 km^2, which covers around 12.81% of the continental surface area and 63% of the marine area of the country, composed of coastal and island areas.

55. The administrative and political organisation of the CRC is composed of 208 municipalities, which form part of the ten (10) departments of the region: Atlántico, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, La Guajira, Magdalena, Sucre, Archipiélago de San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, and municipalities of the north west of Antioquia and north of Chocó, where 23.52% of the total population of Colombia lives, which equates to 10.39 million people[2].

56. The CRC is considered a region of exceptional biological wealth at global level, distributed into 24 large ecosystems (over 90% of them transformed): mangroves, coral reefs, sea grasses, freshwater and saltwater coastal lagoons, rivers and internal wetlands, deserts, savannahs and forests of different types (from very dry to high Andean) and moors, among the most noteworthy. These ecosystems provide crucial ecosystem services for the sustainable development of the territory. However, their integrity is gravely threatened by their fragmentation and the growing anthropic pressure on the Regional System of Protected Areas (SIRAP), and its buffer zones, particularly in the western sub-region.

57. The RUNAP registers a total of 92 PA for the CRC: Nine National Natural Parks (NNP); seven Regional Natural Parks (RNP); 16 Regional Integrated Management Districts (RIMD); three Soil Conservation Districts (SCD); 41 Civil Society Nature Reserves (CSNR); five National Protected Forest Reserves (NPFR); five Regional Protected Forest Reserves (RPFR); one Fauna Sanctuary (FS); one Fauna and Flora Sanctuary (SFF); and one Park Way.

58. At the same time, due to dealing with a territory with high potential for agricultural production, the regional development model, mainly in the western area, is based on capital-intensive large-scale agricultural production. 49,000 hectares of plantain and banana are cultivated, geared mainly towards the foreign market and mid and large-scale transitory crops (corn, rice, cassava and cotton). Smallholder peasants and indigenous communities also carry out traditional subsistence agriculture (cassava, corn, yam, rice, banana). In addition, extensive livestock farming on natural and improved pastures occupies the largest area of the CRC, both by large

[2] National Natural Parks, CORPURABÄ and the Project team provided this data, which is based on a geographical/ecosystem classification.

producers (for fattening), and by smallholder peasants (dual purpose). In addition, artisan subsistence and industrial marine fishing is also conducted in the region, mainly targeting shallow-water shrimp.

59. In addition to these activities, there is the mining of nickel (municipalities of Montelibano, Planeta Rica and San José de Uré south of the department of Córdoba) and of coal in La Guajira, which have contributed towards generating significant resources (taxes and royalties), but at the same time have caused environmental degradation and socio-environmental disputes in the region.

60. In addition, there has been deterioration and degradation of marine and coastal areas of the CRC, which are threatened by over-exploitation, sedimentation, pollution, climate change and invasive species. The aforementioned has led to coastal erosion, effects on marine biodiversity and the loss of ecosystems.

Project scope and objectives

61. To tackle this complex scenario in the CRC, the Project Implementation of the Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Approach for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Caribbean Region of Colombia was completed. The Global Environmental Objective of the Project is to reduce the degradation and fragmentation of the strategic ecosystems of the CRC. Its development objective is to sustainably increase and improve the provision of agricultural and forestry production goods and services in the CRC. Its specific objective is to implement a socio-ecosystem connectivity strategy that includes inter-institutional articulation, territorial planning, social participation with an intercultural vision, the effective management of existing PA, the creation of new PA and the promotion of sustainable production models.

62. The Project defined its area of intervention in the western area of the CRC, based on the analysis performed by the SIRAP, which calculated the Index of State Conservation Targets (ISCT) and determined that 88.89% of the eco-regions are in a critical state. In addition, it enabled the establishment of the conservation targets for the CRC (SIRAP and TNC, 2010).

63. The Project proposed meeting such targets by means of four components, four outcomes and 16 outputs that aim to tackle the main threats to biodiversity in the western area of the Caribbean Region of Colombia, which are: anthropogenic and natural pressures within the protected areas and their areas of transition and the fragmentation between the protected areas and buffer zones (Figure 1).

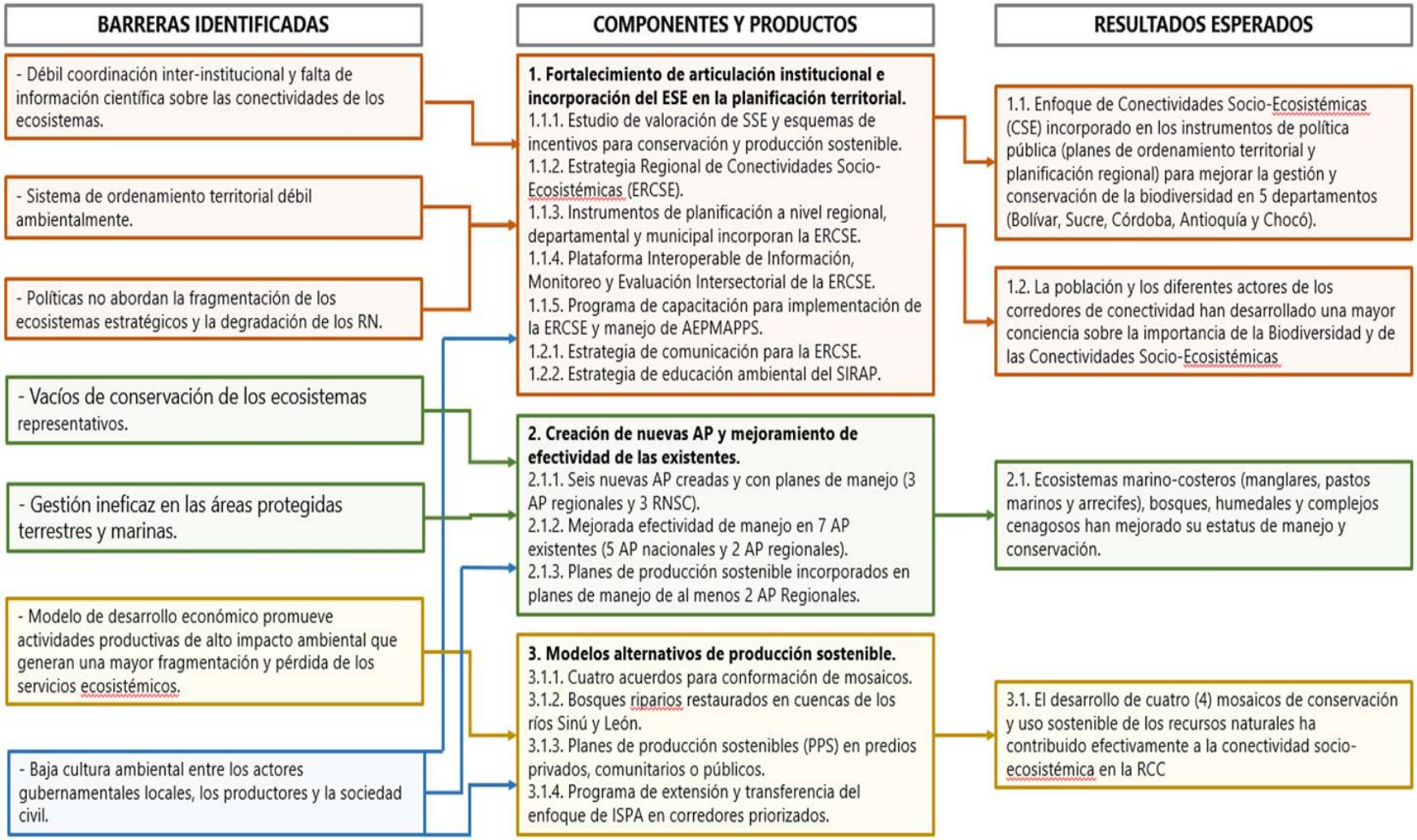
i. **Strengthening of the institutional articulation and incorporation of the socio-ecosystem approach in territorial planning.** To this end, the joint construction of a Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Approach in the Caribbean Region of Colombia (RSSEC) was proposed, as a roadmap for the actions that the Project would implement. It was planned that the Strategy would be adopted by the relevant stakeholders from the region as a reference point for territorial planning. This requires the strengthening of local and regional capacities (including departments and municipalities), and of instruments such as the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). In addition, this component includes the construction of an inter-sectorial monitoring and evaluation information platform, which contributes to the dissemination of the outcomes and to regional collective awareness-raising regarding the importance of biodiversity and of socio-ecosystem connectivity for the regional society and the country.

ii. **Creation of new PA and improved effectiveness of the already existing PA**, strengthening the management and conservation of coastal-marine, tropical rainforest, wetland and swamp complex ecosystems. This would be achieved by means of the promotion of new regional PA that would contribute to filling the conservation gaps and increasing the surface area and representation of protected ecosystems. In addition, by improving the management of the existing PA, through the training and strengthening of the skills (infrastructure and teams) of the responsible regional and local institutions, and of the communities and their organisations in the areas of influence.

iii. **Design and implementation of alternative sustainable production models and strategies to guarantee the offer of regional and local ecosystem services**, geared towards guaranteeing the supply of ecosystem services. To this end, this component includes the adoption of sustainable productive plans with certification systems, backed by a Sustainable Intensification of Agricultural Production (SIAP) approach, by means of Field Schools (FFS), which enable the improvement of the livelihoods of the local populations and the conservation of biodiversity.

iv. **Monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of Project information**, which enables the monitoring, systematisation and dissemination of the lessons learned, as a contribution to future international cooperation interventions and interventions by institutions and organisations involved in their implementation.

Figure 1 - Relationship between the barriers identified and the Project components, outputs and outcomes



Source: Prepared by the authors

2.1 Theory of Change

64. The evaluation team decided to reformulate the Theory of Change (ToC), prepared during the Mid-Term Review, to more comprehensively reflect the expected Project outcomes and impact and the existing causal relations between them. Figure 2 shows the new ToC proposal, which will be reviewed by the Project executing team. The following details the narrative of the ToC.

65. Given the scale and scope of the project development and environmental objectives, these are considered the impact the project should contribute to, under the assumption that the benefits and achievements of the project would be maintained over time, once the project has ended. In accordance with the Project design, this contribution would be made by means of the implementation of a Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity (RSSEC), which would serve as a guide to establish and maintain connectivity in the CRC. The final expected outcome of the Project would therefore be the expansion and strengthening of the socio-ecosystem connectivity corridors in the CRC, including the implementation of conservation mosaics and sustainable use of natural resources, connected by means of regional connectivity nodes. The mosaics would constitute the minimum management unit to achieve connectivity. The assumptions for reaching this final outcome would be that the socio-ecosystem connectivity topic be maintained as a priority topic in the public agenda of the CRC and, consequently, that there would be political will to implement its actions.

66. To have the mosaics and corridors functioning, the project must achieve the following intermediate outcomes: strengthen the management of existing PA, which would be evident by means of an increase in the rating for the effectiveness of their management, measured by means of the GEF tool designed for this purpose; and by creating six new PA with management plans that include the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach (RSSEC). To obtain these two intermediate outcomes, the project must perform restoration actions in riparian forests located in buffer zones; implement agreements for the use and management of resources with Afro-descendant and indigenous groups as required; as well as implement sustainable production plans in buffer zones and in regional PA with RSSEC. To this end, the application of incentive schemes would be proposed for sustainable production and conservation and a study of multi-criteria valuation of ecosystem services would be conducted.

67. Another intermediate outcome that must be obtained would be the implementation of regional, departmental and municipal planning instruments that incorporate the RSSEC, and the fulfilment of these is to be monitored. This outcome would also benefit from the application of incentive schemes for sustainable production and conservation and of a study on the valuation of ecosystem services. The main assumption to achieve this outcome would be political will and having the ideal administrative and political scenario to modify and implement the required planning instruments, by means of participatory processes that ensure the appropriation of such.

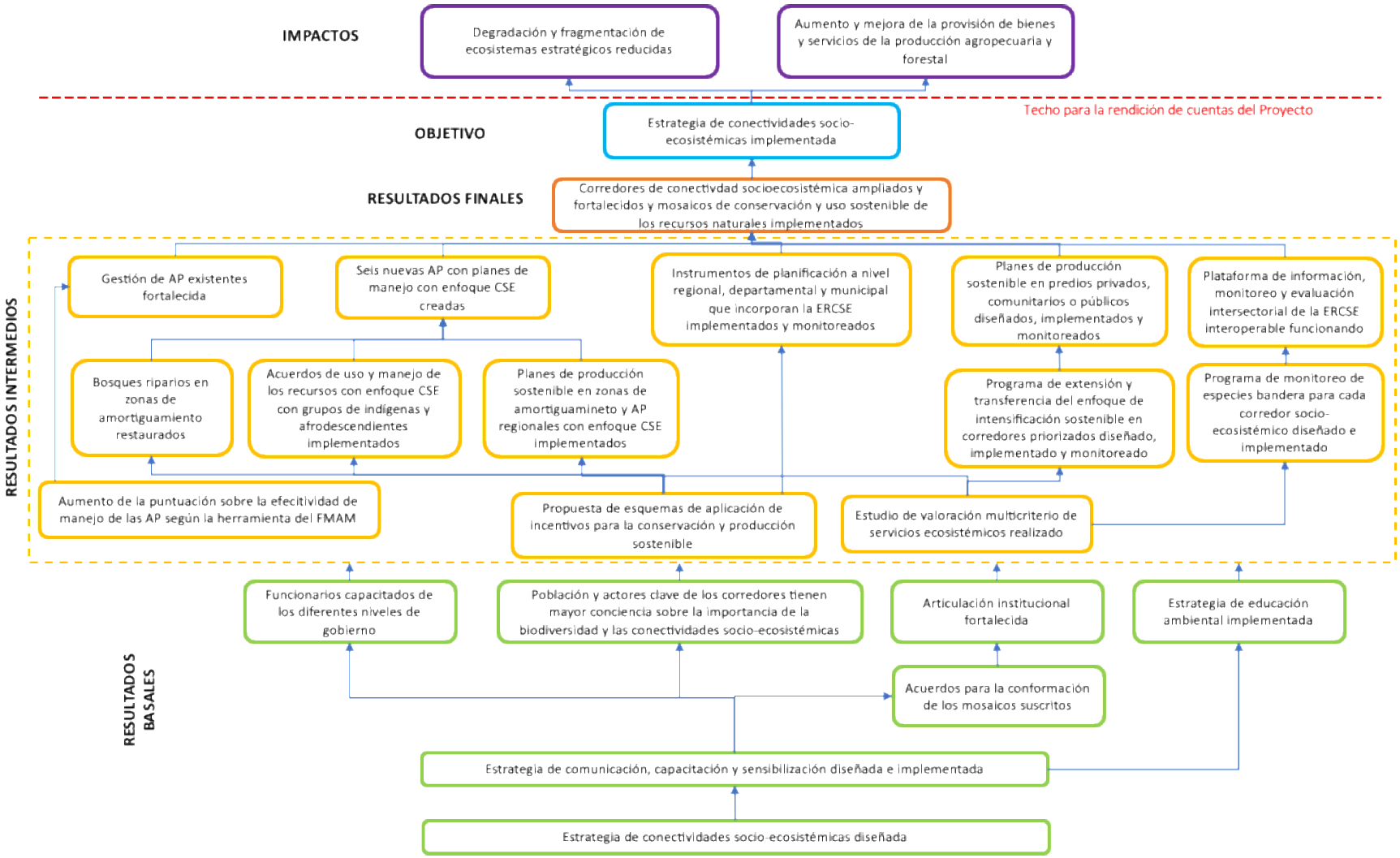
68. Plans for sustainable production on private, community or public land would also be expected to be designed, implemented and monitored as another intermediate outcome. The aforementioned would in turn involve designing, implementing and monitoring a programme to extend and transfer the sustainable intensification approach in prioritised connectivity corridors. This intermediate outcome would also benefit from the application of incentive schemes and from the aforementioned multi-criteria valuation study. To this end, the assumption to fulfil would be to have the active participation and interest of the producers and the community for the development of plans.

69. Another intermediate outcome would consist of having an operating RSSEC inter-sectorial information, monitoring and evaluation platform, which would in turn include a programme for monitoring flagship species for each socio-ecosystem corridor. The assumptions for obtaining this outcome include the availability of accessible and quality information to feed into the platform, and the existence of an agreement between the authorities that own the information to transfer it periodically.

70. To obtain these intermediate outcomes, there would need to be the following: civil servants trained at national, regional and municipal level about the management and implementation of the RSSEC; the recognition of the importance of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity by the population and key stakeholders of the connectivity corridors; a strengthened institutional articulation, by means of agreements for the formation of conservation mosaics and the sustainable use of resources; and of the implementation of an environmental education strategy that will continue to strengthen the capacities and the level of awareness of the population. The assumptions proposed to achieve these initial outcomes would be: having the active participation and interest of the population and key stakeholders for the project, and the political will of the government authorities to establish the institutional collaboration agreements. To this end, a designed and implemented communication, training and awareness-raising strategy would be needed.

71. Another outcome, which would form the basis for completing the actions that the SEC permits in the CRC would be the preparation of the RSSEC itself. It is considered that the main assumption to be fulfilled would be to call upon the key stakeholders and for these to participate actively in the construction of the strategy.

Figure 2 - Theory of Change of the Project modified by the Evaluation Team



3. Evaluation questions: key findings

3.1 Relevance

Evaluation question: Have the Project outcomes been (and are they still) consistent with the spheres of activity/operational strategies of the GEF programme, the national priorities and the FAO Country Programming Framework?

The relevance criterion is rated as satisfactory.

Finding 1: The Project meets the needs and priorities of the national government and showed a high capacity to adapt to the political changes that occurred during its implementation (2018 at national level, and 2016 and 2020 at departmental and municipal level).

72. The political changes and the government transition that occurred during the period of implementation of the intervention, at national, regional and local government levels, and in the regional environmental authorities had different impacts on the process. At national level, although the differences and emphasis between the government plans of the administration of President Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) and the current government led by President Iván Duque Márquez (2018-2022), are significant, these did not lead to structural changes in the operation of the Project.

73. In this sense, the former National Development Plan PND 2014-2018 "Todos por un Nuevo País" [All for a new country] (DNP, 2015) in effect during the Project start-up, promoted a peaceful, equal and educated Colombia, by means of three main objectives: i) To strengthen the peace-building process and guarantee its sustainability to enable the country and its citizens to reach their full potential as a nation; ii) To involve the territory and its communities to contribute to the closure of social and population gaps, strengthening connectivity for productive inclusion and access to public goods, social services and information, and (iii) To reduce the social and territorial inequalities between the rural and urban areas, by comprehensively developing the countryside to guarantee equal opportunities. To achieve this, it prepared an all-encompassing Comprehensive Green Growth Strategy in which all sectors have to commit to adopt practices, so that the growth can be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and there is less of an impact on the environment and greater resilience to climate change and variability.

74. At the start of the current mandate of President Iván Duque Márquez 2018-2022, environmental sustainability and green growth are considered axes cutting across all of public management, under the slogan *"Producir conservando y conservar produciendo"* [produce conserving and conserve producing]. In effect, the current 2018-2022 PND "Pacto por Colombia, Pacto por la Equidad" [Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity] is organised around three major structural pacts: a pact for equity, a pact for entrepreneurship and productivity (noteworthy among which are the objectives geared towards "harmonising agricultural production with the conservation and efficient use of natural resources"), and a pact for legality.

75. In addition, it creates 13 cross-cutting pacts, five of which are clearly aligned with the Project objectives, approach and intervention: *Sustainability Pact, Peace-Building Pact, Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Groups Pact, Equality of Women Pact, and the Decentralisation Pact*. In particular, different stakeholders interviewed highlighted the contribution the Project made to the targets to reduce deforestation in the CRC and to the fulfilment of the targets agreed upon regarding the extension of the PA in Colombia.

76. At the regional, departmental and municipal level on the other hand, it must be taken into account that in 2019 new regional and local elections took place that resulted in the renewal of departmental and municipal governors, of directors of the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR) and of Autonomous Sustainable Development Corporations (CADS), who began their respective terms on 1 January 2020. This situation made the Project hold different awareness-raising events with the new administrations and endorse the agreements reached to give continuity to the actions undertaken in the territories and guarantee the incorporation of such commitments and, in general, of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach in the municipal and departmental development planning instruments, which has to guide public management at these territorial levels. In the same way that some of the environmental authorities had done in their previous Institutional Action Plans and endorsed once again in the new institutional plans. The departmental governments also endorsed their commitment by including actions that point towards connectivity in their new development plans.

77. Despite the efforts made by the technical team and the National Project Director, not all of the departmental administrations assumed the outcomes achieved with the same degree of empowerment to guarantee the appropriate sustainability of the actions or, consequently, the commitments inherited from prior administrations, particularly as regards the financial resources agreed upon initially in the PRODOC.

78. At municipal level, it is important to mention that the potential municipalities to be involved in the Project were not identified with precision during the Project preparation phase. In fact, there is very limited evidence of the participation of the municipalities in this stage. However, during the implementation of the Project, the municipalities participated in the Project activities, among which the active participation of the municipalities of Montería, Acandí and Unguía is noteworthy. Their active participation and involvement in the execution of the Project reflects the relevance and importance of the Project for them.

79. This could be the result of the failure to consider in the Matrix of Risks[3] the electoral processes and the change in the municipal and departmental administrations, foreseen during the life of the Project and that represented a very high risk, as later effectively occurred. Unfortunately, the MTR did not identify weaknesses about this aspect in the risk matrix either.

Finding 2: The Project responded to the needs of the local communities, including indigenous and Afro-descendant communities and other beneficiaries.

80. An extensive map of stakeholders and their potential contributions was considered in the intervention design, which came to fruition during the implementation of the Project, when the local partners and their organisations, peasants, Afro-descendants and indigenous communities, as well as individuals in economic and private sector professions, participated actively. During these interviews, these stakeholders highlighted the importance of the Project in meeting the need to conserve their natural environment, on which their livelihood is based, and in improving the productive systems by making them more environmentally efficient, diversified, productive and sustainable, by reducing their dependence on agro-chemicals, for example.

81. At private sector level, different interviews conducted show the importance that the Project had in meeting the needs of different productive professions and companies that have to provide environmental compensation. In this regard, the Project offered them a sound methodological and conceptual framework and different proposals so that they could provide their

[3] See PRODOC, Appendix 4 "Risk Matrix", page 155 and ff.

compensation in accordance with the connectivity actions included in the RSSEC. The intervention options that the RSSEC offers them include the execution of agroforestry projects and the leasing of land for conservation, by means of the Payment for Environmental Services, among others. More information about the participation of the provide sector is provided in the chapters Involvement of the interested parties and Sustainability.

Finding 3: The Project outcomes and strategy are aligned and contributed to the FAO priorities under Strategic Objective 2 and Priority Area 3 of the Country Programming Framework.

82. At the time of its formulation and negotiation with the parties, the project was clearly aligned with the FAO Framework of Strategic Outcomes (2014-2019), endorsed for the 2018-2021 period. The Project is particularly aligned with Strategic Objective 2: Increase the provision of goods and services from agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner; Outcome 1, which involves the adoption of these practices by the producers, and Outcome 2, which is focused on improving governance by the states.

83. Equally, the Project meets the FAO Regional Priorities for Latin America and the Caribbean, referred to in the 32nd Regional Conference in 2012 in Buenos Aires, and revalidated in the subsequent conferences, including the 36th period of sessions, which took place online at the end of October of 2020. During this period of sessions the climate change and environmental sustainability challenges were addressed. In addition, reference was made to the work done by the member countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2[4] above all, and to meet the national targets in the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

84. In effect, the current FAO priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean for the 2020-21 biennium[5] propose improving the three Regional Initiatives, in order to respond more effectively and with greater impact in the current regional context and the emerging trends. This response focuses on transforming and increasing the food systems, eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, particularly in rural areas, promoting sustainable and resilient marine and territorial ecosystems, and improving the resilience of the farmers, communities and ecosystems. Objectives that the project contributed to since the promotion of the Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity approach.

85. The Project was formulated in the FAO National Framework of Priorities for Technical Assistance in Colombia (2012-2014) and it was subsequently aligned with the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Colombia (2015-2019 CPF). At the moment, the Country Programming Framework (2021-2024 CPF) and the 2020-2023 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) are in place, which are structured based on three strategic areas: 1) Stabilisation, Peace with Legality, 2) Migration as a Development Factor, and 3) Technical Assistance for the Acceleration of Catalyst SDGs. In particular, the Project had an impact on areas 1 and 3.

86. In the framework of the current CPF, FAO Colombia therefore acknowledges that the Project enabled a broad and fruitful exchange with other programme areas of intervention of the Country Office, making it possible to mainstream the projects. In addition, the Project brought visibility to the fact that the rural, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities, and medium and large producers can work with an ecosystem and territorial perspective by means of the

[4] SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030; SDG 2: Zero hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

[5] See *FAO outcomes and priorities in the Latin* America and Caribbean region Source: http://www.fao.org/3/nc936es/nc936es.pdf

connectivity approach and mosaics. In this regard, the Country Office considers the Project one of the most successful initiatives of its portfolio.

87. At the moment, a new CPF is being negotiated between FAO and the Government of Colombia, with regard to which the government has indicated three axes of interest: migration, peace with legality (towards the Development Programmes with a Territorial-Based Focus-DPTFs), and support to achieve the SDGs. In particular, the Project had an impact on the DPTFs and contributed to the SDGs.

Finding 4: The Project approach, strategy and outcomes are aligned and have contributed to the GEF priorities.

88. The Project was formulated in the framework of the fifth replenishment of the GEF, which includes long-term strategic objectives and targets in the focal area of biodiversity. In particular, with the strategic objectives *BD-1 Improve sustainability of protected areas systems* and *BD-2 Expand marine and terrestrial ecosystem representation and integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in productive sectors on land and at sea*.

89. In this framework, the contribution to outcome BD-1.1. was predicted, geared towards improving the effectiveness of the management of the PA, which is addressed in Component 2. The Project also contributes to outcome BD 2.2 relating to the incorporation of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach in the regulatory frameworks (e.g. in sectorial and land use and planning public policies), by means of Component 1. This component included activities to incorporate this approach into the Action Plans of the CAR, the NNP and SIRAP planning instruments, and into different local and departmental land use and planning instruments, such as the Departmental Development Plans (DDP), the Land Use Plans (LUP) and Land Use Schemes (LUS).

90. In addition, Component 3 contributes to outcome BD 2.1. geared towards the up-scaling and sustainable management of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems, that integrate the conservation of biodiversity, by means of the implementation of alternative models and strategies of sustainable production to guarantee the offer of ecosystem services in the CRC.

Finding 5: The conceptual, methodological and operational design of the Project was appropriate for achieving the expected outcomes.

91. That stipulated in the MTR regarding the conceptual, methodological and operational design of the Project having been appropriate for the achievement of its outcomes is reaffirmed. A vertical logic is identified among the Project activities, outputs and outcomes, in such a manner that completing the activities makes it possible to obtain the outputs and for these in turn to obtain the outcomes. The objectives are relevant for addressing the historical processes of fragmentation and degradation of the ecosystems in the CRC, based on the implementation of actions in connectivity mosaics and corridors geared towards the strengthening and/or creation of new terrestrial and marine-coastal protected areas, the implementation of sustainable productive activities that favour socio-ecosystem connectivity and the conservation of biodiversity, by means of the recuperation or establishment of forest coverage in strategic ecosystems.

3.2 Achievement of outcomes

Evaluation question: What outcomes (both intended and unintended) has the Project achieved and to what extent did these contribute to the achievement of the Project's environmental, development and specific objectives?

The rating for the criterion regarding the achievement of the outcomes is Highly Satisfactory.

92. The Project achievements are analysed in accordance with the progress reported up to December 2020. The percentage fulfilment of the targets was estimated taking into account the value of the target and the value finally achieved by the Project. A more detailed breakdown of the achievements made and the percentage fulfilment of the targets is shown in Annex 1. The following details the most important aspects of the achievements by Component.

Component 1: Strengthening of the institutional articulation and incorporation of the socio-ecosystem approach in territorial planning

Finding 6: The fulfilment of most of the targets of the outcomes and outputs associated with Component 1 is equal to or over 100%. The extensive direct and indirect surface area achieved, which contributes to socio-ecosystem connectivity in the western region of the Colombian Caribbean, is noteworthy. Similarly noteworthy is the preparation of the Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity; the development of greater awareness about the importance of biodiversity among the population and the stakeholders that participated in the Project, as well as the inclusion or alignment of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach in planning instruments, although it was not possible to have an impact on the municipal land use plans or schemes, and the required number of trained civil servants was not reached either.

93. Outcome 1.1, which involves the incorporation of the Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity (SEC) approach in public policy instruments to improve the conservation and management of biodiversity in five departments (Bolívar, Sucre, Córdoba, Antioquía and Chocó) includes four targets. The first target was 142% met, on registering 1 451 622 ha of terrestrial ecosystems, which as a direct result of the Project, contributed to increasing the SEC surface area in the western region of the Colombian Caribbean.

94. With regard to the contribution the Project made to directly increasing the SEC surface area in marine-coastal ecosystems, 100% fulfilment was recorded, which corresponds to target two, with a total surface area of 181 918 ha. Target three was 112% met. In other words, an additional area of 1 894 336 ha of marine/terrestrial landscape was counted, which contributed to the SEC as a result of an indirect effect (replication) of the Project.

95. In terms of outputs, the two targets of **Output 1.1.1** were fully met. The Project prepared the study of multi-criteria valuation of ecosystem services and the incentive application proposal. The study was conducted on four mosaics: Urabá, San Onofre, Marine-Coastal and Bajo Sinú and involved four stages: analysis of the social system; sociocultural evaluation of the use and demand of ecosystem services; evaluation and valuation of ecosystem services with indicators and models; and general mainstreaming of the evaluation and valuation. It was in this last stage that the proposal for an incentives and compensation scheme was addressed, which considered the needs and requests of the local stakeholders. For example, in San Juan Nepomuceno-San Jacinto, it was requested that the analysis be scaled up for the registration of new PA with incentives from the private sector.

96. **Output 1.1.2** includes two targets, one of which involves the development of the Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity (RSSEC), which represents the conceptual and methodological axes of the Project. The Strategy was designed in a participatory manner with the Project partners and relevant stakeholders from other government areas and from international cooperation, and with the support of an expert specialist in connectivity, and involved the completion of workshops. The Strategy consists of four components: i) territorial management of socio-ecosystem connectivity, ii) sustainable production models and landscape management tools, iii) territorial governance and iv) institutionalisation and sustainability of the strategy. The RSSEC became, based on the process of design and implementation in the field, a key element in the structuring of the intervention of the partners and of other relevant regional stakeholders, including the productive and business sectors, as can be gathered from the interviews conducted. The Strategy was therefore implemented in the framework of the Project and comprised of the arrangement of different types of agreements for: connectivity; conservation and sustainable use; land agreements; and the signature of letters of agreement with community organisations, universities, NGOs and private companies for the hiring of specific services. The implementation was monitored by means of the monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual progress reports of the Project. The information and supporting documents from these are saved in the Project monitoring and evaluation system. The output target was therefore 100% fulfilled.

97. The second target of output 1.1.2 is to have a programme to monitor flagship species of the biodiversity for each socio-ecosystem corridor, of an inter-institutional nature and with community participation, designed and implemented. The monitoring programme was designed in a participatory manner with the collaboration of the local communities, making the most of their ancestral knowledge. In this manner, the species, ecosystems and ecosystem services to be included in the Programme were defined in a participatory manner. The programme was articulated with the plan to monitor the PA and the adjacent areas and was implemented by means of two case studies in San Juan Nepomuceno and Morrosquillo. At present, the monitoring programme forms part of the components of the Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform of the RSSEC, which as will be seen further ahead is currently administered by National Natural Parks of Colombia (NNP).

98. **Output 1.1.3** involves having 17 planning instruments at regional (five Environmental Authority Action Plans), departmental (five departmental development plans) and municipal level (five Municipal Land Use Plans) and a SIRAP-Caribe Action Plan and an NNP Institutional Action Plan, implemented and monitored and that incorporate the RSSEC. With regard to the fulfilment of this target, it is important to mention that at the beginning of 2016, there was a change in government in the municipalities, departmental governments and in the directors of the Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR). In that same year, the implementation of the Project began, and as such there was still no RSSEC and it was therefore not possible to have an impact on the planning instruments of the incoming government administrations. The aforementioned led to the Project waiting until the new change in government, which took place in January 2020, to be able to have an impact on the planning instruments detailed in the target. However, due to the short time available for such, it was not possible to have an impact on all of the instruments detailed, as will be described further ahead. It is also worth highlighting that during the Project implementation, and as an adaptation measure, an effort was made to have an impact on other planning instruments that were not considered in the PRODOC, which will be explained in the following paragraphs. To support this work to have an impact on planning instruments, the "Guide for the incorporation of the SEC approach into planning instruments" was developed and shared along with two specific guides – one for the departmental instruments and another for the municipal instruments.

99. As at December 2020, the following four Regional Environmental Authority Plans have been approved. The Institutional Action Plan of the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Valles del Sinú and San Jorge (CVS), which recognises the loss of connectivity as a problem and highlights the key role that the riparian forests play in their maintenance. To this end, projects to increase the connectivity between protected areas are included, as well as ecosystem restoration projects with an emphasis on connectivity. Its 2020-2031 CVS Regional Environmental Management Plan, which aims to counteract the effects of climate change and address some of the connectivity priorities, was also contributed to.

100. The 2020-2023 Institutional Action Plan (PAI) of the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Canal del Dique (CARDIQUE) mentions the connectivity processes and mosaics achieved by means of the declarations of different conservation statuses. To monitor these achievements, ecosystem restoration projects are proposed in ecosystem connectivity corridors. The 2020-2023 Institutional Action Plan (PAI) of the Regional Autonomous Corporation for the Sustainable Development of the Chocó (CODECHOCÓ) mentions the RSSEC as an output of the Biocaribe Project and the concept of socio-ecosystem connectivity is taken up again in some of the actions proposed, although it is not mentioned that the RSSEC will serve as a guide for the development of said actions. The 2020-2023 Institutional Action Plan (PAI) of the Corporation for the Sustainable Development of Urabá (CORPOURABA) highlights the interaction between humankind, nature and the social environment for environmental, tourism and agricultural sustainable development, although it does not explicitly adopt the socio-ecosystem connectivity concept. Due to the recent creation of these plans, only some initial actions have been implemented that have been monitored by means of the Project progress reports. Only a preliminary version of the 2020-2023 Institutional Action Plan (PAI) of the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Sucre (CARSUCRE) was accessible, and as such it is understood that it continues to be in the process of approval.

101. Five Departmental Development Plans were approved, including that of Córdoba, Chocó, Antioquia, Sucre and Bolívar. All of the plans contain actions that point towards socio-ecosystem connectivity and only the Córdoba and Antioquia plans explicitly mention the concept of connectivity. Similarly, only some actions have been implemented that were monitored by means of the Project progress reports, given that the plans were recently approved.

102. The Project generated input to update the ecological structure components and soil classification with a socio-ecosystem connectivity approach, and update the land use instruments of the eight municipalities, which had begun the process to update their **land use schemes or plans**. However, at the end of the Project the municipalities did not approve these instruments and as such said instruments were not implemented or monitored, as stated in the PRODOC. The main reason for not managing to meet this target relates to the lack of a deeper analysis with the municipalities, at the stage of formulating the targets, to understand the process involved in updating these instruments and therefore determine the feasibility of being able to update, approve and implement these instruments during the life of the Project.

103. In accordance with the interviews and the documentation review, the process to update the municipal land use instruments is slow, and can take years (e.g. updating the land use plan of the municipality of Medellín took three years). This is due to the fact that a lot of technical information is required and proceedings have to be followed before the Territorial Planning Council, the corresponding Regional Autonomous Corporation, and the Municipal Council, which meets twice a year. In addition, the adoption of these instruments by the Municipal Councils is very politically charged, where different territorial interests come into play, as well as partisan interests, which can be a difficult obstacle to overcome. Another of the reasons is the

difficulty in connecting the Project implementation timeframes with the government timeframes. For example, the process for approving the Land Use Plan of the municipality of Montería, which had made quite a lot of progress, was stopped due to the change in municipal government, and to date it has not been possible to approve it due to the different priorities that the new administration brought in.

104. In addition to this, the municipalities that participated in the Project were not co-financing partners of the Project, and as such had no obligation to the Project to update their land use plans or schemes, as occurred in the CAR and NNP, which in the majority of cases did gain the approval of their planning instruments. It is also worth mentioning that the COVID-19 pandemic delayed several government processes that have made the processes to review and approve key documents even longer.

105. Despite this situation, some of the new municipal administrations have taken up the RSSEC approach again or aligned with it in their municipal development plans. For example, the 2020-2023 Montería Municipal Development Plan recognises the need to re-establish ecological connectivity and includes the Biodiversity Conservation Programme and its ecosystem services, using the number of ecological connectivity studies as one of its indicators. For its part, the 2020-2023 Acandí Development Plan vouches for strengthening the national system of protected areas to maintain the socio-ecosystem connectivity of the species. In addition, the 2020-2023 Territorial Development Plan of the municipality of San Juan Nepomuceno includes actions aligned with the RSSEC.

106. The **2020-2023 Institutional Strategic Plan of the NNP** includes connectivity as a strategic axis. It consequently proposes the completion of activities focused on improving and increasing connectivity. For example, improving the structural and functional connectivity of the PA and arranging management strategies with ethnic groups and local communities to promote, among other aspects, connectivity in its different dimensions. The implementation and monitoring of some of the actions included took place in the framework of the Project.

107. The **SIRAP-Caribe Action Plan** is in the process of being updated. It appears that they are waiting for the policy on the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) to be completed, in order to align with it. It is worth mentioning that they are still within the times permitted to update the Plan. However, there is still no approved, implemented and monitored document that incorporates the RSSEC.

108. As a result, the target is 59% fulfilled (ten of seventeen instruments required). However, it is also important to acknowledge the efforts the Project made to have an impact on other planning instruments, such as the Land Management and Use Plans of a Water Basin (POMCA)[6]. In particular, the Project collaborated in the diagnosis of the Land Management and Use Plans of the Water Basin (POMCA) of Medio and Bajo Sinú, to include the concept of socio-ecosystem connectivity and actions aligned with it. This plan was already adopted. It also worked on the Land Management and Use Plans of the Water Basin (POMCA) of Río Canalete, which is in the process of management. In addition, the Project also had an impact on the Action Plans for the Territorial Transformation of the sub-region Urabá Antioqueño, of the South of Córdoba, Montes de María and Chocó, with sub-regional views that incorporate biodiversity conservation in alignment with the productive systems and the fulfilment of the Right to Food and Food

[6] The POMCA is an instrument employed to plan the coordinated use of the soil, water, flora and fauna along with the management of the water basin, understood as the execution of works and treatments, in terms of maintaining the balance between the social and economic use of such resources and conserving the physical biotic structure of the water basin and particularly of the water resource.

Sovereignty. No less important is the contribution the Project made to the construction of the SINAP policy (CONPES document under construction), which will include the concept of connectivity in the document: Towards a National Policy for the National System of Protected Areas of Colombia SINAP, 2020-2030 Vision. In addition, it made arrangements to participate in the development of the Departmental Land Use Plans, such as that of Sucre and Bolivar. In addition, the connection of the Project with the private sector made it possible for the RSSEC to be used as a reference to update the conservation portfolios of the environmental authorities, which included actions by the RSSEC itself so that the private sector complied with the environmental compensation.

109. The Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform of the automated RSSEC corresponds to **Output 1.1.4**. The platform was designed and submitted to the NNP, including equipment, technological developments and protocols to operate it. The platform is operational and can be viewed at: https://conexionbiocaribe-pnnc.opendata.arcgis.com/ The target for this output was therefore 100% fulfilled. It is considered that the platform has room for improvement, given that its presentation on the website does not mention what its objective, characteristics and content is, nor the institutions that collaborate to complete its databases. It is furthermore difficult to identify the monitoring and evaluation sections. Similarly, its inter-operability with other databases such as those of the Environmental System of Colombia and INVEMAR still has to be ensured.

110. The training programme for the development of skills for the management and implementation of the RSSEC and use of the AEPMAPPS tool (Output 1.1.5) was designed properly and in good time. The programme comprised of the development and teaching of the Diploma in Socio-ecosystem Connectivity, which was taught on two occasions, by means of which a total of 71 civil servants of the NNP, MADS, SILAP, departmental governments, CAR and municipalities were trained alongside teachers, who are also considered public servants; 30 of whom are women and 41 of whom are men. It also included the course "Protected Areas Work Programme", which trained 34 civil servants, 18 women and 16 men. In addition, it included the course on environmental education, which totalled 89 civil servants trained, 48 women and 41 men; most of those trained are teachers. A total of 194 civil servants were therefore trained (96 women and 98 men), which represents 121% fulfilment of the target number of 160 civil servants. In addition, 14 people belonging to other sectors such as NGOs and community associations were trained. The effect of these training sessions is addressed in the chapter on Capacity-building and knowledge management.

111. In relation to **Outcome 1.2**, which focused on developing greater awareness about the importance of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity, the results of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (CAP) surveys conducted by the Project at the beginning and end of the Project were reviewed. According to the results of these surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the Project, it was found that the population in general improved its attitudes and practices by 72% to 90% and exceeded the target in fulfilling it 127%. For their part, the stakeholders directly participating in the Project also improved their attitudes and practices from 69% to 89%, and as such their target was also exceeded in fulfilling it 181%. These outcomes are consistent with that found in the interviews, in which some people expressed the importance that it now has for them, for example, to look after the trees they planted and the role that these play in ecosystem connectivity.

112. The Project designed and implemented a communication strategy, in a participatory manner, for the positioning and dissemination of the RSSEC (**Output 1.2.1**). The Strategy was prepared under the leadership of SIRAP-Caribe, although it subsequently had to be updated to

incorporate the MADS policy and guidelines regarding communication. The strategy was implemented by means of communication/dissemination/outreach actions, which included graphic and written materials; handling of the press, social media, written and audiovisual media and channels; organisation and participation in promotion, visibility, positioning and marketing events; and educommunication and community and institutional strengthening. The latter included the consolidation, training, strengthening and empowerment of communication collectives. Some of the components of the strategy in 2020 had to suit the conditions resulting from the pandemic and lockdowns, giving priority to online communication channels and the use of social media. The creation of the website and the profuse production of communication material show a high technical level and content that was adapted to the reality and culture of the local communities, as well as accessible language. The party responsible for the Project communication linked the environmental education strategy to the communication strategy for better synergy. The fulfilment of the strategy was monitored by means of the monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual progress reports of the Project. The target for this output was therefore 100% fulfilled.

113. In addition, the Project generated a SIRAP environmental education strategy adapted to different levels and implemented in educational institutions (**Output 1.2.2**). The SIRAP environmental education strategy at the School was adapted to include a socio-ecosystem connectivity approach. Its content was structured and endorsed in a participatory manner with the environmental education delegates of the project partners, the departmental Inter-Institutional Committees for Environmental Education (ICEE) of the Caribbean region and of the SIRAP-Caribe Environmental Education Network. The training process was implemented by means of the course "Bio-Caribbean Connection: environmental education for conservation, sustainable use and territorial governance" taught online and in pyramid chaining: ICEE to teachers, teachers to students and students to other students. The PRAE school environmental programmes were updated and the proposal to incorporate socio-ecosystem connectivity in the PEI was prepared.

Component 2: Creation of new protected areas (PA) and improved effectiveness of the PA already existing in the Caribbean Region of Colombia

Finding 7: Most of the outcomes and outputs of Component 2 show far above 100% fulfilment. The 36 new protected areas stand out, which include those declared by the Project partners. This target was 317% fulfilled; in addition, targets regarding areas under land use agreements, sustainable management and conservation were exceeded by far, and with sustainable production plans. All that was missing was the inclusion of sustainable production plans in the management plans of the RIMD of the Swamp Complex of Bajo Sinú and Lago Azul Los Manatíes.

114. **Outcome 2.1** focused on improving the management and conservation of marine-coastal, forest, wetland and swamp complex ecosystems. This outcome took three targets into account. The first target focuses on having 725 418 ha of new and existing PA that have improved their management and conservation status by contributing to connectivity, including at least 10 000 ha of new PA and 715 418 ha of existing PA. In this regard, 774 232 ha of existing PA were counted (108% fulfilment) and 78 168 ha of new areas that have improved their management due to the intervention of the Project and to the co-financing by the counterparts (317% fulfilment). The total improved area therefore comes to 852 400 ha, which corresponds to 117% fulfilment of the target. The improvement has involved, among other activities, the generation of information such as the RSSEC, the development of management plans and maps with an SEC approach, which guide and support decision-making by the authorities and other

stakeholders present in the targeted areas. In addition, it includes the strengthening of monitoring through training and equipping in the existing PA, capacity-building and the strengthening of governance.

115. The second target establishes having 3 000 ha of PA with use by indigenous communities, peasants and Afro-descendants, under resource management and use agreements that incorporate the SEC approach. The target was therefore 270% fulfilled. The third target involved having 2 500 ha of buffer zones covered by sustainable production plans incorporating the SEC approach. According to the information reviewed, 12 321.16 ha were counted, and as such the level of fulfilment is 493%.

116. The target for **Output 2.1.1** was to declare six new PA (three regional areas and three civil society reserves), and to have their respective management plans and cover an area of at least 100 000 ha. The Project managed to declare 19 protected areas, five of which are regional areas and 14 are civil society reserves, which in total come to 56 402 ha. In addition to these areas, there are 17 PA declared by the CAR, which are counted as a balancing item. As a result, the target for the number of protected areas declared with a management plan is 317% fulfilled. This achievement was reached due to the work and interest that there was in the targeted areas, since before the Project in San Juan Nepomuceno began, and due to the alignment of this target with the institutional targets, as well as because of the strength of the SEC approach. With regard to the fulfilment of the 100 000 ha area, 56% was fulfilled.

117. **Output 2.1.2.** involved improving the effectiveness of the management of seven existing Protected Areas (five national PA and two regional PA) using an initial measurement reported in the PRODOC as a baseline, as a reference. The Project therefore used the same GEF tool (METT) to measure the effectiveness of the PA after the intervention. As a result, it was found that three PA reached, and even slightly exceeded, the effectiveness value required and two PA remained very close to reaching the rating established as a target.[7] It was not possible to measure the improved effectiveness in two PA as they replaced two areas considered in the PRODOC, and as such there was no initial measurement of their effectiveness. The global target is therefore 97% fulfilled. It is worth mentioning that two PA did not achieve the management improvement target due to the METT tool including the presence of indigenous communities and tourist destinations as an aspect to rate. Given that these two PA did not meet these two conditions, no rating was given to them, which affected their overall rating.

118. The improvement in management resulted from the strengthening of: the strategies and agreements for use, occupation and ownership; the control and surveillance strategy; and the skills of the civil servants of the PA, the local authorities and the local communities in the integration of the SEC approach. In addition, the improvement was also the result of the implementation of the PA management plans.

119. The target of **Output 2.1.3** was to have three sustainable production plans incorporated into the management plans of at least two regional PA, with a SEC approach. The Project managed to develop and implement ten sustainable production plans, five plans were developed and implemented in the RIMD Swamp Complex of Bajo Sinú and five plans in the RIMD Lago Azul Los Manatíes. The productive plans were implemented by means of the execution of the RSSEC

[7] The Caribbean region also benefited from other international projects, such as the MAPCO-European Union action and the GEF-SINAP project, which took place at the same time as this Project and that contributed to increasing the effectiveness of another two protected marine areas, the RIMD Cispata and the RIMD La Caimanera, which for 2019 increased their effectiveness to 82% and 71% respectively, in comparison with the baseline for 2016 used in the framework of the Sub-system of protected marine areas, which was 32% and 56%, respectively.

and their fulfilment was monitored by means of the periodic progress reports that the Project prepared. However, these sustainable production plans were not incorporated into the management plans of these two PA, which affected the fulfilment of the target, which is 67%. In the various interviews conducted, the Project beneficiaries welcomed the support provided by the project, and the technical and professional quality of the field professionals, as well as the agreed upon definition of the productive plans adopted and their benefits for the generation and retention of income for the families, as well as their contribution to the food security of the communities.

Component 3: Alternative sustainable production models and strategies to guarantee the supply of local and global ecosystem services

Finding 8: In all of its outcomes and outputs Component 3 reached a level of fulfilment equal to or greater than 100%, enabling the local communities to incorporate the RSSEC in their local biodiversity conservation and sustainable production processes, in pursuit of the recovery or consolidation of connectivity in their territories. The exorbitant fulfilment of the area under conservation mosaics and sustainable use of natural resources is noteworthy, as its target was 23.053% fulfilled. Without downplaying the Project achievements in this Component, this target seems to have design problems.

120. Outcome 3.1 focused on the development of conservation mosaics and sustainable use of natural resources to contribute effectively to the SEC in the Colombian region of the Caribbean. The target was to have an area of 2 429 ha of mosaics. This target was excessively exceeded due to the creation of seven mosaics, which together totalled an area of 559 948 ha, and as such the level of achievement of the target was 23.053%. This situation can be explained due to the fact that: a) the targets were designed conservatively given that the Project would take place in the areas affected by the armed conflict; b) at the time of the execution, the socio-ecosystem connectivity concept was expanded to include areas with productive production based on different agroecosystems, areas that provide ecosystem services and areas of cultural importance, among other aspects and not just the aspect of vegetation cover, which involved the creation of a new connectivity map that covered a larger surface area; and c) the Project design had some political complications, which led to completing it with very active participation by the government counterparts and fewer resources.

121. In order to formalise the creation of the mosaics, **Output 3.1.1** involved having four agreements signed among key territorial stakeholders. The project managed to sign five good-will framework agreements for the management of sustainable development and socio-ecosystem connectivity in the mosaics of San Juan Nepomuceno San Jacinto; Bajo Sinú, Betancí and South of Córdoba; Urabá; Acandí-Unguía (Chocó Darién); and North Morrosquillo. The respective Action Plans of the agreements were implemented and the Local Technical Committees were strengthened. The target is therefore 125% fulfilled.

122. The Project restoration actions were focused on **Output 3.1.2**, the target of which was to have 100 linear km of riparian forests in buffer zones, protected streams and channels linked to the mosaics in the water basins of the restored Sinú and León rivers. The Project managed to intervene in 153 kilometres (153% fulfilment) of riparian forests, which involved gathering seeds of local species, their propagation through community nurseries and their plantation on the banks of the rivers and their affluents. Ninety-four kilometres correspond to the Sinú River and its affluents (mosaics of Bajo Sinú, Betancí and South of Córdoba), and 59km to the River León (Urabá mosaic) helping with the conservation and recovery of ecosystem services. This output

was fulfilled by means of the signature of Letters of Agreement with five local community organisations, making it possible to benefit from the leadership of the community, which led to the appropriation of the work performed.

123. **Output 3.1.3** regarding sustainable production plans (SPP) in private, community or public properties, foresaw the achievement of five targets: i) 3200 ha under SPP; ii) at least 50% of which with the application of certification schemes (existing or new); iii) 300 families with which the adoption of the sustainable intensification approach under SPP would be promoted, iv) with at least 30% of this total being women (women heads of households) and v) 30% belonging to ethnic groups.

124. With regard to the first target, alternative SPP models were implemented in 8,572 ha by means of mixed vegetable gardens, silvopastoral systems, beekeping, agroforestry systems with cocoa and *jagua* [genipa americana] and aquaculture, and as such its level of fulfilment was 268%. A total of 34 Field Schools (FFS) were set up to train the farmers in these topics: nine in Bajo Sinú, two in Betancí, five in Chocó Darién, two in San Juan Nepomuceno San Jacinto, five in the South of Córdoba and eleven in Urabá. On average, each FFS had nine modules and provided lessons between 12 and 20 days. The FFS promoted the collective construction of knowledge, which was later applied by means of the "learn by doing" approach.

125. Regarding the second target, 4 783.5 ha (299% fulfilment) were counted, 3 091 ha of which are under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)[8], which corresponds to a MADR strategy to promote sustainable productive systems and local markets (short circuit commercialisation) of peasant, family and community agriculture. The other 1 692.3 ha are under the Green Business Plan[9] of the MADS and the CAR, with a green business understood to be economic activities that offer a good or service that generates a positive environmental impact and contributes to environmental conservation. Although these two government schemes are not defined *per se* as an official certification scheme, they do have criteria and rules to be fulfilled to promote sustainable productive systems and involve the verifications of the goods produced. It was pointed out that an international certification scheme was very costly. It is worth mentioning that the PGS has to be regulated progressively with the active participation of the communities and territorial authorities, as set forth in the MADR policy document. The third target was 147% fulfilled with the involvement of 1 178 women in the SPP. The fourth target was also 160% fulfilled with 1 294 people belonging to ethnic groups.

[8] The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is endorsed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, by means of Resolution 0464 of 29 December 2017 "which adopts the strategic Peasant, Family and Community Agriculture public policy guidelines, and establishes other provisions". The objective of the PGS is to promote sustainable productive systems and local peasant, family and community agriculture (PFCA) markets (short circuit commercialisation) by means of the development of these systems, which constitute an instrument of the agrarian organisations for the recognition and endorsement of agroecological production linked to strategies to promote conscious and responsible consumption (Art. 9). This Resolution defines the PGS (Art. 3, number 14) as: "Guarantee systems developed by means of the direct participation and relationship between the producers, consumers and other members of the community who among each other verify the origin and the condition of the agroecological products, and by means of the system guarantee the production, sale and consumption of these products in the local and regional market. This strategy is led by the Department of Innovation, Technological Development and Health Protection of the MADR, the ADR, ICA, CORPOICA and SENA.

[9] According to the Green Business Criteria Evaluation and Verification Guide (MADS, 2014), green businesses are economic activities that offer goods and services which have a positive impact on the environment and that incorporate good environmental, social and economic practices, with a life cycle approach, contributing to the conservation of the environment as natural capital that supports territorial development.

126. The Project prepared its own sustainable production models for socio-ecosystem connectivity, as a strategy that makes it possible to create key mini biological corridors – such as areas for the reproduction, nesting, feeding and rest of wild fauna – and as a mechanism for the adaptation and reduction of risks associated with climate change (**Output 3.1.4**). These models were based on the sustainable intensification approach and the knowledge and experience that the Project team has regarding the region and the country. The document that describes these models is entitled *Agroecosistemas diversos en la Estrategia Conexión Biocaribe* [Diverse agroecosystems in the Bio-Caribbean Connection Strategy], which was adopted by the Technical Committee. This document details eight diverse agroecosystems: agroforestry systems, sustainable mixed vegetable gardens; silvopastoral systems; community forest restoration; restoration of marine ecosystems; beekeeping and meliponiculture; sustainable fisheries; and agroecotourism. These models were implemented in the targeted areas and their fulfilment was monitored by means of reports by promoters and the periodic Project progress reports. The target for this output was therefore 100% fulfilled.

127. The Project consequently contributed to the global environmental objectives detailed in the PRODOC, which refer to the incorporation or increase in socio-ecosystem connectivity in corridors defined by the Project in land and marine ecosystems; to improved conservation status and management of coastal and marine ecosystems, forests, wetlands and swamps; to the establishment of a programme to monitor flagship species in each connectivity corridor with the participation of multiple government and community authorities; the restoration of riparian forests; and the incorporation of the RSSEC in national and regional planning instruments.

Co-benefits

128. The Project generated co-benefits in the participating communities by means of the implementation of the diverse agroecosystem model, which included the creation and maintenance of mixed vegetable gardens and the use of good practices to reduce environmental pollution, among other activities. In accordance with the evaluations the Project performed, by means of a survey conducted with the beneficiaries at the beginning and end of such, the Project contributed towards increasing the diversity of crops that could be sown by the families and as such, an increase was recorded in: a) the consumption of vegetables and meat by 7%; b) the consumption of three or more daily meals by 19%; and c) storage of food by 19%. Furthermore, water treatment increased by 11% and now most families wash their food (98%). In addition, a 21% reduction in the use of agro-chemicals for the management of pests and diseases, and a 40% increase in the application of organic fertilisers as well as a 13% increase in the management of solid waste was recorded. According to these figures, the Project contributed to the food and nutritional security of some of the participating families, which was very important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the national government ordered a mandatory lockdown.

129. In addition, the Project, by means of sustainable production plans, enabled some families to generate and retain economic income, by selling their products in local and regional markets. According to the surveys conducted, 10% of families who earned less than the minimum salary in 2017 started to earn a minimum salary or more in 2020.

130. Other co-benefits identified directly by the Project, at the end of such, were the greater storage of carbon in the targeted areas, equal to 160 tonnes of carbon per hectare, compared to other areas that were not targeted, whose best figure was 59 tonnes of carbon per hectare. The structural and functional role of the diverse agroecosystems in the landscape was also recognised, which facilitated the movement of species between patches of native forest and

their importance for sustaining bird populations. Additionally, in general terms, their contribution to the conservation of biodiversity, and of soil, was recognised, as they facilitated the conservation of their physical, chemical and biological properties and the recuperation of the ecosystem services and biological corridors, which have been impacted by the agricultural and livestock practices in the region.

131. No less important was the contribution the Project made to reconstructing the social fabric in some areas affected by the armed conflict, by means of the trust generated through the coexistence and interaction during the Field Schools the Project provided, which is addressed in more detail in the chapter on the Involvement of the interested parties.

3.3 Efficiency

Evaluation question: Have the modalities and quality of implementation/execution, the institutional structure and the governance of the Project, the financial, technical and operational resources and procedures available helped or hindered the achievement of the Project outcomes and objectives?

The efficiency criterion is rated as satisfactory.

Finding 9: Ninety-eight percent of the budget granted by the GEF has been executed. In the first year, 69% under-spending was recorded, which gradually decreased until it reached 9%. Savings were recorded that mainly resulted from the difference in the exchange rate in the Colombian peso compared to the United States Dollar, which made it possible to expand the activities on land and, for some outputs, increase the fulfilment of their targets.

132. The Project had 100 000 USD for the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) and a contribution made by the GEF for its execution totalling 6 052 114 USD, which is additional to the contribution from the executing partners (co-financing) that corresponds to 51 120 096 USD, and as such the total amount of the Project is 57 120 096 USD. Pursuant to the data provided, 5 942 302 USD of the GEF budget was implemented as at September 2020. In other words, 98% of the budget has been implemented. It is necessary to mention that the Project was extended by 15 months and it is programmed to end in January 2021.

133. Figure 3 shows the comparison between the budget detailed in the PRODOC, the budget planned in the AOP and approved by the Steering Committee, and the budget executed, per year. As can be seen in the figure, the PRODOC planned to spend the highest amount of the budget in the first year, which corresponded to approximately 2.2 million USD, with a gradual decrease in the amount until the Project was completed. This trend was achieved until the second year, which had the highest budget (approximately 2 million USD), and then in the following years, the amount decreased.

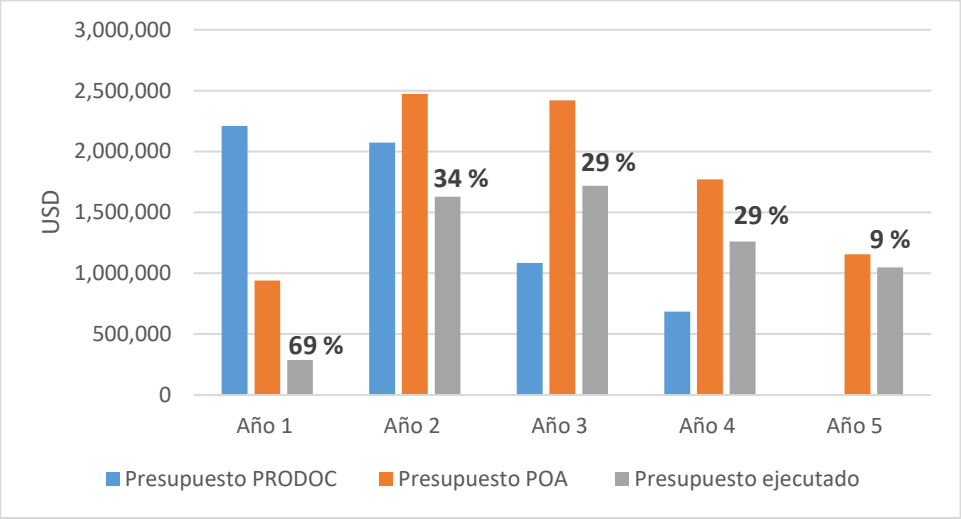
134. According to figure 2, the budgetary execution was very low in the first year (31%) compared to the budget planned in 2016. According to the interviews and the documentation review, the main cause of this budgetary underutilisation (69%) corresponds to the need to define the Project intervention areas more precisely, due to the PRODOC including very general geographic scales and the need to update the conditions of the areas proposed and plan and agree upon the specific actions to complete on the ground, with the relevant partners and stakeholders. This work was addressed in the first sessions of the Technical Committee, which was constituted in 2016 before the Steering Committee. Another cause of the under-spending was the impossibility to install the Steering Committee in the first year of the Project, due to the difficulty in juggling the agendas, priorities and approaches of the 14 government entities that compose it. The 2016 Annual Operating Plan was consequently not approved by the Steering

Committee. Another of the causes was the delay in hiring the Project technical team due to the different periods of time that the Steering Committee members require to review and approve the terms of reference for recruitment, and to the need to cancel the job vacancy as the candidates did not have suitable profiles.

135. FAO Colombia, like the local and regional stakeholders went through a learning curve, given that this was the first project implemented using GEF funds. As a result, the office had to make internal adjustments to restructure roles and procedures for contractual and financial management. In addition, it was found that the Regional Autonomous Corporation (CAR) did not agree that FAO Colombia should direct and implement the Project, and this disagreement also took time to resolve. This led to the proposal of a contingency plan that began to be implemented from the second year and that aimed to ensure that the Project would end in the four years established.

136. For the second year, the budgetary underutilisation reduced to 34% and to 9% in the fifth year. The main causes of the underutilisation were the delay in the recruitment and the procurement required by the Project.

Figure 3 - Comparison of the budget detailed in the PRODOC with the budget planned in the Annual Operating Plans (AOP) and the budget executed per year



Prepared by the authors based on data provided by FAO Colombia. The Annual Operating Plan budget in the first year was not approved by the Steering Committee.

137. The Project had additional resources due mainly to the fact that the exchange rate for the United States dollar compared to the Colombian peso increased over time, which led to a lower execution of dollars as a result of the variation in the exchange rate. These resources contributed to the completion of a higher number of activities than were contemplated and as a result, the fulfilment of some targets was exceeded. In addition, FAO increased its co-financing to cover some of the Project expenses linked to professional salaries and the procurement of materials, equipment and software, which also represented a saving for the Project, which could be applied to increase the activities on the ground.

Finding 10: One hundred percent of the Project beneficiaries and partners acknowledge the high performance of FAO in the Project implementation and in the processes generated to ensure collaborative and effective work with the counterparts. Areas of opportunity were identified to

improve FAO advice in the determination of balancing items and in the identification and monitoring of Project risks.

FAO performance during the implementation

138. According to the interviews, the Project arose based on needs that the Colombian Government identified very well, mainly of National Natural Parks (NNP) and of the CAR, regarding specific problems linked to weak land use management in relation to environmental aspects; ineffective management of protected areas; weak inter-institutional coordination; and the lack of policies that address the fragmentation and degradation of the ecosystems among others. FAO contributed effectively to the Project design using these problems and needs as a basis, which it gathered by means of participatory and consultative processes with the national and regional governments. One of the main successes of the Project design was the balance achieved between the activities geared towards the conservation of natural resources and the activities linked to the sustainable use of resources, applying the diverse agroecosystem model. This, as will be explained in the chapter on Sustainability, enabled a high degree of facilitation by the local beneficiaries. One of the beneficiaries interviewed said, "this project has been the best in the region".

139. The areas for improvement in this design phase include identification and advice for determining the co-financing by the executing partners of the Project. It was found that some letters of commitment from partners include activities that do not contribute to the fulfilment of the Project objectives. This topic is explained in more detail in the chapter on Co-financing. In addition, the failure to include two substantial risks was highlighted: 1) failure to fulfil the government commitments due to the lack of appropriation by the incoming governments above all at regional and local level and 2) the lack of total or partial impact on the policy instruments to be worked on by the Project, due to the lack of alignment between the administrative timeframes of the regional and local governments and the Project implementation timeframes. Albeit to a lesser extent, the materialisation of these risks on a regional and local level affected the fulfilment of the targets. The lack of indicators *per se*, intermediate targets and assumptions for the outputs in the Project Framework of Outcomes (see Chapter on Monitoring and Evaluation).

FAO performance during the execution

140. One hundred percent of the people interviewed agree that the Project was executed correctly and do not identify major problems or collateral effects. In addition, 100% of the Project partners interviewed recognise the high performance of FAO in the execution of the Project and the extensive collaboration and coordination spaces created to perform joint and efficient work. In addition, they recognise the great abilities of the Project Coordinator and of the technical team. Two community organisations interviewed recognised the efforts made by the Project team in supporting them beyond what was expected (e.g. the team helped them to make proposals to obtain resources from other sources of financing and give continuity to the benefits achieved by the Project).

Governance

Finding 11: The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), as Project executing partner, closely monitored the Project and in the committees, it provided a comprehensive vision regarding other government initiatives. The areas for improvement identified include a limited level of institutional accompaniment from the municipal authorities. The National Director of the Project actively participated in the Project and promoted the

exchange of information with the Mesoamerican Corridor initiative. However, a limited strategic contribution was noted in terms of promoting active participation with the municipalities too. The Project partners participated in the Project on an ongoing basis. However, each of them had different levels of involvement.

141. The PRODOC states that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), as a proponent of the Project, is the executing partner of such and, consequently, is the party responsible for "ensuring the general coordination of the project implementation, as well as the coordination and collaboration of the departmental governments, the CAR, local community organisations and the other entities participating in the project". According to the minutes and reports of the Steering Committee, MADS participated in all of the meetings. The contributions that MADS made in these meetings are highlighted. In particular, the call that the Ministry made to approve the Project operating instruments due to the impossibility to hold a meeting with the Committee in 2016 and the delays this led to, is mentioned. In addition, the inclusive vision that the MADS proposed to connect the Project to other government initiatives and projects, for example, the post-conflict actions, is noteworthy.

142. The areas for improvement identified include the MADS failure to speak with the municipal authorities to support the Project in having an impact on the land use plans of five municipalities in a timely manner, as reported in the chapter on Effectiveness. This was because it was not possible for the municipal authorities at the time to incorporate the proposals the Project made during the implementation of the Project. With regard to the co-financing, in the last year of the implementation of the Project, MADS sent a letter signed by the Deputy Minister to some departmental governments asking for reports on the balancing items, given that this non-compliance was identified from the first year of the Project. Although the socioecological systems have been being applied for over a decade in Colombia, at present, the socio-ecosystem connectivity still does not explicitly appear in the MADS policy. However, the Project has contributed to making the matter even more visible, and as such the concept of connectivity is included in the draft document, "Towards a policy for the National System of Protected Areas of Colombia, 2020-2030 Vision", which includes "Towards a well connected National System of Protected Areas" as one of the points of the policy. Among the beneficiaries, the Project is considered an FAO project and not a government project, which reflects limited support from MADS in the regional and local processes implemented. Although this also reflects limited communication by FAO to point out, where possible, that it is a government project. The lack of MADS human and financial resources, to guarantee more active participation in the support for the Project, was mentioned in the interviews.

143. MADS participated in most of the Technical Committee meetings[10], in some of which it submitted initiatives, projects and activities complementary to the Project (e.g. progress in the technical guidelines for buffer zones). In addition, it contributed to the Strategic Environmental Evaluation completed within the Project framework.

144. The PRODOC details a National Project Director who would be a government civil servant in charge of supervising and guiding the Project Coordinator in relation to the policies and priorities that frame the Project, and coordinating the activities linked to the four components with all of the partner institutions of the Project and other government authorities. The Caribbean Territorial Director of NNP was appointed as the National Project Director (NPD) in

[10] Representatives from the sectorial Divisions for Forests, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; Marine and Coastal Matters, and Aquatic Resources; Environmental Land Use and coordination of the National Environmental System; Climate Change and Risk Management; Education and Participation; and Green Businesses mainly participated in the Technical Committee.

the first Steering Committee meeting, held in March 2017. The National Project Director promoted the exchange of information with the Mesoamerican Corridor initiative, to which feedback was given regarding the connectivity modelling completed and with which information that the Project generated was shared, and incorporated in its studies. It also played the role of mediator at the start of the Project to manage to unify the visions of the partners and avoid changes in the Project design and it has closely monitored such. The areas for improvement identified include the lack of an effective strategy to promote the participation of the municipalities and incorporation of the connectivity approach in its land use plans, as well as to promote the fulfilment of the balancing items pledged.

145. The institutional SIRAP-Caribe structure was used as a basis to create the Steering Committee, expanding to include the participation of other stakeholders who normally do not participate in this, such as the departmental governments, FAO and MADR. The extensive institutional participation of the Steering Committee guaranteed the diverse involvement of the different authorities and other institutions with territorial responsibility to arrange and implement strategies for the conservation, recovery and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as collaborative projects that favour the integration, connectivity and the environmental planning of the Caribbean region.

146. The Project began to be implemented in October 2015 and the Project Steering Committee was in place until March 2017. It was explained that in 2016, it was complicated to match up the agendas of the 14 government entities composing it and, in particular, due to the changes in staff in the MADS. The 2016 Operating Plan was consequently not approved by the Committee.

147. Although the matter of the failure to report the balancing items was addressed in most of the Steering Committee meetings, the lack of a strategic and decisive proposal by its members to create the report is noted. In addition, it was found that the Committee did not complete enough strategic actions in view of the difficulties the Project was having to establish a collaboration with the municipal governments and have an impact on their land use plans. The meetings mainly focused on the general monitoring of the Project and on the approval of the progress reports and of the operating plans. In total, the Committee met on six occasions, including one extraordinary meeting, and one online meeting just to approve the extension of the Project.

148. The Technical Committee, which in the English version of the PRODOC is referred to as the Project Management Committee aims to technically guide and support the execution of the Project and discuss and pre-approve the content of the matters that would be submitted for approval by the Steering Committee. To this end, four working groups were formed that would address the following matters respectively: comprehensive valuation of ecosystem services and incentives and compensation instruments or mechanisms; mosaics and connectivity strategy; environmental education and communications; and relationship with ethnic communities. The meetings had a workshop format in which, in addition to fulfilling the duties of the Committee, the Project outputs, such as the RSSEC were submitted for review. The Committees were established in different locations, which in some cases made it difficult for all members to participate. In the latest meetings, field visits were also programmed to see the work done in some mosaics (e.g. Betancí-Córdoba mosaic) or in conjunction with specific events (e.g. Cordoba agrobiodiversity fair).

149. This is the Committee where the Project partners, mainly the CAR and departmental governments, made the main technical contributions, by providing reflections and recommendations to guide and better adjust the Project activities to ensure the fulfilment of its

priorities and ensure contributions to the efforts already initiated. A collateral effect of the Project mentioned by some CAR is the internalisation of the coordination and consultation processes – one of these mentioned that they already know who to coordinate with and that they will continue to do so.

150. On the ground, the Project partners provided support in identifying families or sectors to work with, and shared their infrastructure for the development of some of the Project events and activities. In particular, the CAR, in the framework of the National Green Business Plan (MADS, 2014), have scaled up the provision of sustainable outputs and provided support in the search for new markets under the fair trade principles.

151. No specific technical contributions were identified on the ground by the partners – for example, the provision of any training session or workshop, to contribute to the Project activities. Different levels of involvement in the activities were also identified. The close collaborative work achieved by the technical team with the departmental administration of Cordoba facilitated by the location of one of the offices of FAO Colombia in Montería, is noteworthy.

152. The institutional arrangement of the Project also included the integration of Local Committees, which facilitated participation and promoted the sustainable use and conservation agreements in the connectivity mosaics. Its principal task was to monitor the agreements to form the mosaics created.

153. Due to the complexity of meeting and having enough time to reach agreements with the Technical Committee as a result of the high number of members, a new authority not included in the PRODOC was created – the Coordinating Committee. This Committee served as a consultation and support body for the Project team and Technical Committee, and is made up of representatives of MADS, of the Caribbean Territorial Division of NNP, SIRAP-Caribe, the National Project Director, the Project Coordinator and the Coordinator of Natural Resources and Governance of FAO Colombia.

154. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) participated in most of the Steering Committee meetings. It is worth mentioning that the Deputy Minister of Rural Development took part in the second meeting of the Committee. They participated less in the Technical Committee. Generally speaking, participation by MADR, mainly by means of the Coordination of Sustainability and Climate Change in the Project was limited and focused on the general monitoring of the productive projects and with contributions to the design of some of the FFS. Specifically, the MADR shared its experience in relation to the Participatory Guarantee System. The contribution that MADR made to the co-financing of the Project was not specified.

155. With regard to risk management and the implementation of adaptation measures, the Project deemed it appropriate to include the risk of failure to fulfil the co-financing (although this risk was not described individually in the PIR) from the first year of the PIR report, in 2017. However, the problem began during the design phase of the Project and subsequently acquired a political connotation, which the Project could not interfere in. As mentioned previously, the management of this risk by the Steering Committee could have been more strategic. Adaptation measures were also implemented to circumvent the changes in national, regional, departmental and municipal government, yet despite being implemented, in most cases effectively (e.g. it was possible to have an impact on national, regional and departmental planning instruments but not on municipal land use planning), they did not involve the definition of a risk to substantiate them (e.g. failure to fulfil the targets due to the changes in government).

3.4 Co-financing

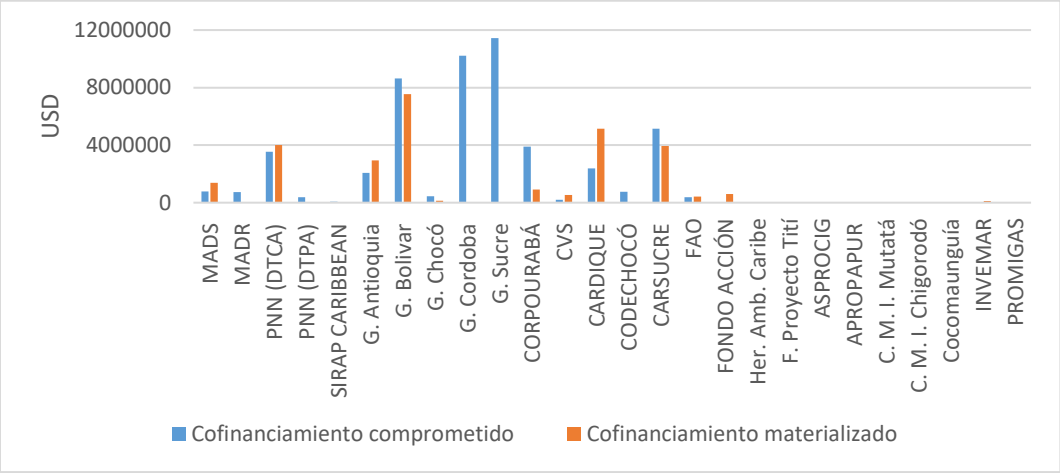
Evaluation question: To what extent has the foreseen co-financing materialised and how has lower than expected co-financing affected the Project outcomes?

The co-financing criterion is rated as moderately unsatisfactory.

Finding 12: As at November 2020, 54.5% of the co-financing pledged had materialised. Areas for improvement were identified in the determination of some of the balancing items during the Project formulation phase, given that, in some cases, these included activities that did not contribute to the objective of such, or, some balancing items were conditioned by the mining and energy royalties that the national government would transfer to them, which implied *per se* a higher risk of non-fulfilment.

156. The co-financing pledged by the Project partners was 51 141 422 USD. In accordance with the data provided by FAO Colombia, by January 2021, 54.5% of the co-financing had materialised, which equates to 27 884 226 USD. Figure 4 shows the co-financing pledged and materialised and Appendix 4 shows the co-financing table. The causes that explain this low materialisation of co-financing are described below.

Figure 4 - Pledged and materialised co-financing



157. It is observed that the co-financing pledged corresponds to an 8:1 proportion. In other words, the partners committed to provide 8 USD for each dollar provided by the GEF. This Project was approved in the fifth cycle of the GEF when the proportion of co-financing requested was 6:1. As observed in figure 4, three departmental governments undertook to provide almost 60% of the co-financing pledged – Bolívar, Córdoba and Sucre. On reviewing the letters of commitment of these partners, which show an extensive breakdown of the activities and amounts considered balancing items, it was identified that these included some actions that did not contribute to the Project objective. In the case of the departmental government of Bolívar, activities to conserve areas of strategic relevance for the availability of water were included, which contributes to the Project objective. Several investments in infrastructure were also included, such as the development of water and sewage systems and of construction as in the building of a community centre and of a mega school, which did not contribute to the Project.

158. The Departmental Government of Córdoba included an activity that would directly contribute to the Project actions, which was the maintenance of the agroforestry systems as a strategy for the regulation of water, the conservation of soil and to improve productivity in depressed regions.

However, the other actions focused on improving agricultural and aquaculture productivity without indicating that they would be completed with a sustainable production approach, otherwise, these could contradict the Project objective. In addition, some of these activities, in accordance with the interviews, would be conducted using the budget that would be transferred to them from the mining and energy royalties, which involved *per se* a greater risk of non-compliance.

159. The Departmental Government of Sucre included activities that contributed to the Project, such as the implementation of a hydrological-environmental model to support decision-making by the government and the recuperation and conservation of strategic zones for the provision of water. However, most of the actions proposed included the promotion of agricultural, aquaculture and livestock production, also without specifying that they would take place with a sustainability approach to avoid affecting the biodiversity of the targeted zones. In addition, the amount established in the letter of commitment from this departmental government does not match that included in the PRODOC.

160. According to the interviews, it is known that a workshop was held with the Project partners so that they could identify government programmes and actions that contribute to the Project objective, and could therefore define their balancing items. Given the identification of activities that are not ideal for the Project, it is found that there was a lack of methodological reinforcement by FAO so that the activities proposed by the partners would align and contribute effectively to the Project objective.

Finding 13: The low level of co-financing materialised was due to the difficulty in getting the government partners to ratify the balancing items, due to the changes in government. The partners primarily considered the balancing items unrealistic due to the high amounts pledged, and not in line with their government programmes. However, most of the partners showed ongoing commitment to the Project and to the best of their ability contributed to the fulfilment of their targets.

161. During the implementation of the Project, there have been two changes in national government (in 2014 and 2018), and in regional and local government (in 2016 and 2020). The letters of commitment that therefore constituted the balancing items for the Project were signed by a different government to that in office when the Project began to be implemented. In addition, it is a different government that is closing the Project.

162. Since the beginning of the Project, in the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee, the partners were asked to review and update their balancing items with regard to the activities, but not with regard to the amounts or, where applicable, they could also ratify the existing ones. A template was also shared with the partners for reporting them. According to the interviews, some departmental governments refused to ratify the balancing items due to the corruption cases of the former government, or because they considered them unrealistic or because they did not reflect the actions of the current government. The matter therefore became political in some cases. Other partners also commented that it was difficult to fulfil them due to the amounts being in dollars, as the Colombian peso had depreciated compared to the dollar.

163. As a result of this situation, the failure to fulfil the co-financing was included as a substantial risk in the first PIR report of 2017. In most of the committees, the request to report the balancing items was repeated and individual meetings were held between FAO and the partners to address the matter. However, the response was very limited, which was reflected in the 2019 PIR, which reported 15% fulfilment of the co-financing. However, the interest and participation of

the partners was maintained, to a greater or lesser extent, throughout the implementation of the Project and as shown in the chapter on Project Achievements, there was no effect on the fulfilment of the targets.

164. It was in 2020 that MADS intervened more decisively and sent a letter to the partners asking them to report their balancing items. In addition, the Project Implementation Unit completed the task of reviewing the departmental government development plans, the corporation action plans, and the pages of reporting and of recruitment, to identify programmes and actions that would contribute to the Project. These actions had an effect on some of the partners who certified their balancing items, one of which was the departmental government of Bolívar. This departmental government includes in its certification letter the promotion of tourism activities, such as nature tourism to diversify the economic activities of the communities, as well as environmental conservation and protection works. However, it should be noted that the letter from this departmental government includes actions that do not contribute to the Project, for example, the development of electricity infrastructure.

165. By November 2020, the percentage materialisation of the co-financing therefore amounted to 54%. Figure 4 shows that the Departmental Government of Bolívar reports 87% fulfilment of the balancing item. The Departmental Government of Antioquia, which reported its balancing items from the first year, exceeded the amount pledged by 42%. The actions reported contribute to the Project conservation actions, given that they focus on actions to protect and conserve biodiversity and to strengthen its departmental system of protected areas. For its part, the Departmental Government of Chocó, which also reported its balancing items from the first year, fulfilled the amount pledged by 27%, which includes the transport, stationery, equipment use and other expenses resulting from their participation and monitoring of the Project. The Regional Governments of Córdoba and Sucre have still not reported the materialisation of the co-financing.

166. MADS certified an amount 78% higher than that pledged, providing an amount slightly over one million dollars, which includes support for the formulation of the Morrosquillo POMIUAC and the facilitation and support for the consultation process regarding the Archipelagos of Nuestra Señora del Rosario and San Bernardo Protected Marine Area management plan and sustainable development model, which contributes to increased protected marine areas in the country and to the management of the coastal zone following environmental criteria and facilitates connectivity by including conservation criteria in territorial planning. The Caribbean Territorial Division of NNP, which is the National Director of the Project, provided 13% more than that pledged, which includes the budget assigned for the operation and management of the protected areas under their jurisdiction. For its part, the Pacific Territorial Division (DTPA) indicates fulfilment of 15% of the balancing item, which incorporates concerted actions with ethnic groups for the management of the protected areas in the region and training actions of its staff that align with the three Project components. In accordance with its report, SIRAP-Caribe provided 77% of the co-financing, which corresponds to the resources in kind (e.g. transport, equipment use, communication actions, etc.) invested by the institution to implement the environmental education strategy that it completed for the Project. The MADR has not reported any balancing items.

167. With regard to the corporations, Cardique certified a balancing item of 216%, materialising just over 5 million dollars. CARSUCRE reported 77% fulfilment; CORPURABÁ 23% and CVS provided a balancing item that corresponds to 264%, in other words, a little over double that pledged. CODECHOCÓ has still not reported its balancing item. The actions reported result from the fulfilment of the action plans, including the noteworthy declaration of protected areas that

contributed to exceeding the target number of declared protected areas by 317%. Actions were also reported in the management of forests, land use and environmental planning in the regions, and biodiversity conservation actions. FAO reported 114% fulfilment of the co-financing including actions of other projects it completes, which incorporated the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach (e.g. Technical Cooperation Convention for productive development and land restitution in Colombia).

Finding 14: The Project managed to connect new partners who overall contributed with additional co-financing of USD 842 996. In combination with the above, the high level of appropriation of the Project at local level, the new collaborations established and the savings of the Project have mainly contributed to no negative effect being recorded due to the low materialisation of the co-financing.

168. It is noteworthy that the Project managed to connect new partners who overall contributed with additional co-financing of USD 842 996. These new partners include Fondo Acción, INVEMAR, Herencia Ambiental Caribe, Fundación Proyecto Tití, ASPROCIG, APROPAPUR, Cabildo Mayor Indígena Mutatá, Cabildo Mayor Indígena Chigorodó, Cocomaunguia and PROMIGAS (figure 4).

169. Given the level of appropriation by the local communities and associations, it was possible to replicate the Project actions substantially, which has increased the level of fulfilment of some of the Project targets. In addition, the collaborations with new partners and savings reported by the financial area of FAO Colombia, impeded a negative effect on the Project outcomes due to the failure to fulfil the co-financing pledged.

3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation question: To what extent has the M&E plan and its implementation been efficient and contributed to the Project outcomes?

The monitoring and evaluation criterion is rated as satisfactory.

Finding 15: A Monitoring and Evaluation strategy was designed and implemented, which was based on the M&E plan of the PRODOC that made it possible to almost completely fulfil the Plan. The missing activities are detailed with the lack of reporting of co-financing in a periodic and comprehensive manner.

170. In compliance with that detailed in the PRODOC, in the Project start-up workshop, the Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system strategy was submitted, which in turn is based on the M&E plan of the PRODOC. As can be appreciated in table 3, the Project fulfilled most of the elements of the M&E plan. All that stands out is the lack of a periodic and comprehensive report of the co-financing provided by the partners.

Table 3 - Main monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities and reports, and their level of fulfilment

M&E activity	Parties responsible	Time period/frequency	Fulfilment status
Start-up workshop	RSC; FAOCO (with the support of the LTO, BH and the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit)	Two months from the start of the project	The workshop took place from 31 March to 1 April 2016.
Project start-up report	RSC and FAOCO approved by the LTO, BH and the FAO-GEF	Immediately after the start-up workshop	The report that includes the elements detailed in the PRODOC is available.

	Coordination Unit.		
Monitoring of the impact "on the ground"	RSC; project partners, local organisations	Ongoing	The Project team, including the Coordinator made ongoing visits to the targeted areas and the respective reports on such are available.
Visits to supervise and assess the progress in the PPR and the APIRR	RSC; FAO (FAOCO, LTO, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit)	Annually, or as required	The Lead Technical Officer (LTO) made four visits, two in 2016, one in 2017 and another in 2018. During these, specific consultations were held with the experts in other technical areas different from those of the LTO. In 2019, the LTO did not make any visits, or in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The FAO-GEF (FGLO) made two visits, one during the Project design phase and another to support the selection of the Project team. The progress reports were reviewed by the LTO and the FGLO and by FAO Colombia.
Project Progress Reports (PPR)	RSC, with contributions from project partners and other institutions participating in the execution	Half-yearly	Nine half-yearly reports were prepared, including the most recent PPR completed which covers the period from July 2020 to January 2021.
Annual Project Implementation Review Reports (APIRR)	FAO (LTO and FAOCO) with the support of the RSC. Approval and submission to the GEF by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit	Annually	Four APIRR were submitted from 2017 to 2020.
Co-financing Reports	RSC with inputs from other co-financiers	Annually	There was no annual report by the Project partners regarding the co-financing pledged, these submitted a single balancing item with the total amount of their contribution. Twelve of the sixteen partners who appear in the PRODOC reported the balancing items. Two new partners reported them. The Project team reported the progress in the materialisation of the co-financing pledged, on an annual basis in the APIRR.
Technical reports	RSC and FAO (LTO, FAOCO)	As required	Technical reports were completed to document the processes and methodologies generated by the Project.
Independent interim evaluation (IIE)	External consultant, FAO Independent Evaluation Unit in consultation with the Project team, including the GEF Coordination Unit and other stakeholders	Halfway through the implementation of the project.	It took place at the end of 2018 and the final report was submitted in February 2019.
Final Independent Evaluation (FIE)	External consultant, FAO Independent Evaluation Unit in consultation with the Project team, including the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit and	After the implementation of the project	In progress

	other stakeholders.		
Final report	RSC; FAO (FAOCO, LTO, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, the Trade Standards Compliance Report Unit TSCR)	Two months before the date of termination of the Execution Agreement	Still not applicable.

171. The M&E strategy describes how these two procedures take place, the tools used, the processes to follow and the stakeholders involved at each stage. In particular, the Project monitoring begins with a monthly report, which is submitted by those responsible for the Components of the Project, using a template prepared by the Project. Aside from reporting the progress made in the fulfilment of the activities programmed, this report details the obstacles or factors that are affecting the Project development, a proposal for their resolution and the lessons learned. The proposals were implemented and, in most cases, managed to mitigate the problems that arose during the implementation of the Project, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the M&E system. The spending of the budget and the contracts are also monitored in a timely fashion. The monthly reports, which include the monitoring of the Framework of outcomes indicators, together with the documents and materials that support them (e.g. minutes of workshops or meetings, attendance lists, etc.) are reviewed by means of a monthly meeting with the Project Coordinator and once validated are uploaded initially (until December 2017) onto the Project Outcome Monitoring and Evaluation Platform (PSIMER)[11] and, subsequently, in line with the FAO Colombia guidelines, stored in its digital archive. As a result, there are consolidated databases with workshop reports, minutes of meetings, beneficiaries who attended the FFS and other activities. There are templates for the compilation of the information and for the reports. Methodological records were also created for each outcome indicator.

172. The PSIMER generates a monthly, quarterly or half-yearly graphic progress report (dashboard), which is shared with the strategic shareholders of the Project. From 2019, this graphic report will be complemented by additional data that make it possible to present information about the alignment of the Project with the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2018-2022 National Development Plan, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the FAO and GEF Framework of Interest, the budget disbursed, a financial analysis, the territorial scope of the Project, general indicators, among other information.

173. These monthly, quarterly and half-yearly monitoring and evaluation reports generated by means of the PSIMER serve as input for the half-yearly and annual reports submitted to the GEF.

174. In 2017, the task of monitoring the balancing item reports, to understand progress made, note any low fulfilment and submit the summaries in each half-yearly and annual report, as well as to the Steering and Technical Committees, was included in the Annual Operating Plans (AOP) and, specifically in activity 4.1.2.

Finding 16: The progress the Project made was monitored in detail, which made it possible to prepare monthly, quarterly and half-yearly reports. However, the monitoring had to be complemented by a component that would make it possible to analyse and monitor the risks identified in the Project and the identification of new risks. The foregoing did not enable a robust

[11] The Project Outcome Monitoring and Evaluation Platform was developed by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and is used to programme the Project Framework of Outcomes and the corresponding operating plan. The PSIMER creates reporting templates by activities, outputs and outcomes.

analysis of the effectiveness of the adaptive measures implemented, or the identification of new risks, which affected the level of fulfilment of some of the Project targets.

175. In accordance with the conceptualisation of the PSIMER, this is just one input to identify early warnings with regard to the fulfilment of outputs and outcomes and use of the budget. However, this input was not enough to monitor the Project risks or identify new risks, and monitor the effectiveness of the adaptation measures implemented. It is considered that the M&E of the Project should have been complemented with a risk monitoring and analysis component. The status of the risks is reported annually in the Annual Project Implementation Review Reports (APIRR), as well as the measures proposed to mitigate them. As mentioned in the section about the performance of FAO, the Project team managed to identify, in a timely manner, the risk of failing to fulfil the co-financing pledged. However, given that the problem started at the Project design stage and due to the political connotation it acquired during the implementation, the team did not have a lot of margin to solve the problem.

176. Other situations that affected the fulfilment of targets were not identified as risks *per se*, such as the failure to fulfil the government commitments due to the lack of appropriation by the incoming governments at national, regional and local level, and the lack of total or partial impact on the policy instruments, due to the lack of alignment between the administrative timeframes of the regional and local governments and the Project implementation timeframes.

177. With regard to the Annual Project Implementation Review Reports (PIR), the timely report by the Project on the changes made to some indicators and outputs, which did not discredit the scope of the Project is noteworthy. In addition, it is noteworthy that, in the first report that covers July 2016 to June 2017, the Project is rated as satisfactory with regard to its progress in the fulfilment of its objectives. This was despite acknowledgement of a substantial delay in the first year of implementation of the Project, which is reflected in the failure to fulfil activities that should have been completed in that year. For example, the PRODOC states that in the first year, the flagship species monitoring programme should be designed (Output 1.1.2). However, this first report states that the tender process for hiring the consultants who would complete this work was in progress. The same is true of the study of multi-criteria valuation (Output 1.1.1), the strategic environmental evaluation (Output 1.1.3), the Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform (Output 1.1.4) and the training programme (Output 1.1.5). However, it is not possible to measure the level of delay given the lack of intermediate targets in the Framework of outcomes.

178. It is also important to mention that the Framework of Outcomes did not *per se* include indicators or a description of such, but in the "indicators" column it incorporated the description of the outcome or output. However, the final targets that were incorporated made it possible to monitor the Project progress. No assumptions were included for the outputs either, and as such the executing team did not know that it had to be fulfilled so that they could obtain the outputs. For example, for output 1.1.3, it would have been essential to include the alignment of the start of the new government administrations and the start of the Project as an assumption, to be able to have an impact on its planning instruments.

179. Ten of the eleven recommendations resulting from the MTR were fulfilled, which include noteworthy studies by the Project to document the additional impact it is having as a result of its actions, which has made it possible to identify good practices that can be replicated in similar projects. The design and implementation of an exit strategy was also fulfilled to contribute to the sustainability of the achievements. The recommendation that was still pending refers to the improvement of the FAO acquisition processes, although progress has been made in this matter

upon the issuing of tender packages in 2019, which made it possible to reduce the number of tenders to conduct in the year.

3.6 Involvement of the interested parties

Evaluation question: How have other non-executing stakeholders of the Project been involved, such as civil society, the indigenous population or the private sector, in the design or the implementation of the Project, and how did this affect the Project outcomes?

The criterion regarding the involvement of stakeholders is rated as highly satisfactory.

Finding 17: The broad and diverse participation of interested parties in the implementation of the Project guaranteed a high level of appropriation of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach, which contributes to the sustainability of achievements made.

180. Since the formulation of the Project, the participation of a wide range of stakeholders was considered, which came to fruition in the implementation of such. The extensive participation by local organisations, community councils, indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant communities is noteworthy. Approximately two thirds of the signatories of the Connectivity Pacts in each mosaic belong to this group of stakeholders. According to the participation lists, a total of 2 701 people took part in the execution of the sustainable production plans, 629 of which belong to Afro-Colombian communities, 665 to indigenous communities and 585 to persons of mixed race. The participation of associations such as ASPROCIG APROPAPUR, Cocomaunguia and of the Cabildo Mayor Indígena Mutatá and Cabildo Mayor Indígena Chigorodó, which became financial partners of the Project during its implementation, is noteworthy. In addition, civil organisations such as WWF, Fundación Titi and Fundación Herencia Ambiental Caribe participated.

181. It is also worth highlighting the participation of the private sector, specifically the Asociación Nacional de Empresarios, and of companies such as PROMIGAS, which also contributed to the Project co-financing, the power company Urrá ESP and the mining company Cerro Matoso.

182. Some of the municipalities in the targeted areas also participated actively in the Project, the participation of the municipal mayor's offices of Montería (Córdoba), San Juan Nepomuceno (Bolívar), Acandí and Unguía (Chocó) stands out mainly in the declaration of new PA in the framework of the connectivity mosaics and in the conclusion of agreements for the conservation of the existing PA. The Local Protected Areas System (SILAP) of San Juan Nepomuceno and Montería also participated.

183. The Project made an effort to incorporate the RSSEC in the land use instruments of these and other municipalities located in the Project intervention zone, which in the end was not achieved. As mentioned in the chapter on Relevance there is very limited evidence to back the participation of the municipalities in the Project formulation phase, which may explain the difficulties encountered in having an impact on their land use plans or schemes. This difficulty was compounded by the changes in government in 2016 and 2020, and the design problems of the target *per se*, which was addressed in the chapter on Achievement of the Project outcomes.

184. The academic and research sector were also represented in the Project, by means of the participation of INVEMAR, which also subsequently became a financial partner of the Project, the Alexander von Humboldt Institute and the Universities of Córdoba and Antioquia. In addition, the Institute for Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM)

participated in the development of the interoperable platform and the capacity-building programme for the implementation of the RSSEC.

185. The National Training Service (SENA), attached to the Ministry of Labour, also participated and played an important role in supporting the training and education of the participating community organisations, on administrative matters (recruitment, accounting, archiving and management), environmental management geared towards groups of young people and ecotourism (planning, training of guides, accommodation, food handling), specifically in the Chocó – Darién and North Morrosquillo ecotourism corridor. The Technical Inter-Institutional Committees for Environmental Education (ICEE) also participated and played a leading role in the environmental education activities.

186. The collaboration established with the Colombian Territory Renovation Agency (ART) during the execution of the sustainable production plans to have an impact on the DPTFs is noteworthy.

187. The following sections of this chapter describe the participation of these stakeholders in more detail.

Finding 18: The Project implemented highly inclusive and participatory mechanisms and processes, which jointly led to a very high appropriation of the Project. These mechanisms and processes had an ethnic, age and gender focus. These include the consultation processes performed on the different groups of stakeholders, which included Free, Prior and Informed Consent; the formalisation of the participation of the stakeholders by means of the conclusion of *Agreements for the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources* and the establishment of contractual commitments and payments for the provision of services (e.g. the signing of letters of agreement); the creation of communication collectives composed of young people; and training, among which the Field Schools are noteworthy.

188. The specific components of the sustainable productive plans were designed and implemented in consultation and agreement with the beneficiary communities and their organisations, and therefore responded to their needs, cultural practices (dialogue of knowledge) and productive traditions. All of the beneficiaries interviewed felt listened to and managed to openly communicate the needs and expectations of their community in the consultation processes the Project carried out. The actions executed on the ground covered these needs and priorities, some of which gave continuity to the work previously started or were in line with the mission and vision of the local associations.

189. In particular, a contribution was made to improving the productive systems by implementing agroforestry and silvopastoral systems, and/or introducing or improving aquaculture, beekeeping and mixed vegetable gardens to improve food self-sufficiency, which during the pandemic, enabled families to have fresh food. The intervention of the United Nations World Food Programme added to this benefit, as it granted food stamps, which motivated the participation of families even more and, particularly of women in the field activities, in preventing a work overload for them. However, when this support ended, some families decided not to continue participating in the Project as they thought that this support would continue until the culmination of the Project activities on the ground.

190. The consultation processes conducted with the indigenous communities are addressed in detail in the following section.

191. These processes and mechanisms made it possible to involve indigenous and Afro-descendant communities as well as small, medium and even big rural landowners. In some cases, this

involvement was achieved by means of the collaboration with national and regional Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) (mainly Fundación Herencia Ambiental Caribe and Fundación Titi), who had already been working in the zone with different organisations of producers (associations and cooperatives), on activities to restore and conserve ecosystems and protect emblematic species.

192. The outreach, dialogue and consultation process with these community organisations led to the conclusion of formal agreements and to the signing of contractual commitments (e.g. signature of letters of agreement), which formalised the participation of these stakeholders, and trained and empowered them, by making them feel like Project partners and parties responsible for the execution of some of its actions, which some stakeholders capitalised on to apply to other projects and initiatives.

193. As mentioned in the Achievement of outcomes chapter, three Agreements for the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources were concluded. One was entered into by Paramillo NNP, CORPOURABA and the Cabildo Mayor Indígena de Mutatá; a second agreement was entered into by the Cabildo Mayor Indígena de Chigorodó, NNP and CORPOURABA, and the third agreement was entered into between NNP Los Katíos, Codechocó and the COCOMAUNGUIA Community Council, which represents part of the Afro-descendant community in the zone.

194. In addition, Letters of Agreement between the local FAO stakeholders and labour agreements between the associations and the community were signed to enable the development and implementation of the different activities contemplated in the Project. The Letters of Agreement were in turn translated into the signature of property conservation agreements. These agreements were based on the surveying of the baseline and property planning, which detail the Project intervention commitments and beneficiary family commitments in terms of the maintenance and sustainability of the actions to restore or improve the productive systems. The set of 675 properties, divided into the Mosaics of bajo Sinú, Betancí, Chocó-Darién, Morrosquillo Norte, San Juan Nepomuceno, Sur de Córdoba and Urabá, encompass an area of 8 572.5 hectares and an average size of 12.7 hectares.

195. The Field Schools (FFS) were another mechanism that was very effective at involving the local organisations and communities in the Project. The FFS became a space for the exchange and resurgence of ancestral knowledge, and the combination of such with the latest technology, to make the actions to restore and sustainably use the natural resources more effective and efficient. In the FFS that took place in the mosaics of Betancí, Bajo Sinú and Chocó Darién, specific proposals were developed to include the ethnic, age and gender focus, which will be addressed in this section. The effectiveness of the FFS is addressed in the chapter on Capacity-building and knowledge management.

196. One mechanism that particularly promoted the active participation of young people was the creation of communication collectives. These collectives were composed of educators and young people from educational institutions, who were trained in biodiversity conservation matters and the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach, and in the handling of communication tools and technology (e.g. photograph and video) and provided with the necessary equipment to complete the task (e.g. cameras). These collectives produced important informative materials about their environment, culture, land, the challenges of conservation and the alternatives identified by their communities to promote sustainable development and the best productive practices. This takes on more importance if you take into consideration that some of the

targeted zones have a high level of migration of young people to urban centres because of a lack of opportunities for them in their communities.

197. In addition, these collectives gave rise to the development of nodes such as the CONECTADOS Network, which will enable the expansion and sustainability of the social connectivity actions surrounding the conservation objectives.

198. These participation processes and mechanisms incorporated a strategy covering multiple approaches, which took gender, interculturality and inter-generational factors into account. For example, in the communication collectives, the differential ethnic focus was appropriately considered, and as such the contents were adapted to the culture and traditional language of the communities. Materials in the Embera language were therefore produced, for example, for the indigenous communities of Chigorodó, with support from the University of Antioquia.

199. In the case of the FFS, it was ensured that the technical team was respectful of the customs and cultures of the participants. While organising them, for example, the dates of important events and holidays for the community were taken into account, to avoid any overlapping. In one FFS, the Project therefore created a specific methodological guide to include the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach and the ethnic approach for certification with indigenous communities. The school times were also considered to promote the participation of youth and girls and boys in the training, and, in general the participation of the whole family was encouraged. The gender approach is addressed in a specific chapter.

Finding 19: The actions that facilitated and promoted the involvement of stakeholders in the aforementioned processes and mechanisms include: the appointment of promoters and technical facilitators who belonged to the community itself; training of the stakeholders on matters of administration and accounting, the organisation of cultural events that reinforced the identity of the communities and, in the case of indigenous communities, the use of their native language in the training provided and in the development of educational and informative materials.

200. Each conservation mosaic had a facilitator who served as a bridge between the community and the Project team. The facilitators were leaders, who thanks to the capacity-building promoted by the Project, were able to contribute to the development of their community and provide technical support in the implementation and monitoring of the actions on the ground. In addition, they had the support of promoters, who were people belonging to the same community and, consequently, were aware of its culture and traditions. The promoters supported the awareness-raising of the Project and promoted the participation of the communities and associations. One facilitator commented, "the promoters facilitated communication with the communities and that made the work flow well".

201. The Project trained the indigenous cabildos and local associations on accounting and administration, which empowered them and facilitated their signing of Letters of Agreement and the conclusion of contractual commitments between members of the same community.

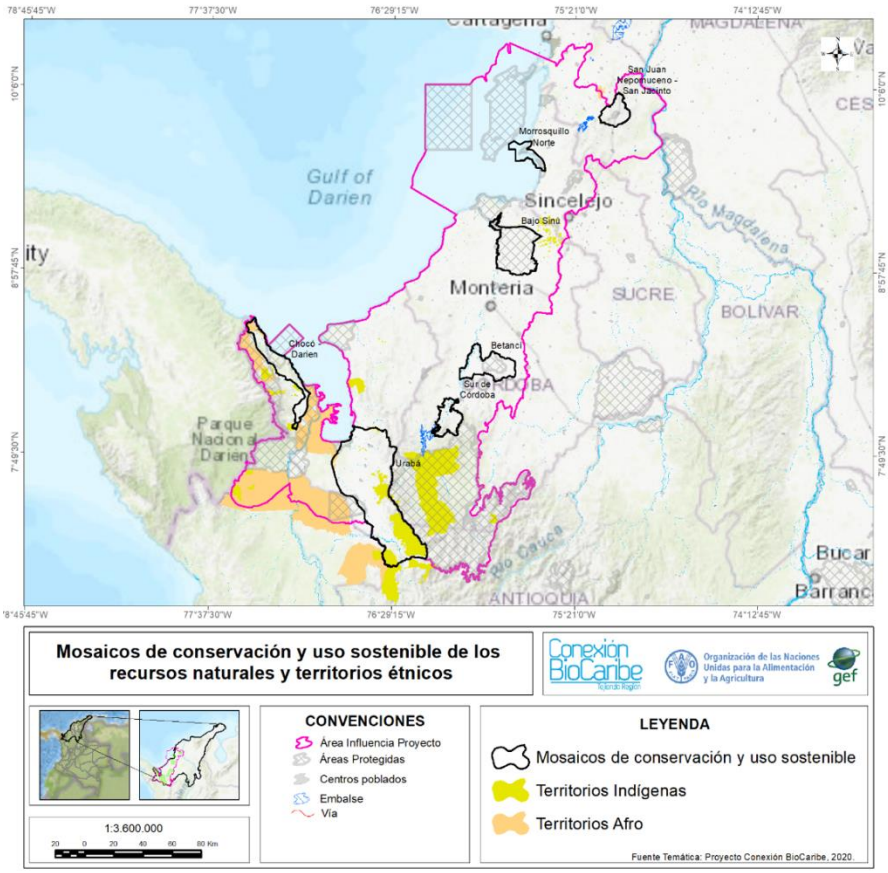
202. The Project considered and strengthened the cultural identity of the participating communities by holding cultural events, which motivated their participation in such. For example, the Project organised the bocachico fish festival, where communities developed their cultural expressions through cuisine and dance, and organised competitions to catch the largest fish, or swimming contests. The community lives outside of the los Katios National Natural Park but fishes in the protected area.

203. As mentioned previously, the communication and training in the indigenous community was provided in the native language, which facilitated the participation of these communities. In particular, the Project supported the Indigenous Communication Hub Krincha U Numua, recognised by the traditional authorities as a strategic process in the assertion of their territorial rights, the strengthening of traditional culture and identity and the sustainability of the ecosystems.

Finding 20: The Project contributed to strengthening the links between the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and their territories, which guaranteed their full and effective participation. To this end, these groups were effectively consulted in compliance with the applicable national norms and the FAO and GEF guides and standards related to working with ethnic communities.

204. The Project contributed to strengthening the links between the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and their territories, compatible with their cultural values and the common objectives of sustainable development and conservation, guaranteeing their full and effective participation in the project cycle (validation, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation), appropriately valuing traditional knowledge and practices through the dialogue of knowledge (exchange of technical and traditional and ancestral knowledge), and guaranteeing the access and participation of these communities in the benefits generated by the intervention. Figure 5 shows the location of the ethnic groups that participated in the Project.

Figure 5 - Ethnic Territories and Conservation Mosaics



Source: Bio-Caribbean Connection Project, 2020

205. The international agreements signed by Colombia constitute the main reference points of the regulatory framework, which underpins the consultation processes completed. These include

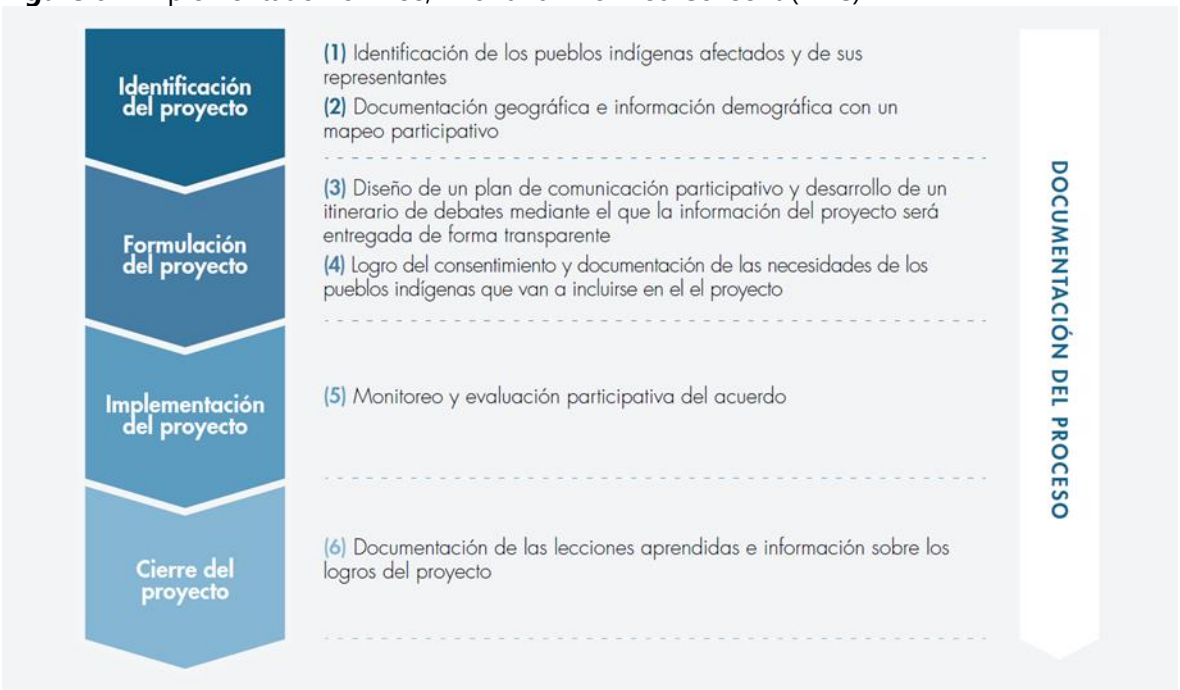
Convention 169 of the ILO (1989), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the United Nations Development Group's Guidelines (2009) on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The latter are recognised and adopted by the GEF and contained in the "Updated policy on social and environmental safeguards". This policy was adopted during the 55th GEF Council Meeting (2018), specifically Minimum Standards 5 and 6 on Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage, respectively. This is in addition to the jurisprudential developments of international organisations such as the International Commission on Human Rights.

206. In addition, the Project is obliged to fulfil the FAO principles contained in the "Environmental and Social Management Guidelines". Specifically, to fulfil the Environmental and Social Standard ESS 9 on Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage, detailed in the "Manual on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)", geared towards field professionals (2016).

207. As regards that concerning the Colombian legal system, the FPIC finds its constitutional basis in the recognition of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian state. Specifically, in Law 21 of 1991, by means of which the Colombian state ratified Convention 169 of the ILO. The fundamental right to prior consultation was also incorporated by means of this law, which was subsequently regulated by means of Decree 1320 of 1998. In addition to this decree, there are several administrative acts and jurisprudential developments of the High Courts.

208. To comply with the different policy guidelines mentioned, the Project prepared the protocol "ABC of Free, Prior and Informed Consent in the Project Bio-Caribbean Connection - A right of the Indigenous Peoples and a good practice for the local communities", which made it possible to guide the consultation processes and guarantee the participation of the communities during the different phases of the project, including their participation in decision-making. The steps followed for the implementation of the FPIC are shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 - Implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)



Source: ABC of Free, Prior and Informed Consent in the Bio-Caribbean Connection project

209. As a result of the successful experience of the Project in the application of the aforementioned FPIC tools and principles, the project prepared the document "Free, Prior and Informed Consent: Systematisation of a good practice in Bio-Caribbean Connection" (2018). This process of systematisation involved the collection and organisation of documental information (minutes and attendance lists), audio recordings and photographic records of the consultation sessions with the communities involved in the municipalities of Acandí (with Afro-Colombian communities from the Acandí-Unguía mosaic), Mutatá and Chigorodó (with indigenous communities of the Embera ethnic group from the Urabá Mosaic) from 2016 to 2018.

210. It is considered that the consultation process was a success as it enabled the signature of the aforementioned Agreements for the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources, with the Cabildos Mayores indígenas de Chigorodó and Mutatá. These agreements enabled the implementation of comprehensive activities that helped to consolidate the socio-ecosystem connectivity processes in the territory and the conservation of biodiversity, in line with the interests and expectations of the local communities expressed in their Life Plans[12]. To implement the activities, Letters of Agreement were signed with the two cabildos mayores. The activities were based on land planning and the signing of family conservation agreements, which established the commitments of the parties to ensure the sustainability of the actions.

211. In the Chichimán-Rincón del Mar area, a prior consultation was carried out with the black community of the Rebelión Community Council for the creation of a protected area in the zone. However, the process was suspended by CARSUCRE and the Ministry of Internal Affairs due to the emergency resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

212. In the Urabá Mosaic, where the Cabildo Mayor of Mutatá and of Chigorodó are located, 590 families of the Embera ethnic group participated and benefited directly. In the Chocó-Darién Mosaic, 499 Afro-Colombian families benefited, belonging to the Community Councils of Cocomasur, Cocomaunguía and Cocomaseco.

Finding 21: The Project contributed to the creation of community producer and stakeholder associations, as is the case of Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Alto Sinú (COOMUDESA), and to the organisational strengthening of the skills of the existing associations, as is the case of the Association of Producers for the Development of the Ciénaga Grande del Bajo Sinú Community.

213. The interest generated in participating in the Project led, in some cases, to the constitution of an association among the stakeholders so that they could participate in the Project. This is the case of Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Alto Sinú (COOMUDESA), the Asociación de Emprendedores Productores y Comercializadores Agropecuarios de Tres Palmas and the Red de colectivos de comunicación, which were created because of the Project.

214. In other cases, the associations consolidated themselves due to their participation in the Project, as is the case of the Association of Producers for the Community Development of Ciénaga Grande del Bajo Sinú (ASPROCIG), which groups together 96 grassroots community organisations and includes members who are representatives of the peasant, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. This association played an active role in the development and

[12] The activities involved in the agreements include the construction of community nurseries for the production of plant material geared towards the restoration of riparian forests; the establishment of silvopastoral and agroforestry systems; the establishment of mixed vegetable gardens; the execution of productive aquaculture and beekeeping projects; the improvement of transformation and commercialisation systems under the Participatory Guarantee System scheme, among others.

implementation of the sustainable production plans in the RIMD Swamp Complex of Bajo Sinú and in the zones outside of the protected area, as well as in the restoration of riparian forests. In particular, the importance and usefulness of the training on silvopastoral matters and the raising of awareness among livestock farmers in the zone was recognised, which facilitated their work.

Finding 22: The Project contributed to the reconstruction of the social fabric in areas historically affected by the armed conflict through the cohesion and trust generated during the FFS and the trust that the local promoters conveyed.

215. The FFS also promoted the co-existence and interaction between the members of the community. An interview mentioned that at the end of the FFS they prepared a meal to eat together and that co-existence during and after the FFS began to generate trust once again between the residents. It mentioned that they learned to co-exist again as a community. The cohesion and trust that was generated through these collective days contributed to the reconstruction of the social fabric.

216. In addition, the local promoters also generated trust in the communities as they were members of the same community and because of their closeness and permanence in the community. This benefited their participation in the FFS and in the other Project activities.

Finding 23: The inclusion and involvement of the private sector, by means of different companies and professions, enabled the adoption of the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach as a guideline for its obligatory (compensations) and voluntary (corporate social responsibility) investments, which contribute to the sustainability of the Project outcomes.

217. One of the most important achievements of the Project, in terms of the involvement of the interested parties is the inclusion of the private sector. This participation occurs not only by means of the productive professions representing important sectors of the regional economy such as Fedepalma, Fedegan or Fedemaderas, but also by means of companies in the energy and mining sector, such as the power company Urrá ESP, the mining company Cerro Matoso and the company PROMIGAS. In these cases, these are large companies obliged by Colombian legislation to identify, evaluate, avoid, mitigate and ultimately compensate, the loss of biodiversity that they cause in exercising their activities (UNDP-BIOFIN, Compensation in linear projects). This contributes to conservation by implementing actions concerning preservation, restoration in any of its approaches or sustainable use, with measurable and quantifiable outcomes, to contribute to the fulfilment of the conservation objectives of the country[13].

218. By means of the Project, the Asociación Nacional de Empresarios (ANDI), which since 2014 has been working together with the Humboldt Institute and with NNP, found a direct way to apply the companies' compensations in the socio-ecosystem connectivity actions proposed for the conservation mosaics.

219. In 2018, the *Alianza Biodiversidad y Desarrollo por el Caribe* [Biodiversity and Development Alliance for the Caribbean] was therefore established and signed by ANDI, FAO, NNP, USAID, the Humboldt Institute, the Jaguar Connection Programme and the affiliated companies Isa, Isa Intercolombia, Promigas and Sociedad Portuaria El Cayao.

220. The alliance provided an intervention framework, based on the identification of conservation and connectivity priorities in the Colombian Caribbean, helping to strategically channel the

[13] Source: National Strategy for Environmental Compensation of the Biotic Component and the Policy for the Comprehensive Management of Biodiversity and its Ecosystem Services (PNGIBSE).

environmental investments of its members surrounding the environmental and territorial management of 26 Civil Society Nature Reserves. In this regard, the RSSEC granted a conceptual, methodological and operative framework to the obligatory environmental compensation processes and to the voluntary compensation resulting from the CSR policies.

3.7 Capacity-building and knowledge management

Evaluation questions: Were the capacity-building activities based on real needs, were they relevant to the sector/beneficiaries and did they capitalise on existing capacities? Did the capacity-building activities have an integrated approach (individual, organisational and favourable environment level)? What evidence is there that beneficiaries have acquired more skills in local environmental governance and that institutions make informed decisions about it? Have knowledge management products and activities been produced and shared, and has this improved the contribution to the outcomes?

The capacity-building and knowledge management criterion is rated as highly satisfactory.

Finding 24: The training programme contributed to capacity-building on an individual scale as there was evidence of the development of technical capacities, but also of a change in values, behaviours and attitudes in pursuit of the conservation of biodiversity. It also contributed to the development of skills on an organisational scale, as some organisations have a mandate and a team that can perform its duties. In addition, the participating institutions have a platform to exchange information and knowledge. There is also a favourable environment given that some institutions have a policy framework that is aligned with the RSSEC and an associated public budget, to implement the planning instruments that the Project worked on.

Capacity-building

221. According to the FAO Office of Evaluation Framework for the Evaluation of Capacity-building, the Project training programme included capacity-building at the individual and organisational levels and also contributed to an enabling environment for its implementation. The training programme consisted of the Diploma in Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity, the online course Protected Areas Working Programme for the Caribbean Region of Colombia, an environmental education course and the provision of thematic Field Schools.

222. The Diploma was developed in collaboration with the Universities of Córdoba and Antioquia, to promote and strengthen local environmental governance, using tools and methodologies for the management and implementation of the RSSEC. It had a duration of 140 hours. The target audience was extensive and included public civil servants at municipal, departmental, regional and national level, members of local associations, teachers and civil organisations. Its curricular content, the educational focus and teaching resources applicable to the conditions of the target population were designed, and a sheet outlining its contents was published. In the interviews, it was mentioned that it was a challenge to teach the diploma to such a heterogeneous group of participants with very varied levels of education, which resulted in groups being put together according to their characteristics, and to making adjustments while it was being taught. In the first phase of the Diploma, 41 people graduated (15 women and 26 men) and in the second, 30 people did (15 women and 15 men). No final evaluation was conducted on the knowledge acquired at the end of the diploma. It was mentioned that those who delivered a biodiversity use and conservation mosaic proposal were certified. The people certified also have to commit to replicating the knowledge acquired. The diploma was initially partly taught in person but due to the pandemic it went completely online.

223. During interviews conducted with representatives of the CAR, it was mentioned that the diploma helped with the resolution of the environmental determining factors and the inclusion of concepts linked to ecosystem connectivity, with clarifying queries, making correct use of terms and to consider the context in the projects and activities. Another person interviewed mentioned that they will apply the knowledge to the implementation of the project entitled GEF-Pacific. This training and its expression in terms of the definition and adoption of mosaics and connectivity corridors gave strategic meaning to the interventions at farm level, which were carried out as part of Component 3.

224. Other people interviewed mentioned that the diploma was very demanding and some did not finish it, as it had to be completed during working hours. That is why the time dedicated to the diploma was counted as part of the co-financing provided by the partners. Others also mentioned that it was difficult to take it due to internet connection issues.

225. The online course about protected areas was picked up from an existing course developed in the framework of the project Integration of Amazonian Protected Areas (IAPA), which FAO is a partner of. On the basis of existing material, the study plan and lesson plan was created with a duration of 62 hours. The course addresses topics regarding legislation, planning of management, networks and integration, governance and participation, financial sustainability, climate change, education and awareness-raising and restoration of ecosystems in protected areas (PA). The course also had an extensive target audience, which included public civil servants, academia, NGOs and community associations. Of the 116 people registered, 38 received their certificate of approval (34 of whom are public civil servants; 18 women and 16 men). At the end of the course, a survey was conducted to evaluate the work of the virtual tutor and the fulfilment of the methodology and the evaluation parameters initially proposed for the course, which in general were rated as satisfactory. A question was also included to determine whether the course had fulfilled that offered, to which 89% of the participants responded 'always', while 9% responded 'almost always'. In addition, a question was included about whether the knowledge acquired contributed to the personal and professional development, 94% said 'always', while 6% said 'almost always'. The evaluation did not include questions about the usefulness and transfer of knowledge nor did it rate the level of knowledge acquired.

226. According to the interviews, it was mentioned that this course generated skills in the working teams of at least two PA, and their usefulness was highlighted on addressing specific topics about the management of PA. The community management was also highlighted that had been included in the course.

227. The objective of the environmental education course was to strengthen the environmental education processes for all of the territorial stakeholders, generating tools for the understanding and appropriation of attitudes and practices for citizen participation, community socioenvironmental management and the conservation of biodiversity from a socio-ecosystem approach. The target population of the course were the members of the Technical Inter-Institutional Committees for Environmental Education (ICEE), teachers and students in the fifth year of primary school and in secondary school. Social environmental organisations, community organisations, CAR public civil servants, local and departmental environment divisions and the public in general, were included as a complementary audience. The course had a duration of 20 hours. In the first phase of the course, 89 people were certified, 46 of whom were teachers and head teachers, 25 were from the ICEE and 18 were public civil servants from the departmental governments, CAR, MADS, Cereté Mayor's Office and NNP (in total, 48 women and 41 men). In the second phase, 890 students were certified. There are no results of an evaluation of the

course. The interviews mentioned the high participation of some CAR (e.g. CARDIQUE) given that the course was in line with its institutional plan actions.

Finding 25: The Field Schools were based on the needs and interests of the beneficiaries, and on the activities that they had been completing since before the Project started, which favoured the extensive appropriation of the knowledge acquired.

228. Field Schools (FFS) were organised about mixed vegetable gardens, silvopastoral systems, beekeeping, agroforestry and aquaculture systems and about sub-topics resulting from these general topics. As indicated in the chapter on Achievements, the 34 FFS developed by the Project were taught to the Project beneficiaries, including local and family associations of the communities targeted. In particular, a specific methodological guide was developed for the FFS with the inclusion of the ethnic focus for the certification of indigenous communities. The FFS were based on the needs and interests of the beneficiaries, and on the activities they had been completing since before the Project started. They also included ancestral knowledge that contributed to reactivating their use. In other words, there was a collective construction of knowledge, which was later applied by the participants. The aforementioned helped with the extensive appropriation of the knowledge acquired as described in more detail in the chapter on Sustainability. In the interviews, 14 of the 17 beneficiaries (82%) highlighted the high effectiveness and usefulness of the FFS, some of which highlighted the importance of having been provided with the materials to apply the knowledge acquired, which formed part of the execution of the productive projects and others mentioned the importance of the link to the educational institutions. Some of the comments made during the interviews were: "the livestock farmers are now aware", "they were excellent, I've never seen a project on this scale, we give them 10 points", "the training was very worthwhile".

229. Given that the FFS were connected to the productive plans, the knowledge acquired was used by means of these. The interviews mentioned that they continue to prepare their own organic fertilisers and that they are reducing the use of agrochemicals. One woman interviewed said "the Project has changed our way of thinking". Another person interviewed mentioned that in their association, most of the members were mangrove cutters and that their association and the Project itself gave them other alternatives for work. Another person interviewed mentioned that the Project had helped them improve their traditional productive systems.

230. In accordance with the aforementioned, it can be said that the Project contributed to the development of individual skills, which include technical skills, and also a change in attitude, values and behaviour. The inclusion of connectivity in some of the planning instruments (e.g. Departmental, CAR and national institution action, institutional and development plans), the provision of equipment, as well as the development of the inter-operable platform and of technical plans and guides that are useful for the institutions participating in the Project, also make it possible to note a development of skills on an organisational level. In other words, some organisations have a mandate, an infrastructure and a platform to exchange information and knowledge. This has in turn generated a favourable environment as there is a policy framework that is aligned with the RSSEC and a public budget, to implement the planning instruments that the Project worked on.

Knowledge management

Finding 26: The Project generated a Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity Strategy, and the technical and geographical information from this was systematised in an Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform, which in turn contains the biodiversity flagship species

monitoring programme for each socio-ecosystem corridor. The Project is in the process of producing 19 publications that systematise the main outputs, methodologies and lessons learned generated during its implementation. In addition, it performed nine tours to exchange experiences among different Project stakeholders, in at least five municipalities of the region.

231. The Project generated extremely important knowledge to contribute to the determination of socio-ecosystem connectivity in the Colombian Caribbean, starting with the preparation of the RSSEC, which involved the development of connectivity models and maps to define the connectivity corridors and the conservation mosaics. This information was shared in fora and was included in the databases of other initiatives (e.g. Mesoamerican Corridor Initiative). It also contributed to the definition of terms such as 'incentive' – what is it and how is it recognised and assessed, in the framework of the multi-criteria study detailed in the RSSEC.

232. Some of this information can be found systematised on the Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform of the RSSEC, which is inter-operable with some information systems of the participating entities. The Platform, in turn, contains the programme for monitoring flagship species of the biodiversity for each socio-ecosystem corridor, which has an inter-institutional nature and includes community participation.

233. The Project organised the National Connectivity Symposium, in coordination with NNP, IAvH, WWF and the Water and Land Conservation Project (ProCat). The symposium contributed to making the topic of socio-ecosystem connectivity visible in the academic sector at a national and international level, and consequently the periodic organisation of such could continue to benefit the generation of synergies between the government and academic sector to make progress in the matter. It is also worth highlighting the mangrove restoration model that the Project created, which takes into account the land-coast-sea relationship. This model was used as a reference in the National Mangroves Workshop held in 2019 and organised by the MADS with the support of GiZ and of the Project.

234. As a result of all of the work performed, the Project produced books, guides and collections of sustainable use and conservation mosaics that resulted in 19 publications, the names and status of which are shown in Table 4. One of these is written in the Embera language. In addition, it generated audiovisual material amounting to 73 videos in total. The information produced can be viewed on the Project website: https://conexionbiocaribe-pnnc.opendata.arcgis.com/

Table 4 - List of publications of the Project and status

Title of the publication	Type of publication	Status
Book Agroecosistemas diversos en la Estrategia Conexión BioCaribe: modelos de producción sostenible para la conectividad socioecosistémica, adaptación y reducción de riesgos asociados a la variabilidad climática	Printed	Final edition
Guía metodológica para la implementación de Escuelas de Campo para Agricultores (ECA) para la Conectividad Socioecosistémica	Printed	Final edition
Aporte de Conexión BioCaribe a la representatividad ecosistémica del Caribe colombiano: Nuevas áreas protegidas regionales y Reservas Naturales de la Sociedad Civil	Printed	Designed and with diagrams
Book Estrategia de Conectividades Socioecosistémicas para el Caribe colombiano – Estrategia Conexión BioCaribe	Printed	Final edition

Guía de incorporación de la Estrategia de Conectividades Socioecosistémicas en los instrumentos de ordenamiento territorial	Digital	Designed and with diagrams
Guía metodológica para la implementación de Escuelas de Campo para Agricultores (ECA) para la Conectividad Socioecosistémica in Embera	Printed	Final edition
Guía de incorporación de la Estrategia de Conectividades Socioecosistémicas en el ordenamiento de cuencas	Digital	Designed and with diagrams
Book Lecciones de comunicación y educación en las conectividades socioecosistémicas para la conservación, recuperación y uso sostenible de la biodiversidad	Printed	Final edition
Sheet Programa de monitoreo para la conectividad	Digital	Final edition
Review Resumen de ejecución Proyecto Conectividades Socioecosistémicas para el Caribe colombiano – Estrategia Conexión BioCaribe	Printed	Designed and with diagrams
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo I. Metodología	Printed	Designed and with diagrams
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo II. Mosaico Bajo Sinú	Printed	Final edition
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo III. Mosaico Betancí	Printed	Final edition
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo IV. Mosaico Chocó – Darién	Printed	Final edition
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo V. Mosaico Morrosquillo Norte	Printed	Final edition
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo VI. Mosaico San Juan Nepomuceno – San Jacinto	Printed	Final edition
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo VII. Mosaico Sur de Córdoba	Printed	Final edition
Colección Mosaicos de Conservación y uso Sostenible: Tomo VIII. Mosaico Urabá	Printed	Final edition
Tarjetero [cards featuring the QR code for each project]	Printed	Final edition

235. An important contribution the Project made was to recuperate ancestral knowledge for use in the riparian forest restoration activities (e.g. use of native seeds) and in the sustainable production plans. To this end, the Project organised six tours for the peasant, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities to exchange experiences relating to the technical, productive and economic management of growing different products (e.g. cocoa, banana and timber products), ecotourism and diverse agroecosystems (mixed vegetable gardens, silvopastoral and restoration systems), as well as knowledge for their transformation and commercialisation. These tours took place in Vereda Guapa León and in Cabildo Mayor de Chigorodó, in the municipality of Chigorodó; in the property la Esperanza, Vereda Raiceros and in the municipality of San Juan Nepomuceno; Lorica, in the municipality of Montería. They also took place in the municipality of Valledupar and in the settlement of the community Arhuaca de Jimain in the department of Cesar, and the indigenous settlement of Katanzama in the department of Magdalena, as well as in the mosaics of Urabá and Chocó Darién.

236. In addition, a tour of journalists was organised to give greater visibility to the conservation actions that would include socio-ecosystem and socio-cultural connectivity of the Colombian Caribbean. In addition, a mission was conducted on the ground by 32 FAO officials to find out about the work of the Project and exchange experiences with the people from the communities and institutions, in order to incorporate the environmental and conservation topics in the

productive models promoted by FAO. Experiences were also exchanged on the ground with the GEF Pacific Project Coordinator to obtain input that would allow them to implement that project better.

3.8 Social and environmental guarantees

Evaluation question: What was the impact of the measures taken during the implementation of the Project, with regard to social and environmental guarantees?

The social and environmental safeguards criterion is rated as moderately satisfactory.

Finding 27: The risk of the Project having a negative social or environmental impact was assessed as moderate during the formulation of the Project and this rating did not change during the implementation of such. No negative environmental or social effects resulting from the Project were detected and the necessary measures were taken to avoid any negative collateral effects. However, it is not clear whether the measures implemented by the Project coincide with those established in the environmental and social commitment Plan, as the Project did not have access to this Plan. It is therefore not known whether the mitigation measures and actions included in the Plan were fulfilled.

237. According to the Environmental Impact Evaluation, completed in the Project preparation phase, the risk of the Project having a negative social or environmental impact was rated as moderate, and as such was classified as category B. This category indicates that the Project could not generate a significant or potentially irreversible negative social and environmental impact although it could have adverse effects that could be mitigated with appropriate preventive actions. To this end, the LTO assigned to the Project should have conducted a Social and Environmental Analysis and, based on this, proposed an environmental and social commitment plan, as outlined in the FAO social and environmental management guides (FAO, 2015). This Plan should contain the measures and actions so that the Project can effectively manage and mitigate the social and environmental risks identified. The Plan would have to be certified and included as an appendix in the PRODOC for its approval.

238. The distributed English and Spanish versions of the PRODOC mention an appendix containing the "Social and Environmental Review Form". However, the appendix only shows the image of the link to a PDF file. As a result, the appendix was requested from the Project Coordinator, who in turn contacted the FAO offices in Rome, and managed to obtain a preliminary version of the form. However, the document does not contain the annexes that the environmental and social commitment plan should contain. The evaluation team could therefore not confirm whether the measures and actions included in the Plan were fulfilled.

239. None of the beneficiaries interviewed and partners of the Project mentioned any negative environmental or social effect that the Project may have caused. To the contrary, they all highlighted the positive aspects and significant achievements of the Project, including indigenous and Afro-descendant people (the chapter on the involvement of the parties addresses these groups in more detail). The Project beneficiaries and the Project team mentioned the use of local plant species, to perform restoration, and of native seeds for the agroecosystems. This was reviewed and authorised by the LTO, as was the material the Project acquired. In this regard, the LTO, based on its knowledge and experience, fulfilled its duty of avoiding collateral social and environmental damage. However, given the lack of knowledge of the commitment plan, it cannot be said that the risks identified during the Project preparation

phase were minimised, mitigated or compensated. Lastly, the 2017, 2018 and 2020 PIR reports mention the same category of risk and the 2019 PIR does not report the status of the risk.

3.9 Gender

Evaluation questions: To what extent have gender-sensitive considerations been taken into account in the design and implementation of the Project? To what extent has the Project ensured equality in terms of participation and benefits, contributing to the empowerment of women, youth and other vulnerable groups?

The gender criterion is rated as satisfactory.

Finding 28: After the Project Mid-Term Review, the Project actions were strengthened to include the gender perspective. Although the Project did not have an exclusive strategy for calling upon and promoting the participation of women, it did manage to increase and strengthen self-esteem, knowledge and the empowerment of some of the female participants. In addition, the RSSEC highlights women and young people as key stakeholders in the creation and implementation of actions, and its content shows the use of neutral language, in most cases. In compliance with the PRODOC, the Diploma in socio-ecosystem connectivity includes the gender perspective in the rights, identity and territory module.

240. As mentioned in the MTR, FAO Colombia put together a specific working group to address the gender-sensitive approach throughout the project by the Representation, and as such the Project had the support of this group with regard to this approach. The MTR recognised some Project actions to include the gender perspective. According to the PRODOC, the Project should promote the empowerment of women to improve their participation in planning and decision-making, and to improve their productivity, earnings and living conditions. In particular, the MTR requested the implementation of mechanisms to guarantee that the participation of women would not overburden them and to support their situation as mothers by providing, for example, childcare support during the FFS. In addition, by means of a work workshop in April 2019, the gender working group also recommended that the Project better mainstream the gender-sensitive approach in all of the Project actions. This working group therefore began to provide training on the approach, to the Project team.

241. The final evaluation clearly identifies the implementation of a strategy covering multiple approaches, which not only included the topic of gender but also the consideration of multicultural and inter-generational factors. Specific actions such as the following were therefore implemented:

- Inclusion of an introductory module with differential approaches in the FFS for farmers, which included the topic of gender, ethnicity and age.
- Actions to strengthen the committees of indigenous and Afro-descendant women included in the letters of agreement of the Urabá and Chocó mosaics (e.g. Letter of Agreement Two with COCOMAUNGUÍA, which included the establishment of the Productive Committee of Women of the Tarena community).
- Programming of times and dates to organise the FFS agreed upon among all of the participants – in some mosaics priority was given to holding them on Saturdays to support the participation of women and their children.
- Productive and cultural exchange tours to recognise good practices of other indigenous communities, in which women participated.

- Assumption of field tasks by women related to the care of plant material.
- Participation by local women-led organisations at business conferences and the conclusion of commercial protocol agreements with women-led groups or traders.

242. The attendance lists of the FFS and of the different Project events are broken down by gender. Specifically, a similar number of male and female public civil servants were trained (96 women and 98 men). The Project also achieved the target of involving 300 producers in the sustainable production plans (Output 3.1.3), 30% of which had to be women, therefore achieving 44% participation. According to the attendance lists, the Project managed to involve 1 178 women.

243. When applying this strategy covering multiple approaches, although specific actions were implemented for women, the announcements and communications promoted the participation of all interested people, and were in general geared towards families but without a specific appeal to women or young people and they did not include inclusive language. As a result, the gender-sensitive approach was sometimes blurred. Specifically, the RSSEC was designed with a participatory approach, in which the gender-sensitive approach was also blurred in some processes. However, the final version of the RSSEC identifies young people and women as key stakeholders for the creation and conclusion of actions and their implementation. In addition, in most cases it uses neutral language in its content. In compliance with that required in the PRODOC, the Diploma in socio-ecosystem connectivity includes the gender perspective as part of the rights, identity and territory module.

244. According to the interviews, women participated in the Project due to the open call that was made and to the opportunities that were offered to everyone who wanted to participate, but not because of a specific appeal geared towards them. The local associations led by women were already in place before the Project began, and as such the Project had no impact in this regard. In Mutatá, it was mentioned that more women participated in the projects because of their readiness to want to work. They do not recognise a specific call by the Project for women but their participation in the projects has increased their self-esteem, as excluding them was prohibited, and it has strengthened the empowerment they felt since before the Project. This is the case of the committee of indigenous women of Chigorodó, which was established years before the Project arrived. Their participation allowed them to better understand the environmental topic and also identified them in their role as guardians of nature and enabled them to be aware of the responsibility they have for taking care of the environment.

3.10 Sustainability

Evaluation question: How sustainable are the outcomes achieved to date, at an environmental, social, financial and institutional level?

The sustainability criterion is rated as likely.

Social sustainability

Finding 29: A high level of appropriation was identified among most of the beneficiaries, due to the continuity they are giving to the Project actions, by means of new initiatives and voluntary work. Fifteen of the seventeen beneficiaries interviewed mentioned that they are performing an activity that is giving or will give continuity to the Project activities.

245. **Continuity of the Project actions by means of the proposal and implementation of new initiatives.** With support from the Project, the Association of Producers for the Community

Development of Ciénaga Grande del Bajo Sinú (ASPROCIG), composed of fishers, peasants and Afro-descendants, managed to secure a project financed by GiZ by means of Fondo Acción. This Project will end in December 2021 and involves the participation of 90 small-scale livestock farmers for the application of silvopastoral systems, the execution of initiatives regarding alternative energy to increase productive capacities in the zone and the reforestation of 3 km of riparian forests and of gallery forests with native trees, among other actions. This project will also offer training by means of the field schools. For its part, the Community Council of Porroso won a project offered through the call "United Incentives for COVID-19" issued by the Government of Antioquia. This project created sustainable mixed vegetable gardens for food and nutrition security in four villages of the municipality of Mutatá, in which fruit species (e.g. banana), timber, manioc and corn are being sown. The Project team supported them in the integration of the proposal. This project began in October 2020 and ended in December of the same year, benefiting 48 families. In addition, seven local associations interviewed mentioned being in negotiations with the mayor's offices, the CAR or another institution to determine the extent to which they could collaborate to continue with the work undertaken.

246. **Voluntary actions and replication of activities.** In addition, five beneficiaries mentioned that they will continue to apply the good practices learned. One association said, "there are no longer any payments and they continue with the work to take care of the fruit trees, which are for their own consumption". Another association mentioned that other families are adopting the fractal methodology of the Project for fishing and another stated that they will continue to produce and use organic fertiliser. Another association stated that some residents are going to replicate their work and one beneficiary mentioned that she will continue to convey the importance of conservation to her children. Other statements made by the local associations that show the degree of appropriation include: "we are not beneficiaries, we are partners", "we are the grey matter of the Project", it is the best Project we have done and "conservation pays". Two beneficiaries mentioned that they were not sure how to continue with the work started.

247. The aspects and activities that enabled a high level of appropriation by most of the beneficiaries include:

- **the alignment of the Project with the activities that the local communities and associations had been performing.** Most of the beneficiaries mentioned that the Project managed to add to the activities that they had initiated, or, that the activities proposed were in line with the objectives of their association. One of the beneficiaries mentioned that the Project did not end up imposing anything on them. Another mentioned that it was the only Project that had been developed from the territory and under initiatives that were already being implemented.

- **The effectiveness of the training and of the practices applied, as well as the provision of the equipment required facilitated the empowerment and active participation of the local stakeholders.** For example, indigenous groups were trained in administration, which enabled them to sign letters of agreement with FAO. Several of those interviewed highlighted the effectiveness of the field schools. Another local stakeholder mentioned that the training they were given is now the "muscle of its youth collective". In addition, the positive outcomes obtained from the practices taught, for example, concerning agricultural practices such as the preparation of organic fertilisers has helped with their continuity and replication. In addition, the provision of the necessary equipment to apply the practices was also key for the appropriation of such.

- **The hiring of facilitators and promoters selected by the community itself**. The Coordinator of Component 3, a facilitator for each or for every two mosaics and several promoters carried out the field work of each mosaic. The facilitator(s) and promoter(s) were selected by the community itself and hired by FAO. The facilitator who is a professional provided technical support to the Project beneficiaries and for their part, the promoters conveyed the good practices of the Project to promote their replication. Both figures enabled continuous and flowing communication with the Project beneficiaries. One of them mentioned that the participation of these was fundamental for monitoring the Project as they were 100% dedicated to this, and served as a bridge between the FAO technical team and the participating communities and associations. They were also quite useful for the interaction with indigenous communities as the technicians and promoters belonged to these same indigenous groups and facilitated the communication, given that many of their members (particularly the eldest), do not speak Spanish. In addition, they made it possible for the traditions and culture of the groups to be taken into account in the Project activities. One stakeholder mentioned that the promoter was within the reserve and as such will continue to provide the knowledge acquired.

Finding 30: The Project sustainability is also being maintained in the collaborations initiated by the Project with the programmes and projects of other authorities.

248. In 2017, the Project began collaborating with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Natural Wealth programme. The aim of this USAID programme is to support the Colombian government in the fulfilment of the comprehensive rural sustainable development and conservation targets to achieve stable and lasting peace in the post-conflict framework. The programme began in 2017 and will end in 2022 and the regions of the Caribbean and Orinoquía intervene. Given that this Programme has objectives in common with the Project, it joined efforts with those already made by the Project. Close collaboration was therefore established to increase the conservation areas, and in particular the San Juan Nepomuceno management plan was jointly prepared, and conceptual, technical and cartographic information was exchanged. In addition, joint events and meetings were held and the work of value chains was complemented to benefit more families with productive projects. USAID will finance a new programme phase to continue to support productive projects for 30 families in the Colorados and Cerro Maco Sanctuary and to strengthen the management of the protected areas created in the region. In the interviews, a local association mentioned that it was also participating in this programme by means of which they will give continuity to the Project actions. USAID also formed part of the public and private agreement titled *Alianza Biodiversidad y Desarrollo por el Caribe* [Biodiversity and Development Alliance for the Caribbean], more details of which can be found in the Financial Sustainability section.

249. In addition, a collaboration was also established with the German International Cooperation Agency (GiZ) by means of the project Local protected areas and other conservation measures, which covers four countries: Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. The objective of this project is to strengthen the municipalities of these countries in the management of conservation areas and other alternative measures for the protection of biodiversity. Consequently, this collaboration added to the training provided to the municipalities and to the strengthening of the municipal systems of protected areas. This project will continue until 2022 and will reinforce conservation in the region of areas that are not protected and the training of the municipalities.

250. The Project actions will additionally be continued, by means of phase five of the collaboration project between Fundación Herencia Ambiental and Fundación Tití, supported too by NNP and

the German agency KFW. These foundations have joined forces since 2016 to support and expand a conservation project, in which peasants undertake to help with the conservation of the forest, by protecting or reforesting their land in exchange for technical assistance and inputs to implement sustainable agriculture and other productive activities, which from the start included ecosystem connectivity. These activities were directly aligned with the Project activities, which joined forces to strengthen phases three and four. Phase five of the project involved connecting the Cerro del Colorado with Cerro Maco to expand the area of influence of the Project. The Inter-Institutional Committee for Environmental Education of San Juan Nepomuceno, ASPRAN and the Comprehensive Association of peasants of the village of Hayita and resident of the municipality of San Juan Nepomuceno (ASICHAV) will participate in this fifth phase, which will also enable them to make the actions they initiated with the Project sustainable.

251. The results of the survey on skills, attitudes and practices, performed at the start and end of the Project indicate a greater awareness about taking care of and the importance of biodiversity, as well as better practices and attitudes towards it. This achievement directly contributes to the social sustainability of the Project achievements.

Institutional sustainability

Finding 31: Although the RSSEC *per se* was not adopted in the national, regional departmental and municipal planning instruments, the connectivity concepts were taken up again in some of these instruments and actions were proposed that align with the RSSEC, which contribute to the continuity of the Project achievements.

252. One of the key products of the Project was to have planning instruments on a national, regional, departmental and municipal scale that incorporated the RSSEC, which is key for the continuity of the actions and achievements of the Project by the institutions and also so that these may contribute to guiding and/or coordinating the efforts of the local associations and communities. According to the Project Achievements chapter, on a national level, one of the strategic objectives of the 2020-2023 Institutional Strategic Plan of the NNP is the promotion of the creation and consolidation of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) by strengthening the ecological representation and structural and functional connectivity of the System. It therefore included connectivity as one of its strategic axes and shows a general diagnosis of the connectivity on a national scale; it additionally introduced the concept of a "well connected" system. NNP therefore proposes aligning the concept of Connectivity in the conceptual frameworks of other complementary instruments such as the SINAP policy and the new formulation of the 2020-2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It will therefore also continue to implement actions that promote and improve the connectivity of the PA with the collaboration of the ethnic groups and local communities.

253. With regard to the national policy of the SINAP, a preliminary version from 2019 of the document *Towards a National System of Protected Areas Policy, 2020-2030 Vision*, makes it possible to highlight the inclusion of the chapter *Towards a well connected National System of Protected Areas* although it is clarified that the policy must establish the conceptual framework that explains what is understood by a well connected SINAP. In this same regard, it is observed that the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach is still not adopted in the MADS policies, which would be essential, considering that it is the MADS that issues the national policy on environmental matters.

254. In addition, it would be necessary for MADS to adopt the RSSEC as its own policy instrument to ensure its formal use in the Colombian Caribbean region and that it is used as a reference for the development of other similar strategies in other regions of the country. The aforementioned

considering that MADS reviewed and endorsed the RSSEC so that it would align with the national vision. This facilitates the adoption of the ecosystem connectivity approach by the different national, regional, departmental and municipal institutions and would ensure the sustainability of the work done by the Project and expand its impact. The interviews also mentioned the importance of the MADS completing the processes to connect the RSSEC to the Rural Agricultural Planning Unit.

255. At regional level, the CORPOURABA and CODECHOCÓ Institutional Action Plans denote the influence the RSSEC has had on the comprehensive vision they propose with regard to the interaction between humankind, nature and the social environment, and on the actions proposed, some of which correspond to actions performed in the framework of the Project. These include the development of sustainable productive systems in the socio-ecosystem corridors or the restoration of disturbed areas using endangered species to generate connectivity.

256. At departmental level, the Córdoba Departmental Development Plan recognised the issue of the fragmentation of ecosystems and the importance of structural and functional connectivity and focuses actions towards the formulation of land use plans and the restoration of strategic ecosystems to guarantee the supply of ecosystem services, among others. The Chocó Departmental Development Plan includes the environmental sustainability approach, which highlights the importance of environmental education and the development of strategic ecosystem recuperation, restoration and protection projects. The Bolívar Departmental Development Plan proposes securing the configuration of inter-municipal and supra departmental, rural and urban functional corridors that provide the convergence between its subregions, together with the protection and recuperation of its natural resources and strategic ecosystems. The Antioquia Departmental Development Plan again takes up the topic of the biological corridors and declaratory actions, PSA, with a sustainable use and conservation approach.

257. At municipal level, although the Project proposals to incorporate the RSSEC in the municipal land use schemes and plans have not been approved yet, in some of the municipal development plans, it was possible to recognise the importance of re-establishing ecological connectivity, as is the case of the municipality of Montería. Specifically, the new mayor of Montería and FAO will sign a letter of intention to give continuity to the work of the Project by implementing a payment for environmental services scheme and creating a local protected areas system and a green fund. The municipality will contribute 3 billion Colombian pesos for these works.

258. The Acandí Development Plan vouches for strengthening the national system of protected areas with the aim of maintaining the socio-ecosystem connectivity of the species that inhabit the territory and the connection by means of a corridor with other species, as well as the promotion of the social, environmental and cultural value of the communities. Other development plans such as those of Chigorodó and Mutatá show an alignment with the RSSEC by including general focuses such as the promotion of the comprehensive development of the territory in a manner that cares for the environment and programmes for the conservation of biodiversity and its ecosystem services.

259. The five good-will framework agreements for the management of sustainable development and socio-ecosystem connectivity in the mosaics and their plans of action contribute to that achieved in the planning instruments, upon establishing a joint commitment regarding the actions to keep developing in the targeted zones to improve socio-ecosystem connectivity. The

agreements were signed by NNP, CAR and some mayor's offices, universities, NGO and a high number of local associations with a shared vision and objectives.

260. It is also expected that the inter-institutional cooperation will be maintained to continue with the implementation of the RSSEC, by means of the Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform, which was developed in the Project. The Steering Committee appealed to the institutions to continue contributing to the operation of the platform to secure its sustainability in the medium and long term, considering that this benefits all of the SIRAP-Caribe institutions.

Financial sustainability

Finding 32: The companies Urrá, Cerromatoso and PROMIGAS submit investment plans that contribute to the financial sustainability of the actions undertaken by the Project, and these are complemented by the expected budget that the government authorities receive for the execution of their planning instruments that the Project worked on.

261. As mentioned in the Involvement of interested parties chapter, Colombia has a comprehensive compensation strategy, in which companies that complete projects, works and/or activities on the road and port infrastructure, hydrocarbons, energy and mining sectors must, ultimately, compensate the loss of biodiversity that they cause in exercising their activities. The compensation constitutes a key economic regulation instrument to guide resources from the private sector towards biodiversity, focusing resources on more comprehensive and effective actions.

262. As a result of the partnership and collaboration established with the private sector, some companies from the mining and energy sector, by means of their compensation, are contributing to the socio-ecosystem connectivity of the Colombian Caribbean, with investment plans that exceed the lifetime of the Project[14]. These companies are detailed below.

263. The company Cerro Matoso began to participate in the Project in the middle of 2019, situating its compensation actions in Paramillo Park. The compensation plan will have a duration of five years and an estimated investment of 1.3 million dollars approximately, and its future actions will focus on the Betancí Swamp. The actions foreseen include the sowing of native trees, the leasing of land for conservation by means of the Payment for Environmental Services scheme, and the execution of agroforestry projects.

264. The company PROMIGAS has a 2020 compensation plan, which was reviewed and endorsed by the Project and by the ANDI that will also last five years. The compensation plan includes the work of five properties, which includes 41 families and 76 beneficiaries. The plan activities include the creation of civil society reservation and fauna monitoring areas. In 2020, 64 productive projects were signed with the families and also include actions for the sustainable management of water, with a total investment of 350 000 USD. Even the initial resources invested by PROMIGAS were added as part of the Project co-financing.

265. The company URRÁ has a ten-year compensation plan, which includes connectivity networks that they developed with the support of the Project. These networks incorporate strategic areas

[14] The connectivity of ecosystems is a concept that is included in the Biotic Resources Compensation Manual (MADS, 2018), as well as the inclusion of connectivity slots or areas with potential for restoration as a compensation measure.

of restoration in inhabited areas. The peasants receive support for the conservation of the areas, which is a source of income. They also have a species monitoring plan and a monitoring and evaluation system for their actions.

266. The aforementioned compensation plans constitute investment plans that contribute to the financial sustainability of the actions undertaken by the Project, in which CARDIQUE played a central role.

267. In addition, the government budget of the institutions, which they will use to fulfil their institutional or development plans that were worked on by the Project, as well as the budget assigned for managing the new and existing PA, also contribute to the financial sustainability of the Project achievements as a whole.

Environmental sustainability

Finding 33: The effectiveness and success of the resource conservation and sustainable use actions that the Project implemented; the institutional strengthening achieved by means of the RSSEC and of the planning instruments worked on, capacity-building and awareness-raising of the communities and key stakeholders with regard to the importance of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity contribute to the environmental sustainability of the Project achievements.

268. Contributions were made to the environmental sustainability of the Project achievements by:

- Improving the conservation status and management of nationally and globally important ecosystems, by means of the formal declaration of 19 protected areas and the development of their management plans and of 17 declarations made by the CAR; improving the management of existing protected areas; the effectiveness of the riparian forest restoration actions; the conclusion of three Agreements on the sustainable use, management and conservation of natural resources, entered into with the indigenous and Afro-descendant communities located in the PA; and the operation of the Inter-sectorial Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Platform, which includes the flagship species monitoring system.

- The institutional strengthening for environmental governance and socio-ecosystem connectivity. This was achieved by means of the participatory development of the RSSEC and the inclusion of actions aligned with the work of the Project in the national, regional, departmental and municipal planning instruments approved in the framework of the Project.

- Capacity-building by means of the design and teaching of a Socio-ecosystem Connectivity Diploma, a Course on Protected Areas, an environmental education programme and the teaching of thematic FFS.

- The awareness-raising of the community and of key actors on the importance of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity.

- The dissemination of practices for the sustainable use of natural resources by means of the establishment of seven mosaics for the conservation and sustainable use of resources, the successful promotion and execution of sustainable productive projects by means of different agroecosystem models; the certification of outputs by means of Participatory Guarantee Systems.

- Proposals for the financial sustainability of the Project achievements by strengthening the environmental compensation processes so that they contribute to the connectivity and realisation of green business tables.

3.11 Progress towards impact

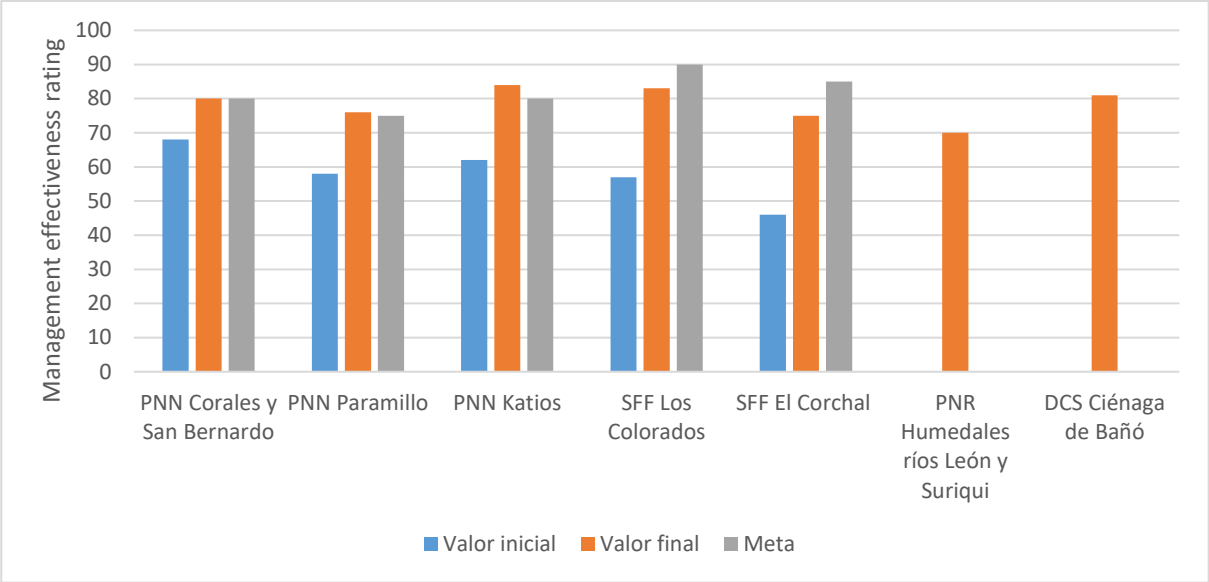
The progress towards impact criterion is rated as highly satisfactory.

Finding 34: Most of the targets proposed in the GEF tracking tool were met and several of these were doubled or quadrupled. It is worth highlighting the improved effectiveness of the management of the PA the Project intervened in, the large area with biodiversity conservation actions in productive systems and sectors, the restoration of riparian forests and sectorial policies that now include elements of biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity. A possible area for improvement was detected in the METT to measure the effectiveness of the management of the PA.

269. The GEF tracking tools measure the progress in achieving the impact and outcomes established in the GEF portfolio of projects, using information requested from the projects. In particular, the Project must report on the effectiveness in the management of protected areas *(*BD-1.1); the inclusion of biodiversity conservation in productive sectors and systems, and the marine and terrestrial landscapes certified by means of international or national standards that incorporate biodiversity considerations (BD-2.1); and the sectorial regulations and policies that incorporate the conservation of biodiversity (BD- 2.2).

270. With regard to the effectiveness in the management of existing PA and, in accordance with that stipulated in Output 2.1.2, once the actions were implemented that would help to improve the management of the PA detailed in the PRODOC, the Project team measured the effectiveness of seven PA by using the GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT). Three of the PA met or slightly exceeded their target (National Natural Parks Los Corales and San Bernardo, Paramillo, and Los Katíos); two obtained an amount slightly below the target (Flora and Fauna Sanctuaries Los Colorados and el Corchal) and two PA only had one initial measurement (Regional Natural Park Humedales ríos León and Suriquí and the Soil Conservation District of the Bañó Swamp) as they replaced two PA that were included in the PRODOC, but were no longer relevant considering the context in which the Project was being implemented (Figure 7). The intervened PA increased their rating by 12 to 29 points compared to their baseline. As mentioned in the chapter on Effectiveness, the METT tool seems to affect the rating of the PA that are not inhabited by indigenous groups or that do not have tourism, as it is not possible to inform the tool that these characteristics do not apply for certain PA.

Figure 7 - Improvement in the effectiveness of the management of existing protected areas.

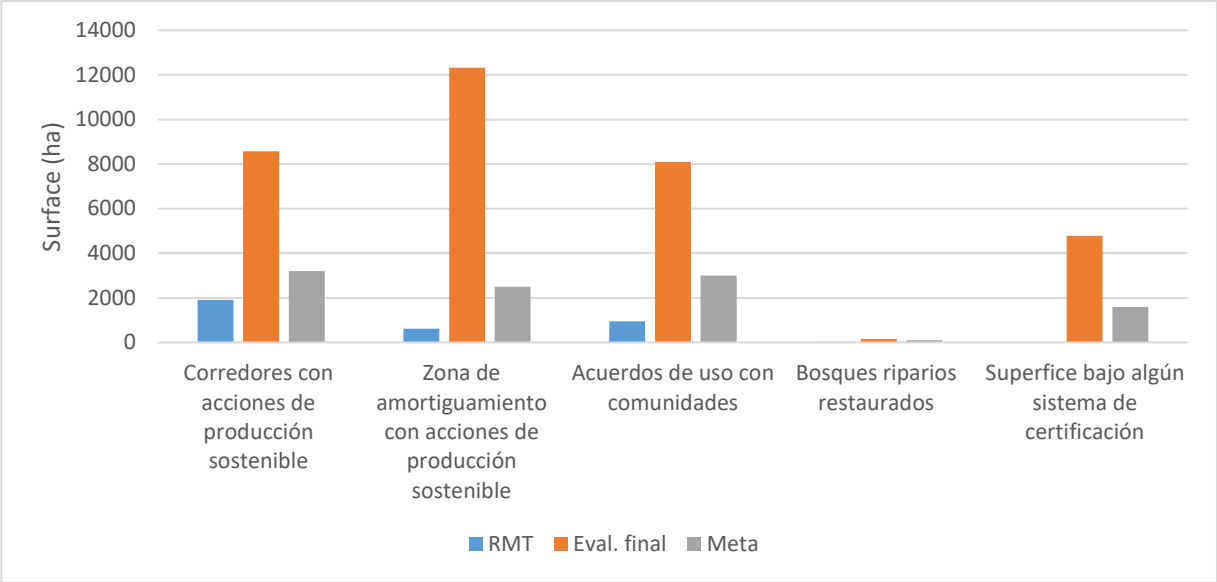


Source: prepared by the authors with the data reported in the GEF tracking tool.

271. According to the interviews, the skills of the team in charge of managing the intervened PA were strengthened by means of the "Protected Areas Work Programme course" (which included training on the AEPMAPPS tool) and the diploma on Socio-ecosystem Connectivity. In addition, the equipment provided (e.g. camera traps, computers, vans, outboard motors and motorcycles, among others) helped them to strengthen their monitoring, control and surveillance activities. Important information was also generated by performing technical studies (e.g. water assessment) and actions were implemented in the buffer zone of some of the PA to reduce the pressure on them. In terms of governance, the use and conservation agreements with the ethnic groups that live in some of the PA were strengthened and effective inter-institutional coordination was established between the municipalities, the CAR and NNP for the management of the area. One interview, for example, mentioned that "the municipalities stopped seeing the PA as a problem as they understood its function".

272. With regard to the indicator *Marine and terrestrial landscapes certified by means of international or national standards that incorporate biodiversity considerations*, figure 8 shows that the targets regarding surface area of corridors and buffer zones with sustainable production plans and use agreements with communities were substantially exceeded. In some cases the target area established was doubled or quadrupled. In addition, the target of having 100 linear kilometres of restored riparian forests was exceeded. The aforementioned results from a greater area of intervention defined at the start of the Project, which mentioned seven conservation mosaics instead of four, as well as the monetary savings obtained by the Project, the extensive community participation and the synergy established with other initiatives implemented in the same intervention zone.

Figure 8 - Inclusion of biodiversity conservation in productive sectors and systems and surface area under a certification system.



Source: prepared by the authors with the data reported by the Project.

273. The target regarding total surface area under a certification system was exceeded, with a total of 4,783.5 ha. The Project considered two schemes. The first was the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), which is a scheme based on trust and that originates by means of a community initiative that includes environmental, cultural, political and social dimensions. Certification was provided by means of the joint decision taken by a committee composed of the Project promoter, the producer and a community representative. On some occasions a teacher and the buyer participated. The second scheme is the Green Business Programme, which involves the verification of 12 criteria by the environmental authority that include, among others, the sustainable use of resources for the production of the good or service, which has a positive environmental impact and the existence of social responsibility within the company.

274. With regard to the sectorial policies and regulations that biodiversity conservation incorporates, the target was to reach a rating of nine in section five Regulatory Framework and Policy of the GEF tool. Given the number of planning instruments that were aligned or incorporated into the connectivity concept, the Project reached a rating of 22 points, exceeding the target by far.

Finding 35: The Project had other effects on some families, such as the greater availability of healthy and varied food, the securing of additional economic income and in some cases, the reduction of exhausting working days. Some people interviewed (35%) mentioned that the Project contributed to improving their quality of life.

275. Other no less important effects correspond to the contribution the Project made to improving the quality of life of the people and families who participated in the Project, due to greater availability of healthy and varied food thanks to the mixed vegetable gardens implemented; obtaining income due to the productive projects implemented; the reduction of exhausting working days due to the equipment provided, and to the trust built which led to better community co-existence. Six of the seventeen beneficiaries interviewed (35%) mentioned that their quality of life had improved. The comments made to the evaluation team include: "The Project is making us self-sustainable", "in the pandemic we had food for our own consumption and to sell to other communities"; "70% of our food is secure".

276. Nine of the seventeen beneficiaries (53%) mentioned that their income had improved. An interview mentioned that with the food stamps they were given and the payments for the work

completed, they saved money and were able to buy seeds to grow and also bought two breeding sows. Another mentioned that thanks to the beekeeping project, they obtained additional income and protected the forest as "where there are bees, they cannot come in to cut down the trees". Others mentioned that they managed to generate income through the indigenous markets.

277. Two beneficiaries mentioned that the Project helped them to build trust once again with their neighbours, through their co-existence in the FFS, when meals were organised for the group to share food.

278. In response to an MTR recommendation, the Project team conducted final studies in the field and in the laboratory to determine the impact that the diverse agroecosystem model has had in the targeted zones. In particular, indicators were measured regarding the soil, linked to its composition and conditions; biodiversity by means of flora, bird, insect, large mammal and other samples; carbon capture by means of biomass sampling in flora; and food security, by means of final surveys conducted with the participating families (there is an initial survey that was conducted at the start of the field activities). The outcomes of this work were not yet available when the final evaluation was performed.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1 - Relevance. The Project continues to be relevant for the Colombian Government, as it aligns with two of the axes cutting across all of public management, which are environmental sustainability and green growth, as well as the objective "to harmonise agricultural production with the conservation and efficient use of natural resources". It is also aligned with the Sustainability Pact, and the Equal Opportunities for Ethnic Groups Pact. In addition, the Project responded to the needs of the local communities. It also remains relevant for the GEF, in accordance with the objectives and outcomes of the focal area of biodiversity. In addition, it is in line with and has contributed to the FAO priorities under Strategic Objective 2 and Priority Area 3 of the Country Programming Framework.

Conclusion 2 - Achievement of outcomes. The Project was extremely successful in the achievement of its outcomes and outputs, in many cases exceeding the targets detailed. It is worth highlighting the 1,451,622 ha, which were intervened by the Project by means of the declaration of new protected areas and the improvement of existing protected areas; the configuration of conservation mosaics and sustainable production in an area of 559,948 ha, and the designation of ecosystem corridors, as well as the planning instruments that the Project worked on.

Conclusion 3 - Co-benefits generated. In accordance with the data that the Project measured, this contributed to improving food and nutrition security in the intervened communities and to the use of good practices in the maintenance of mixed vegetable gardens. In addition, it enabled some families to generate and retain economic income by means of the sale of their products in local and regional markets. It furthermore contributed towards increasing carbon storage in the intervened areas and towards the recognition of the contribution of the diverse agroecosystems to the conservation of biodiversity and the recovery of ecosystem services and of biological corridors affected by the regional livestock farming and agricultural practices.

Conclusion 4 - Efficiency. Upon evaluating the achievements of the Project and the resources invested by the Project, it is considered that the Project was implemented in a cost-effective manner. The Project savings and the appropriation of the beneficiary partner(s) of the Project contributed towards extending the activities on the ground and, for some outputs, increasing the fulfilment of their targets. All of the beneficiaries and partners of the Project interviewed recognised the high performance of FAO.

Conclusion 5 - Co-financing. The partners showed ongoing commitment to the Project and there was no effect on the fulfilment of Project targets although, as at November 2020, 54% of the co-financing pledged had materialised. Areas for improvement were identified in the determination of the balancing items during the Project formulation phase.

Conclusion 6 - Monitoring and evaluation. A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation system was designed and executed, mainly to monitor the Project progress and the use of the budget. However, the system needed to be complemented by a component that would enable the analysis and monitoring of the Project risks identified and the identification of new risks as well as the analysis of adaptation measures implemented, and have a periodic report of the co-financing by the counterparts, who had that responsibility.

Conclusion 7 - Involvement of the interested parties, including the ethnic approach. The Project achieved a very extensive participation of stakeholders from different sectors, among which it is worth highlighting the social and private sectors. To this end, it implemented participation processes and mechanisms that were highly inclusive and effective, such as the consultation process conducted with the communities, the formalisation of the participation of beneficiaries by means of the signature of contractual commitments and agreements and the organisation of Field Schools. The mechanisms and

processes were complemented by a strategy covering multiple approaches, which was very successful in including an ethnic and age focus. The interaction and coexistence achieved generated trust among the social stakeholders, which contributed to the reconstruction of the social fabric in some intervened areas, which is another co-benefit of the Project.

Conclusion 8 - Capacity-building and knowledge management. Capacities were developed on an individual scale, which included technical capacity-building but also a change in values, behaviours and attitudes in pursuit of the conservation of biodiversity. And on an organisational scale, as some organisations have a mandate and a team that can perform their duties. There is also a favourable environment resulting from the development of a policy framework that is aligned with the RSSEC and a public budget, to implement the planning instruments that the Project worked on. The Project produced and systematised information that was very useful for socio-ecosystem connectivity, including successful experience exchange tours.

Conclusion 9 - Social and environmental guarantees. There was no change in the assessment of the environmental and social risk of the Project during its implementation**.** No negative environmental or social effects resulting from the Project were detected either and it was found that the necessary measures were taken to avoid any negative collateral effects. However, it is unknown whether the mitigation measures and actions included in the social and environmental commitment Plan were completed, as the Project did not have access to them.

Conclusion 10 - Gender. After the Project Mid-Term Review, the Project actions were strengthened to include the gender perspective. Although the Project did not have an exclusive strategy for calling upon and promoting the participation of women, it did manage to increase and strengthen self-esteem, knowledge and the empowerment of some of the female participants. In addition, the RSSEC highlights women and young people as key stakeholders in its development and implementation, and its content shows the use of neutral language, in most cases. The Diploma in socio-ecosystem connectivity includes the gender perspective in the rights, identity and territory module.

Conclusion 11 - Sustainability. The sustainability of the Project achievements and benefits in the social, institutional, economic and environmental sphere is highly likely. The high degree of appropriation of the Project by the beneficiaries and partners, the formalisation of the achievements by means of declarations, plans and planning instruments is noteworthy, as is the availability of financing mechanisms for the continuity of important actions.

Conclusion 12 - Progress towards impact. It was found that the Project managed to make progress towards the impact foreseen, as indicated by the fulfilment of the targets set in the GEF tracking tool, some of which were doubled or quadrupled. It is worth highlighting the improved effectiveness of the management of the PA the Project intervened in, the large area with biodiversity conservation actions in productive systems and sectors, the restoration of riparian forests and sectorial policies that now include elements of biodiversity and socio-ecosystem connectivity. Other impacts were also generated in some participating families, such as the greater availability of healthy and varied food. Some people interviewed mentioned that the Project contributed to improving their quality of life.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 - For FAO, MADS, NNP and CAR. An area for improvement was identified in the design of targets of similar projects, which are related to the impact on government policy instruments. The Project did not manage to have an impact on the municipal land use schemes or plans due to the complexities that the updating and approval process of those instruments involved *per se*, in addition to the fact that specific consultations were lacking with the municipalities to analyse the feasibility of having an impact on those instruments. To this end, it is suggested that the necessary consultations be made with the authorities

responsible for approving or authorising government instruments, to determine the feasibility of the Project having an impact on these instruments, taking into account the government process to follow and the time that said process requires, and if possible, it is suggested that these authorities be included as co-financing partners of the Project, to establish a formal commitment for their fulfilment. This, in the same manner as occurred with the Regional Autonomous Corporations, which did manage to approve the planning instruments in the framework of the development of the Project in line with the RSSEC, despite the changes in government that arose.

Recommendation 2 - For MADS and NNP. One of the main contributions the Project made was the development of the Regional Strategy of Socio-Ecosystem Connectivity (RSSEC), which guided the Project activities and served as a reference for the alignment or the incorporation of the concept of connectivity, in some national, regional, departmental and municipal planning instruments. To ensure that the Strategy continues to be a reference for other areas of the Caribbean and can be replicated in other regions of the country, it is recommended that the RSSEC be formalised as an institutional instrument of MADS and NNP. Along these same lines, it is suggested that the MADS define and include in its policy the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach and with such promote the homogeneous adoption of the approach in the Regional, Departmental and Municipal Autonomous Corporations. In addition, it is recommended that the updating of the SIRAP-Caribe Action Plan be monitored to ensure it aligns with the NNP Institutional Strategic Plan and to give continuity and sustainability to the application of this approach in the region.

Recommendation 3 - For the GEF. Given that two protected areas did not fulfil their target for improved effectiveness in their management, as they did not have any tourism or they were not inhabited by indigenous groups, it is suggested that the GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) include guidelines on what to do in these cases so as not to affect the rating of protected areas that do not comply with these characteristics, which depend on the nature of each protected area and, where applicable, analyse the suitability of adjusting the tool.

Recommendation 4 - For FAO, MADS, NNP and CAR. On considering the areas for improvement found to better identify the co-financing during the Project formulation, and the low level of fulfilment of the co-financing recorded, it is suggested that the methodological guide given to the project partners be strengthened to improve their identification. An additional recommendation is to include a review phase of the balancing items proposed with the partners, to ensure that these are aligned with the project objectives and that insofar as possible their fulfilment is feasible, taking into account possible changes in government and in priorities, which may arise during the implementation of the projects.

Recommendation 5 - For MADS and NNP. It is recommended that the inclusion of the proposals prepared by the Project be monitored so that the socio-ecosystem connectivity approach is effectively incorporated into the municipal land use instruments and the sustainability of the Project achievements is therefore strengthened. In addition, and on considering the success in the execution of the sustainable production plans, it is recommended that the ten plans that were designed and implemented in the RIMD Lago Azul Los Manatíes and RIMD Swamp Complex of Bajo Sinú be included in the update of their respective management plans, or be formalised by means of some other institutional mechanism, to ensure the continuity of their application and the sustainability of their benefits.

Recommendation 6 - For FAO, MADS and NNP. Considering the importance of aligning the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity policies with the agricultural and aquaculture policies, it is suggested that an appealing strategy be included in future projects that is also aligned with the priorities of the agricultural sector to promote their more active involvement in these kinds of projects. This would also contribute to the harmonisation of the national policies between these sectors. In this same regard, it is proposed that the MADS present the highly successful outcomes of this Project, and particularly those related to the sustainable production plans, to the relevant authorities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in a high

level meeting, and partnerships can be proposed to give continuity and scale up the benefits obtained with this Project in the areas of agriculture, livestock and food security.

5. Good practices and lessons learned

5.1 Good practices

Practice 1. Mechanisms and processes that promote the effective participation of the parties involved. Overall, the different mechanisms and processes used for the involvement of the beneficiaries, which in turn included gender-sensitive, ethnicity and age approaches, are considered a good practice for effectively facilitating the participation of the stakeholders and the appropriation of the project, which contributed substantially to the sustainability of the achievements made. The mechanisms and processes used were: the consultation processes performed on the different groups of stakeholders, which include Free, Prior and Informed Consent; the formalisation of the participation of the stakeholders by means of the conclusion of *Agreements for the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources* and the establishment of contractual commitments and payments for the provision of services (e.g. the signing of Letters of agreement); the creation of communication collectives composed of young people; and training, among which the Field Schools are noteworthy.

Practice 2. Actions that facilitate and promote the involvement of the interested parties. The actions that facilitated and promoted the involvement of the stakeholders in the aforementioned mechanisms and processes are also considered good practices. These actions were: the appointment of promoters and technical facilitators who belonged to the community itself; training of the stakeholders on matters of administration and accounting, the organisation of cultural events and, in the case of indigenous communities, the use of their native language in the training provided and in the development of educational and informative materials.

Practice 3. The Field Schools were useful in encouraging cohesion and building trust among the project participants. With the inclusion of the strategy covering multiple approaches, which included the gender, age and ethnicity approaches, and how they brought people together, the Field Schools represent a good practice to encourage cohesion and trust among its participants and contribute with such to the construction of the social fabric in areas affected by armed conflicts.

Practice 4. The exchange of knowledge to identify the priorities and needs of the local communities. The facilitation of processes to exchange knowledge, among the Project technicians and the ancestral knowledge of the communities, were a key element for designing activities that would respond effectively to the priorities and needs of the local communities. The aforementioned favoured the replication and the maintenance of the actions over time, contributing to its sustainability.

Practice 5. The use of the diverse agroecosystems model. The application of the diverse agroecosystems model, which considers an appropriate balance between the conservation and sustainable use of resources, is considered a good practice that contributed substantially to the appropriation and success of the Project, and that also resulted in an improvement of the quality of life of some of the participating individuals and families.

Practice 6. The measurement of capacities, attitudes and practices to have quantitative information about the project achievements. Measuring the skills, attitudes and practices of the general population and of the stakeholders involved in these kinds of projects is considered very useful, as it provides quantitative information on the changes resulting from the intervention and makes it possible to affirm the development of capacities and sustainability, based on more elements.

5.2 Lessons learned

Lesson 1: Identification and monitoring of risks and proposal of adaptation measures as part of a M&E system. It is important to include a component for monitoring existing risks and identifying new risks in the monitoring and evaluation system of a project, which will enable their periodic analysis with

a greater frequency than that reported annually in the annual project progress reports (PPR). The aforementioned is useful for proposing adaptation measures that manage to mitigate them. In addition, it is important to include the risks linked to the changes in government, which could arise during the implementation of the Project, such as the risk of not fulfilling the co-financing pledged, as occurred in this Project. These risks are often ignored although they could have a substantial impact on the projects.

Lesson 2. Safeguarding and transfer of all of the project information when there are changes in its handling. Given that the Lead Technical Officer did not have access to the social and environmental commitment plan produced in the Project preparation phase (in response to the risk analysis performed), as it replaced the Lead Technical Officer that participated in that phase, it is vitally important that all of the information and documentation from the Project is effectively safeguarded so that it can be transferred in full to the new parties in charge of handling it, in this case to the Lead Technical Officer, for their reference, consultation and use during the implementation of the Project.

Lesson 3. A multiple approach strategy must ensure that the requirements of each approach are fulfilled. When the multiple approach strategy is applied in a project that includes the consideration of the gender-sensitive, ethnicity and age approaches, it is important to ensure that the announcements and communications comply with the specific requirements that each approach demands, and to avoid issuing general announcements or communications that blur those requirements. For example, as regards the matter of gender there was no specific appeal to promote the participation of women in the announcements the Project issued and, as a result, the women did not initially perceive any special motivation for participating in the Project.

Lesson 4. Search for new co-financiers given the low materialisation of the co-financing pledged. When problems arise in fulfilling the co-financing pledged, it is useful to find new co-financing partners who reduce the non-fulfilment gap.

Lesson 5: Extensive participation by stakeholders in the Steering Committee. Given that the Steering Committee was composed of 14 government entities it was very difficult to align the agendas to organise its meetings. However, the Project team and other stakeholders recognised that in the end it was positive due to the level of appropriation achieved among these stakeholders.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of people interviewed

Appendix 2 – GEF ratings table

Appendix 3 – Ratings table

Appendix 4 – Co-financing table

Appendix 5 – Annexes

The appendices are available in the Spanish version of this report.

Apéndice 1. Lista de personas entrevistadas

Apellido	Nombre	Institución y/o Organización	Cargo	Departamento
Ángel	Manuela	FAO Colombia	Representante Asistente y Oficial Nacional de Programas	Bogotá
Aguas	Carlos	Alcaldía de Montería	Ingeniero Forestal Oficina de ambiente y desarrollo sostenible	Córdoba
Angarita	Luz Elvira	Parques Nacionales Naturales -PNN	Directora Territorial Caribe PNN	Magdalena
Ange	Cristal	Fundación Herencia Ambiental Caribe	Directora General	Magdalena
Argel	Pedro	Coomudesa	Representante legal	Córdoba
Barbosa Camargo	Hernán Yecid	Parques Nacionales	Parques Nacionales	Bogotá
Barrios	Hernándo Ramón	Sistemas Locales de Áreas Protegidas (SILAP) de San Juan Nepomuceno y Montería	Miembro activo SILAP de San Juan Nepomuceno	Bolívar
Bermúdez	Laura	Oficina de asuntos Internacionales MADS	Asesora Oficina de Asuntos Internacionales	Bogotá
Bermúdez	Mario	Promotora de la Interconexión de los Gasoductos de la Costa Atlántica -PROMIGAS	Profesional Forestal	Atlántico
Borja	Samuel	Cabildo Mayor Indígena de Chigorodó	Gobernador Mayor	Antioquia
Canencia	Liliana	PMA	Senior Field Monitor	Córdoba
del Carmen Angulo	Nianza	PNN los Katios	Profesional	Chocó
Castellón	Carlos	Gobernación de Bolívar	Dirección de Planeación	Bolívar
Chaverra Álvarez	Kelly Cristina	Alcaldía de Unguía	Funcionaria Secretaria de Agricultura	Chocó
Coneo	Antonio	Asociación de Productores, Pescadores, Agricultores y Artesanos Agroecológicos de Purísima Córdoba - APROPAPUR	Socio Apropapur	Córdoba
Córdoba Machado	Germán	Corporación Autónoma Regional del Chocó - CODECHOCÓ	Coord. Regional Urabá	Chocó
Correa Ayram	Camilo	Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt	Investigador Instituto Humboldt	Bogotá
Correa Tapia	Mileida		Tesorera de la Junta Directiva	Córdoba
Cuesta Palacios	Rafael	Consejo Comunitario Mayor del Bajo Atrato - COCOMAUNGUÍA	Representante legal COCOMAUNGUIA	Chocó
Díaz	Milton Andres	Junta de Acción Comunal	Presidente JAC Porroso	Antioquia

		de Porroso		
Díaz Blanco	Arnold	AFROVISMAR – Asociación de Mangleros Afrodescendientes Víctimas de Rincón del Mar	Representante legal	Sucre
Domico Murillo	Nataly	Cabildo Mayor Indigena de Chigorodó	Asesora	Antioquia
Durango	Delimiro Simón	Gobernación de Córdoba	Funcionario de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico	Córdoba
Echeverri	Juliana	GIZ	Asesora	Bogotá
Erira	Leydy	FAO-Colombia	Profesional Monitoreo y Evaluación	Córdoba
Espinosa	Rafaél	Corporación Autónoma Regional de los Valles del Sinú y el San Jorge -CVS	Profesional especializado	Córdoba
Fajardo	Zoraida	PNUD	Coordinadora del proyecto GEF Bosque seco	Bogotá
García	Ana María	Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural -MADR	Profesional de Innovación, Desarrollo Tecnológico y Protección Sanitaria 2018	Bogotá
García	Hernando	Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos Alexander von Humboldt	Investigador Instituto Humboldt	Bogotá
Gómez	Rosario	Federación Nacional de Cultivadores de Palma de Aceite -FEDEPALMA	Coordinadora Proyecto GEF Palmero	Bogotá
Grondona	Eber	Asociación de Productores para el Desarrollo Comunitario de la Ciénaga Grande del Bajo Sinú - ASPROCIG	Equipo de apoyo	Córdoba
Guillén	Rosamira	Fundación Proyecto Tití	Directora General	Atlántico
Julio	Luis Eduardo	ASOPEMABE -Asociación protectora y restauradora del ecosistema de manglares del corregimiento de Berrugas	Representante legal	Sucre
León	Iván	FAO	Exoficial de Programas de FAO Colombia y actual Representante de la FAO en Nicaragua	Nicaragua
Lopez	Mario Orlando	Dirección de asuntos Ambientales Sectorial y Urbana	Asesor de la oficina	Bogotá
Lotero	Jorge	USAID – Programa Riqueza Natural		Bogotá
Lozano	Nelson	Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural -MADR	Director de Innovación, Desarrollo Tecnológico y Protección Sanitaria	Bogotá

Marriaga	Rafael	Representante Legal	Consejo Comunitario de Unguía – Cocomaunguía	Chocó
Martínez	Magno	Gobernación del Chocó	Profesional universitario. Secretaría de Desarrollo Económico y Recursos Naturales	Chocó
Mauricio	Carlos	Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza -WWF	Coordinador Proyecto GEF SINAP	Bogotá
Moncada	Dora	Asociación Nacional de Industriales -ANDI	Coordinadora de Asuntos Ambientales - Iniciativa Biodiversidad y Desarrollo	Bogotá
Mosquera	Eduardo	Alcaldía de Acandí	Secretario de Planeación e infraestructura	Chocó
Navarrete	Sandra	FAO-Colombia	Coordinadora Componente 2 – Aps (Dic/19) Profesional misional en Ecología	Bogotá
Navas	David	FAO-Colombia	Coordinador Componente 3 – Modelos PS	Córdoba
Ochoa	María Isabel	FAO-Colombia	Coordinadora General del Proyecto	Córdoba
Orozco	Alfonso	CIDEAS Departamentales y Municipales (Comités Interinstitucionales de Educación Ambiental)	Docente miembro CIDEA Municipal San Juan Nepomuceno	Bolívar
Orozco	Fernando	Parques Nacionales Naturales – SIRAP Caribe	Profesional SIG DTCA	Magdalena
Ortíz	Elizabeth	Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Urabá – CORPOURABA	Profesional Subdirección de Gestión	Antioquia
Ortiz	Hivy	FAO Santiago	Líder Técnico (LTO)	Santiago, Chile
Paredes Zuñiga	Vanesa	Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Urabá – CORPOURABA	Directora técnica Corpourabá	Antioquia
Perez	Luis	Corporación Autónoma Regional del Canal del Dique -CARDIQUE	Profesional delegado	Bolívar
Pineda	María Victoria	Agencia de Renovación del Territorio -ART	ART Córdoba	Córdoba
Polo Benavides	Edward	ASEAGROP – Asociación de Emprendedores Productores y	Secretario	Córdoba

		Comercializadores Agropecuarios de Tres Palmas		
Posada	Daniel	FAO-Colombia	Especialista en Comunicación y Educ. Amb.	Córdoba
Prias	Juan Pablo	Dirección de Bosques, Biodiversidad y Servicios Ecosistémicos	Profesional Especializado	Bogotá
Quintero	Paola	Empresa Generadora de Energía URRÁ	Asesor ambiental	Córdoba
Quiroga	María Eugenia	Cerromatoso	Líder ambiental	Córdoba
Restrepo	Erika	Gobernación de Antioquia	Secretaria de Medio Ambiente	Antioquia
Riggio	Valerio	FAO Roma	Unidad de Coordinación FAO-FMAM	Roma, Italia
Ruiz	Leopoldo	Asoproalsinú	Representante legal	Córdoba
Saltarín Jiménez	Elías Guillermo	ASICHAV – Asociación integral de campesinos de la vereda Hayita y Vecina del municipio de San Juan Nepomuceno	Integrante asociación	Bolívar
Serna Porroso	Marta	Campesina		Antioquia
Sierra-Correa	Paula Cristina	Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras - INVEMAR	Coordinador Investigación e Información para Gestión Marina y Costera, Subdirección Coordinación Científica	Magdalena
Suarez Padron	Isidro	Universidad de Córdoba	Profesional Universitario	Córdoba
Tordecilla	Orlando	FAO-Colombia	Coordinador Componente 1 – Articulación	Córdoba
Tordecilla Alcaláz	Neivis	Red de Colectivos de Comunicación- Red Conectados	Director Colectivo de comunicaciones Unguía	Chocó
Torres	Carlos	FAO-Colombia	Manejo financiero	Bogotá
Tovar Caraballo	Lorenza	APROPAPUR		Córdoba
Tuberquia	Jhon Jairo	Cabildo Mayor Indígena de Mutatá	Asesor del Cabildo	Antioquia
Vidal Pastrana	Carlos	PNN Paramillo	Profesional y encargado de la Dirección	Córdoba
Zambrano	Mónica	Universidad de Antioquia	Docente UdeA Urabá	Antioquia
Zamora	Alejandro	Corporación Autónoma Regional de Sucre -	Profesional especializado	Sucre

		CARSUCRE		
Zárate	Diego	Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza -WWF	Profesional Proyecto GEF SINAP	Bogotá

Apéndice 2. Tabla de valoración de los criterios del FMAM

Tabla de valoración de la FAO – FMAM	Valoración	Comentarios breves [15]
1) RELEVANCIA		
Referencia general al proyecto	S	El Proyecto sigue siendo relevante para el gobierno colombiano, la FAO y el FMAM. Además, cubrió necesidades y prioridades de comunidades locales.
2) LOGRO DE LOS RESULTADOS DEL PROYECTO (EFICACIA)		
Evaluación general de los resultados del proyecto	AS	El Proyecto rebasó con gran amplitud la mayoría de las metas, aunque muy pocas no se lograron cumplir (p.ej, incidir en planes de ordenamiento territorial municipales) el Proyecto influyó en otras áreas no previstas.
Resultado 1.1 El enfoque de Conectividades Socio-Ecosistémicas (CSE) ha sido incorporado en los instrumentos de política pública (planes de ordenamiento territorial y planificación regional) para mejorar la gestión y conservación de la biodiversidad en 5 departamentos (Bolívar, Sucre, Córdoba, Antioquía y Chocó) ubicados en el área occidental de la RCC.	S	Se aumentó la superficie con el enfoque de conectividades socioecosistémicas en el caribe colombiano. No obstante, no se logró incidir en los planes de ordenamiento territorial de los municipios intervenidos
Resultado 1.2. La población y los diferentes actores de los corredores de conectividad han desarrollado una mayor conciencia sobre la importancia de la Biodiversidad y de las CSE	AS	Se rebasaron las metas enfocadas en desarrollar una mayor conciencia sobre la importancia de la biodiversidad y las conectividades socioecosistémicas
Resultado 2.1. Ecosistemas marino-costeros, bosques, humedales y complejos cenagosos han mejorado su estatus de manejo y conservación	AS	Se mejoró el manejo y conservación de ecosistemas marino-costeros, bosques, humedales y complejos cenagosos. Particularmente, se rebasó de manera muy amplia la meta sobre superficie de áreas nuevas protegidas.
Resultado 3.1. Desarrollo de mosaicos de conservación y uso sostenible de los recursos naturales ha contribuido efectivamente a la conectividad socio-ecosistémica en la RCC	AS	Se conformaron 7 mosaicos de conservación, en lugar de 4, por lo que se cubrió una superficie mucho mayor a la planteada en la meta del Marco de resultados.
3) EFICIENCIA, IMPLEMENTACIÓN Y EJECUCIÓN DEL PROYECTO		
Calidad general de la implementación y gestión adaptativa (agencia de implementación)	S	A pesar del lento inicio y la subejecución presupuestaria identificada en el primer año, el Proyecto logró recuperarse y superar muchas de sus metas. Se adaptó a situaciones cambiantes, aunque no llevo un seguimiento efectivo de los riesgos.
Calidad de la ejecución (agencias de ejecución)	S	Las agencias ejecutoras participaron de manera activa en su mayoría, mostraron una alta apropiación del Proyecto, aunque no todas lograron materializar el cofinanciamiento comprometido.
Eficiencia (incluidas la relación coste-eficacia y la puntualidad)	S	Aunque la fecha de término del Proyecto tuvo que ser extendida en dos ocasiones, la última debido a la pandemia por

[15] Incluir hipervínculo para las secciones relevantes del informe

		COVID 19, los logros alcanzados rebasaron las metas esperadas y se registraron cobeneficios y buenas prácticas.
4) MONITOREO Y EVALUACIÓN		
Calidad general del MyE	S	El Proyecto implementó un sistema de seguimiento muy detallado de las acciones y de los indicadores del Marco de resultados. No obstante, faltó un componente que permitiera el análisis y seguimiento de los riesgos identificados y la identificación de riesgos nuevos.
Diseño del MyE al inicio del proyecto	S	La propuesta del sistema de seguimiento y evaluación planteada en la reunión de arranque fue bastante detallada y robusta.
Plan de implementación del MyE	S	El plan cumplió con los requisitos del FMAM y se cumplió casi en su totalidad.
5) SOSTENIBILIDAD		
Sostenibilidad general	P	Se identificó una alta apropiación por parte de los/as beneficiarios/as; las colaboraciones con otras organizaciones no gubernamentales y con el sector privado permitirán la continuidad de acciones en las zonas intervenidas. Asimismo, la inclusión de acciones alineadas en los planes de desarrollo e institucionales de las CAR, los departamentos y algunos municipios también contribuirán a la sostenibilidad de los beneficios alcanzados por el Proyecto.
6) IMPLICACIÓN DE LAS PARTES INTERESADAS		
Calidad general de la implicación de las partes interesadas	AS	El Proyecto logró una amplia participación de actores pertenecientes a diferentes sectores en su implementación, como parte de una estrategia de multienfoque que incluyó el género, la interculturalidad y la intergeneracionalidad, garantizando un alto nivel de apropiación del enfoque de conectividad socioecosistémica.

Apéndice 3 – Tabla de calificación[16]

RESULTADOS Y PRODUCTOS DEL PROYECTO

Se califican los resultados del proyecto en función de la medida en que se han logrado los objetivos. Se utiliza una escala de seis puntos para calificar los resultados generales:

Calificación	***Descripción***
Altamente Satisfactorio (AS)	*«El nivel de resultados logrado supera claramente las expectativas o no ha habido deficiencias».*
Satisfactorio (S)	*«El nivel de resultados logrado es el esperado o no ha habido deficiencias, o estas han sido mínimas».*
Moderadamente Satisfactorio (MS)	*«El nivel de resultados logrado es más o menos el esperado o las deficiencias han sido moderadas».*
Moderadamente Insatisfactorio (MI)	*«De alguna manera el nivel de resultados logrado es inferior al esperado o ha habido deficiencias significativas».*
Insatisfactorio (I)	*«El nivel de resultados logrado es sustancialmente inferior al esperado o ha habido grandes deficiencias».*
Altamente Insatisfactorio (AI)	*«El nivel de resultados logrado es insignificante o ha habido deficiencias muy graves».*
Imposible de Evaluar (IE)	*«La información disponible no permite realizar una evaluación del nivel de resultados logrado».*

IMPLEMENTACIÓN Y EJECUCIÓN DEL PROYECTO

Calificación	***Descripción***
Altamente Satisfactorio (AS)	*No ha habido deficiencias y la calidad de la **implementación/ ejecución** supera las expectativas.*
Satisfactorio (S)	*No ha habido deficiencias o estas fueron menores y la calidad de la **implementación/ejecución** cumple las expectativas.*
Moderadamente Satisfactorio (MS)	*Ha habido algunas deficiencias y la calidad de la **implementación/ejecución** cumple más o menos las expectativas.*
Moderadamente Insatisfactorio (MI)	*Ha habido deficiencias significativas y de alguna manera la calidad de la **implementación/ejecución** es inferior a lo esperado.*
Insatisfactorio (I)	*Ha habido grandes deficiencias y la calidad de la **implementación/ejecución** es sustancialmente inferior a lo esperado.*
Altamente Insatisfactorio (AI)	*Ha habido deficiencias muy graves en la calidad de la **implementación/ejecución.***
Imposible de Evaluar (IE)	***La información disponible no permite realizar una evaluación de la calidad de la implementación/ejecución.***

[16] Ver las instrucciones facilitadas en el Anexo 2: Escalas de valoración de las «Directrices para las agencias del FMAM para la realización de Evaluaciones Finales de Grandes Proyectos», abril 2017.

MONITOREO Y EVALUACIÓN

Se evalúa la calidad del MyE del proyecto en materia de:

i. Diseño

ii. Implementación

Calificación	***Descripción***
Altamente Satisfactorio (AS)	*No ha habido deficiencias y la calidad del* ***diseño implementación del MyE*** *supera las expectativas.*
Satisfactorio (S)	*No ha habido deficiencias o estas fueron menores y la calidad del* ***diseño/implementación del MyE*** *cumple las expectativas.*
Moderadamente Satisfactorio (MS)	*Ha habido algunas deficiencias y la calidad del* ***diseño/implementación del MyE*** *cumple más o menos las expectativas.*
Moderadamente Insatisfactorio (MI)	*Ha habido deficiencias significativas y la calidad del* ***diseño/implementación del MyE*** *es de alguna manera inferior a lo esperado.*
Insatisfactorio (I)	*Ha habido grandes deficiencias y la calidad del* ***diseño/implementación*** *del MyE es sustancialmente inferior a lo esperado.*
Altamente Insatisfactorio (AI)	*Ha habido deficiencias muy graves en el* ***diseño/implementación del MyE.***
Imposible de Evaluar (IE)	La información disponible no permite realizar una evaluación de la calidad del **diseño/implementación del MyE.**

SOSTENIBILIDAD

Se evalua la sostenibilidad teniendo en cuenta los riesgos relacionados con la sostenibilidad de los resultados financieros, sociopolíticos, institucionales y medioambientales del proyecto. El evaluador podrá igualmente tener en cuenta otros riesgos que podrían afectar a la sostenibilidad. La sostenibilidad general se calificará utilizando una escala de cuatro puntos:

Calificación	***Descripción***
Probable (P)	*No existe riesgo para la sostenibilidad o este es mínimo.*
Moderadamente Probable (MP)	*Existen riesgos moderados para la sostenibilidad.*
Moderadamente Improbable (MI)	*Existen riesgos significativos para la sostenibilidad.*
Improbable (I)	*Existen riesgos muy graves para la sostenibilidad.*
Imposible de Evaluar (IE)	*Es imposible evaluar la incidencia y magnitud esperadas de los riesgos para la sostenibilidad.*

Apéndice 4 – Tabla de cofinanciación del FMAM

Nombre del cofinanciador	Tipo de cofinanciador [1]	Cofinanciación al inicio del proyecto (Importe confirmado por el equipo de diseño del proyecto en el momento de la aprobación por el Director Ejecutivo del FMAM) (en USD)			Cofinanciación materializada a la fecha enero-2021. (en USD)		
		En especie	En efectivo	Total	En especie	En efectivo	Total
MADS	Gobierno nacional	773,058		773,058	1,373,799		1,373,799
MADR	Gobierno nacional	740,010		740,010			
PNN (DTCA)	Gobierno nacional	2,726,637	898,559	3,625,196	3002900	1000068	4,002,968
PNN (DTPA)	Gobierno nacional	245,806	123,335	369,141	54,505		54,505
SIRAP CARIBBEAN	Gobierno nacional	64,134		64,134	49,334		49,334
Government of Antioquia	Gobierno local		2,073,642	2,073,642	666,895	2,273,688	2,940,583
Government of Bolivar	Gobierno local	3,238,108	5,405,675	8,643,783		7,547,464	7,547,464
Government of Chocó	Gobierno local	452,977		452,977	43,332	79,973	123,306
Government of Cordoba	Gobierno local		10,218,122	10,218,122			
Government of Sucre	Gobierno local	11,430,960		11,430,960			
CORPOURABÁ	Gobierno local	863,344	3,034,040	3,897,384	125,477	777,508	902,985
CVS	Gobierno local	202,070		202,070	532,807		532,807
CARDIQUE	Gobierno local	1,117,415	1,258,017	2,375,432	5,135,239		5,135,239
CODECHOCÓ	Gobierno local	500,000	260,000	760,000			
CARSUCRE	Gobierno local	592,007	4,549,415	5,141,422	362,625	3,582,616	3,945,242
Herencia Ambiental Caribe	Sector privado					40,000	40,000
Fundación Proyecto Titi	Sector privado					15,000	15,000
ASPROCIG	Sector privado				20,000		20,000
Apropapur	Sector privado				5,000		5,000
Cabildo Mayor Indígena Mutatá	Sector privado				15,000		15,000
Cabildo Mayor Indígena Chigorodó	Sector privado				20,000		20,000
Cocomaunguía	Sector privado				15,000		15,000
INVEMAR	Otro – Investigación				1,856	108,240	110,097

PROMIGAS	Sector privado						
FAO	Otro		380,000	380,000	433,000		433,000
FONDO ACCIÓN	Otro				602,898		602,898
Total general		22,946,526	28,200,805	51,147,331	12,459,669	15,424,557	27,884,226

Apéndice 6 - Anexos

Anexo 1. Cuadro de efectividad, que detalla el cumplimiento de las metas del Proyecto.