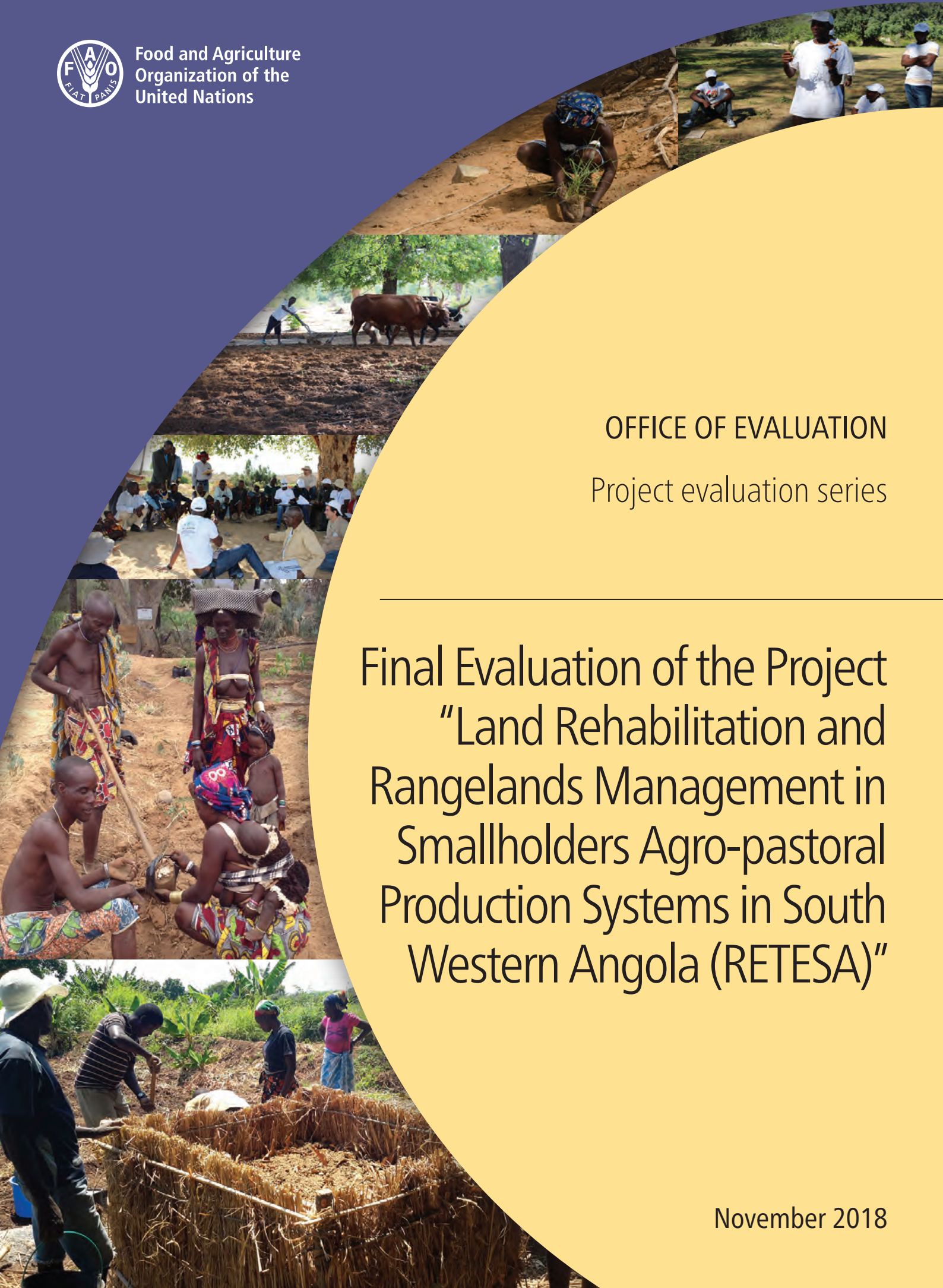




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Project evaluation series

Final Evaluation of the Project “Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management in Smallholders Agro-pastoral Production Systems in South Western Angola (RETESA)”

November 2018

PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES

**Final Evaluation of the Project "Land
Rehabilitation and Rangelands
Management in Smallholders Agro-
pastoral Production Systems in
South Western Angola (RETESA)"**

**GCP/ANG/048/GFF
GEF ID 4720**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION
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Acronyms and abbreviations

APFS	Agro-Pastoral Field Schools
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAS	Social Support Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISCED	Higher Institute of Educational Sciences
RETESA	Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management in Smallholders Agro-pastoral Production Systems in South Western Angola Project
SLM	Sustainable Land Management

Executive Summary

1. This report presents the findings and conclusions of the independent Final Evaluation of the "Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management in Smallholders Agro-pastoral Production Systems in South Western Angola (RETESA) (GCP/ANG/048/GFF)" project. The project's overall strategy aims to address the lack of capacities at national, provincial and local level to prevent and revert land degradation by introducing and adopting participatory approaches to identify and rehabilitate degraded areas in a participatory manner coordinated among the multiple stakeholders.
2. The project was approved in 2014 and its execution is planned until April 2018. The project has a total budget of USD 20 304 636, of which 15 percent (USD 3 013 636) was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the remaining 85 percent was co-funded by local partners.
3. This Final Evaluation serves the dual purpose of accountability and learning. It analysed the project's design and implementation process, as well as its outcomes and relevance for the beneficiaries and for the national needs and priorities. This Final Evaluation also aimed to document lessons that make it possible to inform future actions taking into account the upscaling, replication or monitoring of the project outcomes. The users of this Final Evaluation will be GEF, beneficiaries and national counterparts in Angola, project partners and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) itself.
4. The main Evaluation Questions (EQ) were:
 - EQ1.** Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all beneficiaries and other stakeholders?¹
 - EQ2.** In what way did the modes of intervention, institutional structure and partnerships, financial, technical and operational resources and procedures help or hinder the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes?
 - EQ3.** How effective was the project in achieving its objectives (overall, development and environmental) and expected outcomes? Which outcomes, expected or unexpected, were achieved in the different project components?
 - EQ4.** To what extent did the project design include aspects of gender equality and contribute to the empowerment of women through its implementation?
 - EQ5.** What was the project's approach for working with local communities in relation to rangeland management and sustainable land management practices, and to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to the project?

¹ Taking into account revisions and adjustments, in accordance with the Mid-term Review recommendations.

EQ6. How sustainable are the outcomes achieved by the project in environmental, technical, social, financial and institutional terms?

EQ7. What are the key lessons that can be learned from the design, implementation and sustainability of the project?

5. This evaluation took into account the project's whole period of execution (April 2014 to April 2018), although it focuses in particular on the period following the mid-term review (July 2016 to April 2018). The evaluation covered the whole geographical area of the project (provinces of Huíla, Namibe and Benguela) and analysed the four components of the project: Component 1 - Rangeland management and planning; Component 2 - Rangeland rehabilitation through best range and herd management practices; Component 3 - Mainstreaming sustainable land management (SLM) into agricultural and environmental sector policies and programmes; Component 4 - Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.
6. This Final Evaluation was completed in accordance with the guidelines, norms and procedures of GEF and FAO for this type of exercise. It adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the whole process, involving the project team, government institutions at central, provincial and municipal level, the Steering Committee, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders as well as FAO itself in Angola and Rome. The main findings of the evaluation are summarized below, followed by the recommendations.

Main findings²

EQ1. Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all the beneficiaries and other stakeholders? Highly Satisfactory.

7. The project strategy responded to Angola's priorities in terms of sustainable land management and the project was aligned with the priorities identified in the main national policies existing in this matter. The project was also coherent and in line with the FAO Strategic Objective (SO2), the FAO Strategic Framework for Africa, the United Nations Strategy in Angola (UNPAF, 2015-2019), the FAO strategy in the country (CPF 2013-2017) and the GEF strategy in relation to "Land Degradation". The project's

² The rating of the outcomes was applied in accordance with the classification of GEF (available at <https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/gef-guidelines-te-fsp-2017.pdf>):

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no flaws in the outcomes.

Satisfactory (S): The level of outcomes achieved was expected and/or there were no small flaws.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Level of outcomes achieved more or less in accordance with that expected and/or there were moderate flaws.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): Level of outcomes achieved slightly below that expected and/or there were substantial flaws.

Unsatisfactory (U): Level of outcomes achieved substantially below that expected and/or there were great flaws.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): Only an insignificant level of outcomes achieved and/or there were great flaws.

Impossible to Evaluate (IE): The information available does not enable an evaluation of the level of outcomes achieved.

strategy was suitable for the training needs of the public institutions by means of the introduction of innovative methods and was also suitable for responding to the needs of the beneficiaries promoting their involvement in a participatory manner. The project team adequately managed the risks, which were reviewed throughout the implementation period. The project had an adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that made it possible to gather information systematically in the field and produce reports in different formats and in good time.

EQ2. In what way did the modes of intervention, institutional structure and partnerships, financial, technical and operational resources and procedures help or hinder the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes? Satisfactory.

8. The project had an institutional structure appropriate to the national capacities that facilitated decision-making, coordination and execution of the project in the field. The Steering Committee was an important body for deepening the dialogue, sharing information, answering questions, raising awareness and motivating stakeholders, delivering accountability and providing support in the definition of the project's strategy. Implementation of the project was delayed in its first year but it recovered well from the second year onwards, showing satisfactory progress in the completion of activities and achievement of outputs. The FAO Representation in Angola provided administrative, organizational and financial management support to the project. It also played a very important role in the institutional relationship with the Ministries at central level. The teams from Rome, namely the Lead Technical Officer and the FAO-GEF unit, provided ongoing technical support throughout the execution of the project. At the time of the final evaluation, the project reported a financial implementation rate of 95 percent, a GEF grant disbursement rate of 100 percent and a partner co-financing rate of over 100 percent.

EQ3. How effective was the project in achieving its objectives (overall, development and environmental) and expected outcomes? Which outcomes, expected or unexpected, were achieved in the different project components?

9. **Evaluation of the overall objective – Satisfactory.** There is evidence that shows that the capacities of the communities were reinforced by adopting the fertilization, irrigation and seeding techniques that are more sustainable for the agricultural systems, and at the level of managing the rangelands (particularly reserve areas) that are contributing to the project's overall objective.
10. **Evaluation of the environmental objective - Moderately satisfactory.** The evidence in relation to the environmental objective is less visible given that it relates to more long-term outcomes. For example, the direct rehabilitation of rangelands with plantations of local forage crops as well as the recuperation of rangelands due to the effect of reserve areas takes a significant amount of time to generate effects on the land.
11. **Evaluation of the development objective – Satisfactory.** There is evidence of an improvement in the livelihoods of the beneficiary families as a result of this project (e.g. human capital, social capital, physical capital, natural capital), and the adoption of practices and activities that generate income and that contribute to achieving the development objective.

Outcome 1.1 - Compared to the start of the project, there is now more capacity and knowledge available for the participatory planning of mainstreamed land management at national, provincial and local level. Close to 200 people received training on different innovative methods (LADA, SHARP, GIS, GreenNTD). The project made a significant effort, in terms of access to information and knowledge through the provision of manuals, methodological guides and technical reports in appropriate formats, which are important tools for supporting the work of specialists and decision makers. There is little evidence that the public institutions are going to introduce these methods in their daily work routines and practices given that this process entails ongoing monitoring, by learning by experience, which the project does not have any more time available to support. Six land development plans were negotiated and agreed upon. However, this activity was performed and completed very close to the end of the project, which may undermine the effectiveness of the outcome and the changes in the land.

Outcome 2.1 - The methodology of the Agro-pastoral Fiel Schools (APFS) was central to this project as it turned out to be instrumental for working with the communities and introducing new production, management, community planning and rehabilitation practices based on the ecosystem. When monitoring the Mid-term Review, the Steering Committee found it appropriate to reduce the initial number of APFS from 70 to 35, in order to increase the quality rather than quantity. The Final Evaluation found that of these, 15 APFS are at an advanced stage (43 percent), 12 are at a medium-term stage (34 percent) and 8 are at a delayed stage (23 percent). The APFS constitute a complex method that require significant time to gain the trust of the communities, implement changes in behaviour and work routines and promote social transformation. This is difficult to achieve in a project of such limited duration. Despite the limited amount of functional APFS, there is clear evidence of autonomous use and appropriation of agricultural techniques, animal production and improvement of livelihoods as a result of the project's intervention.

Outcome 2.2 - The project introduced innovative methods that were well received by the communities: i) participatory selection of species for the rehabilitation of agro-pastoral ecosystems; ii) participatory rehabilitation of ecosystems with the support of the community; and iii) verification and experimentation systems for adaptability and palatability. By means of these participatory methods, it was possible to rehabilitate over 750 hectares of rangelands, establish almost 30 000 hectares of rangeland reserve areas (*mise en défense*) and rehabilitate 28 water points. Using participatory methods it was possible to make progress with the production of plant seedlings (forage and fruit plants) at two levels: communities and agronomic stations. There was a high level of interest in producing these species, taking into account the potential they offer for additional income in the communities, as well as the benefits of the production of forage. As for the rehabilitation areas (*mise en défense*), the practical effects on the land and particularly on the rangelands can only be appreciated in the medium- and long-term. However, based on the interviews and field visits, the evaluation found that the communities and public institutions are committed to continuing with this activity and monitoring the reserve areas, making it possible to recuperate some rangelands.

Outcome 2.3 - Few interventions were carried out in relation to reinforcing value chains, therefore limiting the scope and effectiveness of this outcome (only developed the production of mumpeke cosmetic oil as an activity that generates income and some training on entrepreneurship and milk processing). Investment in training livestock handlers was relevant and there is evidence of benefits for the communities, including

partnership with public veterinary services. The partnership with the Social Support Fund (FAS) was relevant, and included training on micro-entrepreneurship and the preparation of initiatives for generating income. The enhancement of ethnoveterinary medicine, based on traditional knowledge and on partnerships with the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences (ISCED) was relevant and can open-up new opportunities for the communities to tackle animal health issues. However, these activities only took place close to the end of the project and, as such, there was not enough time to deepen their practical application and obtain greater effectiveness in the interventions. The partnership with the herbarium of Lubango, associated with ISCED, was decisive in increasing access to information and the use of ethnoveterinary procedures, capitalizing on the traditional knowledge of the communities.

Outcome 3.1 - The proposal of a “National Policy for Sustainable Land Management” was concluded and widely discussed at national level, but there is no evidence that it will be approved in the short-term. The project managed to raise greater awareness of the need to reinforce responsible governance of tenure of land (VGGT) and the decision-makers became aware of the need to adapt national policies and legislation to the commitments taken on globally. However, there is still little evidence of the mainstreaming of sustainable land management in projects of the Multisectoral Commission for the Environment (CMA) or in other existing coordination and dialogue structures.

Outcome 3.2 - The project's contribution to the reinforcement of governance and dialogue among several stakeholders and different sectors of the Government was very limited. Only preliminary meetings were held with the FAO Land Tenure team and AGPM for the creation of an online forum. A proposal was prepared for a website but it is not operating yet.

Outcome 3.3 - No government investment plans were prepared to reinforce sustainable land management. Instead, the project established negotiations with the donor community (European Commission, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and GEF) and at the moment there are good prospects for channelling resources to maintain the continuity of the RETESA project outcomes.

Outcome 4.1 - The project had a monitoring and evaluation system in place, which provided for the systematic collection and distribution of information about the progress made, in good time. An effort was made to disseminate manuals and methodological guides in appropriate formats. Good practices were systematized and disseminated in different formats.

EQ4. To what extent did the project design include aspects of gender equality and contribute to the empowerment of women through its implementation? Moderately unsatisfactory.

12. The project design did not include an adequate gender analysis. The implementation of the project was limited to fulfilling and monitoring gender matters, based on what the project document requested, without trying to improve its initial design. In general, the project provided equal opportunities to women (e.g. 43 percent of women beneficiaries of the APFS), although no specific strategy was prepared for this matter. No negative consequences or effects on women were reported in any of the project's components. Separating the indicators by gender was carried out on very few occasions.

EQ5. What was the project's approach for working with local communities in relation to rangeland management and sustainable land management practices, and to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to the project? Satisfactory.

13. The project adopted an inclusive and participatory approach with the communities. There is evidence that the communities are satisfied with the project activities and with their involvement in the different stages of implementation. The communities are more confident and motivated, and they feel like stakeholders participating in the project's strategy. The project promoted the active participation of different stakeholders but the level of appropriation by government institutions was low throughout the whole project, particularly at provincial level. The project had several difficulties making agreements in the field with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and therefore the establishment of these partnerships, as initially planned, was not fully achieved. However, the project generated very positive synergies and complementarities with other stakeholders that were not planned in the Project Document, namely the PIRAN and IRCEA projects implemented by FAO, with the Social Support Fund and the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences.

EQ6. How sustainable are the outcomes achieved by the project in environmental, technical, social, financial and institutional terms? Moderately satisfactory.

14. Given the current economic and financial situation, there are few grounds for an increase in public investment to give continuity to the project's outcomes. However, there are good prospects for the donor community to ensure their continuity, namely through new projects in the short-term (European Commission, GEF, IFAD) In general, public institutions showed an interest in maintaining the consistency of the project's outcomes. However, it is more likely that this continuity will take place through the communities themselves, in the scope of the APFS, particularly those that are at a more advanced stage of the methodological process. Despite the progress made in recent years in terms of land legislation, in general, the legislative and public policy framework in Angola still needs to be strengthened to more clearly include the ecosystem rehabilitation and sustainable management aspect. The impact of climate change continues to be very visible in the south of Angola. It is likely that this region will continue to be affected by extreme climate phenomena, namely prolonged droughts, which may compromise some of the project's outcomes.

EQ7. What are the key lessons that can be learned from the project's design, implementation of outcomes and sustainability?

15. There are eight lessons that can be learned from this project:
- The implementation of capacity-building processes requires a substantial amount of time, which may exceed the duration of the project.
 - The projects must cover a realistic geographical range of areas.
 - The projects must consider less ambitious targets for the outputs, particularly in terms of the implementation of the APFS.

- The involvement of local governments in the decision-making processes of the projects is important, as well as the measures that favour appropriation by the national institutions.
- The APFS need a minimum set of initial resources to operate sufficiently.
- The publications (guides, manuals, reports, etc.) produced and distributed to the public institutions must be suitable for their context, as well as easy and practical to use.
- The integration of specialists from public institutions in the local technical teams of the projects must be prioritized over hiring external personnel.
- The projects' design must include a suitable gender analysis and this approach must be applied consistently throughout execution.

Conclusions

16. On the basis of evidence collected during the evaluation process, the following main conclusions were identified, which were organized in the order of the evaluation questions. This order does not imply any order of priority.

EQ1. Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all beneficiaries and other stakeholders?

Conclusion 1. The project was relevant given the context of the country and its geographical area of intervention, as the desertification and progression of arid and semi-arid areas are visible, particularly in the south of the country, and negatively affect the livelihoods of the populations and contribute towards substantial environmental and natural changes. The project was coherent and aligned with the main instruments of public policy in Angola regarding environmental, development and poverty reduction matters. It was also coherent with FAO and GEF objectives and strategies. In general, the project's strategy and actions contributed to addressing the lack of capacities at national, provincial and local level to prevent and revert land degradation by introducing and adopting participatory approaches to identify and rehabilitate degraded areas in a participatory and coordinated manner among the multiple stakeholders.

EQ2. In what way did the modes of intervention, institutional structure and partnerships, financial, technical and operational resources and procedures help or hinder the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes?

Conclusion 2. In general, the institutional structure of the project was suitable, and facilitated decision-making, decentralized management and coordination processes. It also had a good dynamic with the Steering Committee. However, it was found that there was a low degree of appropriation by the partner government institutions, as these had assumed a passive position, limiting themselves to waiting for the project team to fund and implement the activities. The capacities and size of the team were suitable for the project requirements.

Conclusion 3. In terms of performance it was found that there were very substantial delays in starting the project in the first year, namely in terms of the selection and establishment of the team, assembly of the institutional structure and logistical conditions of the project. Consequently, the initiation of activities in the field was delayed. However, the project recovered well in the execution of the activities planned from the second year onwards when these difficulties were overcome. At the time of the final evaluation, the project reported a financial implementation rate of 95 percent, a GEF grant disbursement rate of 100 percent and a partner co-financing rate of over 100 percent.

EQ3. How effective was the project in achieving its objectives (overall, development and environmental) and expected outcomes? Which outcomes, expected or unexpected, were achieved in the different project components?

Conclusion 4. In terms of Component 1, a substantial number of people were trained in different methods to analyse land degradation and the climate resilience of the communities. The institutions are interested in adopting these methodologies and increasing the capacity and knowledge available for the participatory planning of mainstreamed land management, but there are few signs that the public institutions are going to introduce these methods in their daily work routines and practices. The six land development plans negotiated and agreed upon with the project's support are important and garnered a lot of interest from national authorities and beneficiaries.

Conclusion 5. In terms of Component 2, the APFS method was very well received by public institutions and beneficiaries. However, the number of APFS installed was much lower than that initially planned (reduction from 70 to 35, and of these only 15 are at a fully functional and advanced stage). Despite the limited number of functional APFS, it is concluded that this method was useful and contributed to introducing new community work methods, resulting in clear evidence of an improvement in agricultural techniques, animal production and the livelihoods of the communities. This component also emphasizes the rehabilitation of rangelands based on the ecosystem and its participatory management. The project introduced innovative methods that were well received by the community. It was possible to rehabilitate over 750 hectares of rangelands, establish almost 30 000 hectares of rangeland reserve areas (*mise en défense*) and rehabilitate 28 water points. However, these are social and natural transformation processes that require time to consolidate. Lastly, the enhancement of ethnoveterinary medicine, based on traditional knowledge and on partnerships with the ISCED was relevant and can open-up new opportunities for the communities to tackle animal health issues.

Conclusion 6. In terms of Component 3, the project made significant progress as for the preparation of a proposal for a sustainable land management policy although this has not been approved yet. However, the other actions of this component were much less effective given that the project's contribution to reinforcing the governance and dialogue among multiple stakeholders and different sectors of the Government was very limited and no governmental investment plan was prepared in order to reinforce sustainable land management.

Conclusion 7. In terms of Component 4, the project's monitoring and evaluation procedures were suitable and the project managed to disseminate manuals and methodological guides, and systematize good practices that were disseminated among the relevant stakeholders.

Conclusion 8. In general, the scope of the objectives was satisfactory, namely in terms of the overall and development objectives. It was found that there is evidence that shows that the capacities of the communities were reinforced by adopting the fertilization, irrigation and seeding techniques that are more sustainable for the agricultural systems, and at the level of managing the rangelands, particularly reserve areas (overall objective) and that there are signs that the livelihoods of the beneficiary families have improved (development objective). However, evidence in relation to the environmental objective is less visible given that it relates to more long-term outcomes.

EQ4. To what extent did the project design include aspects of gender equality and contribute to the empowerment of women through its implementation?

Conclusion 9. The project design is limited in terms of the mainstreaming of gender matters, as there is no sufficient strategy in place to this end. Throughout the implementation of the project, no significant efforts were observed to be made by the project team in terms of the gender matters, with the exception of the separation of some quantitative data by gender (e.g. participants of training, members of the APFS, etc.).

EQ5. What was the project's approach for working with local communities in relation to rangeland management and sustainable land management practices, and to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to the project?

Conclusion 10. The project had some difficulties in establishing agreements and partnerships as planned in the initial Project Document, but this limitation was overcome by means of strong synergies and complementarities that were established with other actions in progress in the field, namely implemented by FAO. With regard to the communities, the project adopted an inclusive and participatory approach, which translated into a high degree of satisfaction among the communities with the project's activities and in their active involvement in the different stages of implementation.

EQ6. How sustainable are the outcomes achieved by the project in environmental, technical, social, financial and institutional terms?

Conclusion 11. In financial terms, it is very unlikely that in the next few years there will be an increase in public investment in this area, given the country's current economic and financial situation. In technical terms, it is observed that, in general, public institutions have more training in and more knowledge about the approaches introduced for the management and planning of environmental matters. In terms of environmental sustainability, it is likely that this will be guaranteed, namely by the action of the communities themselves, given that they are going to adopt methods, practices and technologies that are more suited to the conservation of the soil, water

and the management of the rangelands. However, the impact of climate change continues to be very visible in the south of Angola.

Recommendations

17. On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this final evaluation, seven recommendations are proposed below that may inform future GEF-FAO projects taking into account the upscaling, replication or monitoring of the RETESA outcomes:

Recommendation 1. It is recommended that FAO, as an implementing Organization, provide immediate monitoring and encourage the different partners to comply with the plan of action agreed upon for the project outcome sustainability strategy (see Annex 9). These actions were agreed upon in the last meeting of the Steering Committee in March 2018. They contained a set of steps to guarantee a minimum monitoring of the main outcomes, in order to guarantee their sustainability. Each action proposal is identified with the respective responsible parties. The timing must be maintained to make progress with this plan.

Recommendation 2. Future GEF projects must be of a longer duration, for example six to eight years instead of three to four years, or consider the possibility of having two project phases. This is particularly important in projects that focus on building capacities and promoting institutional changes for planning and management. This will make it possible for public institutions to perform more ongoing monitoring, consolidating the knowledge transferred and the practices/methods introduced. This is also particularly important in the case of projects that include aspects regarding the reinforcement of legislation and public policies, taking into account the time required for national governments to approve laws and policies.

Recommendation 3. Future GEF/FAO projects must focus on the establishment, by means of targeted training, of national specialists in the area of the methods that they aim to introduce (e.g. APFS, LADA, GreeNTD, etc.). The aim is to build capacities in the country, by means of the training/certification of specialists with international training, capable of replicating the training after the projects are over. In this manner, subsequent projects that use these methods do not need to depend on the systematic hiring of international specialists/consultants to perform the training. In practical terms, the projects must allocate resources to this end under the items "travel" or "international training" geared towards international certification.

Recommendation 4. Future GEF/FAO projects must be designed based on realistic diagnoses that show the real existing capacities at national level, particularly at the level of local institutions. This must preferably be carried out during the project design phase. It is essential to know what the real capacities are for the institutions to collaborate/cooperate with the projects, in financial, human, logistical and transportation terms. This avoids the risk of designing projects based on the assumption that public institutions have the capacity to monitor/execute the actions, but then do not have any means to such end (e.g. money for fuel, available vehicles, appropriate facilities, etc.).

Recommendation 5. Future GEF and FAO projects that cover the topics of production and dissemination of knowledge must provide effective partnerships/collaborations with universities and research centres existing in the countries. This must be achieved by means of a prior analysis of the existing institutions and their capacities (stakeholders' analysis) during the design phase. Subsequently, from the outset contracts/agreements with these institutions for the performance of the project activities must be provided. This aims to promote the generation of knowledge in conjunction with national researchers/specialists, and to contribute to reinforcing the services to extend research and development (R&D) at country level.

Recommendation 6. Future GEF/FAO projects must also include formal education (secondary and higher education) as beneficiaries of the capacity-building processes, to complement the exclusive training of specialists from public institutions (municipal services, agricultural, veterinary and environmental services). In practice the aim is for secondary and higher education students to also benefit from the training actions and therefore have access to information on the innovative methods introduced by the projects. In the short-term, they will be the potential public institution specialists. Apart from the completion of training geared towards this target audience, future GEF/FAO projects must also focus on the capacity-building of the countries by adjusting or reviewing the curricula of the courses offered in schools, in order to include the new methods.

1 Introduction

1. This report presents the findings and conclusions of the independent Final Evaluation (FE) of the "Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management in Smallholders Agro-pastoral Production Systems in South Western Angola (RETESA) (GCP/ANG/048/GFF)" project. The Final Evaluation is an obligatory procedure of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for full-sized GEF projects. An external and independent consultant managed this exercise from February to April 2018.
2. The RETESA project is a joint effort between the Ministry of Environment (MINAMB), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MINAGRIF), the Ministry of Social Action, Family and the Promotion of Women (MASFAMU) through the National Technical Unit for the Fight against Poverty through its Integrated Municipal Programme for Rural Development and the Fight against Poverty (PMIDRCP), and the Provincial Governments of Namibe, Huíla and Benguela, in conjunction with FAO as an implementing organization and GEF.
3. The project was approved in 2014 and its execution was planned until April 2018. The project has a total budget of USD 20 304 636, of which 15 percent (USD 3 013 636) was funded by GEF, and the remaining 85 percent was co-funded by local partners.
4. The project's overall strategy aims to address the lack of capacities at national, provincial and local level to prevent and revert land degradation by introducing and adopting participatory approaches to identify and rehabilitate degraded areas in a participatory manner coordinated among the multiple stakeholders. The project is structured into four components: Component 1 - Rangeland management and planning; Component 2 - Rangeland rehabilitation through best range and herd management practices; Component 3 - Mainstreaming sustainable land management (SLM) into agricultural and environmental sector policies and programmes; Component 4 - Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

1.1 Evaluation of the proposal

5. This Final Evaluation serves the dual purpose of accountability and learning. It analysed the project's design and implementation process, as well as its outcomes and relevance for the beneficiaries and for the national needs and priorities. It also analysed the factors that may contribute to the sustainability of the outcomes.
6. This Final Evaluation aimed to document lessons that make it possible to inform future actions taking into account the upscaling, replication or monitoring of the RETESA outcomes, by means of other projects in the country that may use similar approaches, methods and tools. This Final Evaluation aimed to present strategic recommendations with the intention of, *inter alia*, maximizing the institutionalisation of outcomes and appropriation by the different stakeholders, and disseminating information to other institutions that can give continuity to this intervention.
7. The users of this Final Evaluation will be GEF, beneficiaries and national counterparts in Angola, project partners and FAO itself. These will benefit from an external and independent exercise for accountability and also document lessons learned and

inform future actions. Other stakeholders, such as development agencies and donors, will be able to use the results of this evaluation to adjust their actions in the field and continue the outcomes of this project, particularly in the south of the country.

1.2 Scope and objective of the evaluation

8. **Scope:** This evaluation took into account the whole period of execution of the project (April 2014 to April 2018), although it focused particularly on the period following the Mid-term Review (July 2016 to April 2018), the recommendations of which are detailed in Annex 3, as well as the respective proposal of adjustment of activities and outputs detailed in Annex 4. The evaluation encompassed the entire geographical area of the project (Provinces of Huíla, Namibe and Benguela), particularly the five towns covered (Virei, Bibala, Camucuio, Chongoroi, Quilengues) - see map in Appendix 1.
9. This evaluation analysed the four components of the project. Insofar as possible it sought evidence from the field to check the scope and quality of the project outcomes, comparing them with their initial design, and always with a view to identifying lessons learned. The evaluation took into consideration the objectives of GEF at project level, namely: i) to promote accountability to achieve the GEF objectives; and ii) to promote learning and the sharing of knowledge.
10. The analysis and findings used internationally recognized evaluation criteria as a reference: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability. Other analysis parameters included appropriation, involvement of stakeholders, gender matters and financial, social, political and environmental risks.
11. **Objectives:** The main objective of this Final Evaluation was to provide a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the project, evaluating the design, implementation and scope of objectives and outcomes, including their value for the different stakeholders at public/ministerial and community level. This Final Evaluation also identified the impact and sustainability of the outcomes and the extent to which the long-term outcomes were achieved.
12. This objective was identified by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) in consultation with the Project Task Force (PTF) and donors to respond to the needs and priorities identified by the primary users of this evaluation.
13. The evaluator followed the Evaluation Matrix (see Appendix 2) which includes the following main Evaluation Questions (EQ):

EQ1. Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all beneficiaries and other stakeholders?³

EQ2. In what way did the modes of intervention, institutional structure and partnerships, financial, technical and operational resources and procedures help or hinder the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes?

³ Taking into account revisions and adjustments, in accordance with the Mid-term Review recommendations.

EQ3. How effective was the project in achieving its objectives (overall, development and environmental) and expected outcomes? Which outcomes, expected or unexpected, were achieved in the different project components?

EQ4. To what extent did the project design include aspects of gender equality and contribute to the empowerment of women through its implementation?

EQ5. What was the project's approach for working with local communities in relation to rangeland management and sustainable land management practices, and to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to the project?

EQ6. How sustainable are the outcomes achieved by the project in environmental, technical, social, financial and institutional terms?

EQ7. What are the key lessons that can be learned from the design, implementation and sustainability of the project?

1.3 Methodology

14. This evaluation was completed by an independent international consultant (see the evaluator profile in Annex 1) with the support and assistance of the Evaluation Manager from the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED), of the Project Chief Technical Adviser and of the Lead Technical Officer. The project team in Angola provided support for the organization of field visits and meetings with key stakeholders, and provided information and the necessary documentation for the evaluation, including the distribution of opinions on aspects of project implementation.
15. This Final Evaluation was completed in accordance with the guidelines, norms and procedures of GEF and FAO for this type of exercise. It followed the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)⁴ and followed the Office of Evaluation (OED) Manual and its practical and methodological guidelines. This evaluation followed the principles of independence, impartiality, transparency, dissemination, ethics, credibility and usefulness.
16. This Final Evaluation adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the whole process, involving the project team, provincial and local governments, the Steering Committee, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders (e.g. public environmental, agricultural and veterinary services). This exercise provides information based on evidence that is credible due to being verified by the evaluator during the evaluation process. Information was triangulated in order to validate the evidence and support the analysis of information to back the conclusions and recommendations.
17. The Evaluation Matrix includes a set of sub-questions, as well as methods and sources for the collection of information and evidence. The schedule of field visits and the list of people met are included in Annex 2. The following main tools and methods were used in this evaluation:

⁴ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

- **Document analysis:** Reading and review of documents about the project: Project Document (ProDoC), annual work plans, Project Implementation Review (PIR), Project Progress Report (PPR), financial reports, tracking tool and backstopping mission reports about land degradation, consultancy reports, publications produced by the project, among other documents about the country and topic.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** Completion of interviews (in-person and via Skype) with different stakeholders, including FAO-GEF, responsible for the project, consultants, government authorities at provincial and local level, local stakeholders.
- **Field visits:** On-site verification of the project's achievements in the field, the interest and capacities of the communities and local stakeholders as well as the support provided to the project by governmental institutions.
- **Focus Group:** Coordination of discussion groups with beneficiaries (communities) and authorities in the project execution locations.
- **Workshop/Steering Committee:** Participation and facilitation of meetings with the Steering Committee (including the participation of the focal point of the GEF) at the end of the field mission to share the evaluator's main findings and discuss/confirm the main conclusions and recommendations.
- **Briefings/Debriefings:** At the start and end of the field missions, sessions were carried out with the Chief Technical Adviser of the project and the FAO Representation in Angola to present the main findings and discuss the main recommendations.

1.4 Limitations

18. This evaluation was initially intended to be carried out by a team of two people (international consultant and national consultant). However, it was not possible to hire a national consultant due to the lack of applications from potentially interested parties. The teamwork was complemented by crucial support from the Evaluation Manager who provided methodological assistance and accompanied the beginning of the field visit, conducting some interviews.
19. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview the FAO Representative in Angola and Budget Holder of the project given that their mandate terminated before the field mission began, which is why they were no longer in the country.
20. There were logistical problems obtaining the visa for the evaluator, which led to a one-day delay in arrival to the country and, consequently, the possibility to perform some interviews at central level. This problem was resolved with the support of the Evaluation Manager who conducted interviews with responsible parties from the Ministry of Environment in Luanda at the beginning of the mission.
21. Lastly, the project's geographical scope (three provinces) restricted the field visits to a limited number of communities and places where activities were taking place. The evaluation team, together with the project team, selected a limited number of representative communities and locations, based on a random, more representative, sample of the situation in the three provinces.

1.5 Structure of the Report

22. This report is divided into three main parts, in addition to Chapter 1, containing introductory and methodological notes. Chapter 2 describes the fundamental context for the preparation of the project, showing particularly the unsustainable use of natural resources that has led to an increase in soil degradation and desertification. This Chapter also analyses the project's Theory of Change, including its logical structure, the defined chain of results (activities - outputs - outcomes - objectives) and its contribution towards achieving the overall strategy of the project. Chapter 3 is the longest part of this report given that it provides the main findings and critically analyses the performance and outcomes of the project for each of the key questions of this final evaluation. Chapter 4 systematizes the main conclusions and presents some recommendations that can inform other FAO-GEF projects, with a view to continuity of the outcomes and improvement of future actions. This report also has a set of Appendices and relevant Annexes in a separate document.

2 Background and context of the project

2.1 Background and context

23. According to the Project Document, the Republic of Angola has a surface area of 1 246 700 km², of which 43 percent is permanent grassland and rangelands. The country is still suffering from the effects of the civil war (which ended in 2002), particularly in rural areas, where living conditions continue to be difficult, with a high level of poverty and food insecurity. The capacity of the ecosystems to provide services is under high pressure due to the unsustainable use of natural resources, particularly soil and water, and because of the effects of climate change. This has caused an increase in soil degradation and desertification.
24. In particular in southwest Angola, one of the project's areas of intervention, the arid and semi-arid context and the impact of climate change have contributed to a reduction in soil coverage and an increase in soil erosion. The loss of biodiversity is leading to a loss of species and a reduction in the availability of feed for livestock. According to basic studies performed regarding this project's preparation process, the Net Primary Production (NPP) in the project area reduced by 0.3 KgC/ha per year.
25. The main causes of land degradation identified in the project area are the use of not very sustainable agricultural practices, deforestation and overgrazing in rangelands. The more visible results are the disappearance of grasses and forage shrubs, as well as the increase in less palatable species. As a result, livestock in the region are concentrated in few selected areas, increasing the pressure on land, forest and water resources. The reduction of fertile land, accompanied by a growing population, is the main cause of disputes, particularly among peasants and farmers, traditional pastoralists and commercial livestock farmers.
26. It was in this context that the Government of Angola, by means of the technological and methodological support of FAO and co-funding from GEF, decided to make progress with the RETESA project in the southwest of the country aiming to impede continued land degradation by reinforcing the skills of the agro-pastoral smallholders and of the related public institutions, including the rehabilitation of land by means of sustainable management technologies, while contributing to improve the livelihoods of the local communities. The overall strategy of the project is geared towards completing specific and tangible experiences in the area of land development that, starting at a local level, contributes towards defining more extensive initiatives and their inclusion in national policies.

2.2 Identification of the project

Title: Land Rehabilitation and Rangelands Management in Smallholders Agro-pastoral Production Systems in South Western Angola (RETESA)	
Reference: GCP/ANG/048/GFF	
Beneficiary country: Angola	
Resource partner: Global Environment Facility (GEF)	
FAO project ID: 615423	
GEF project ID: 4720	
GEF focal point: GEF-5 Land Degradation	
Strategic Objectives GEF/LDCF⁵/SCCF⁶:	
LD-1 – Agriculture and Rangeland Systems: Maintenance or improvement of the flow of services of agro-ecosystems that sustain the livelihoods of local communities.	
LD-3 – Integrated landscapes: reduction of pressure on natural resources in the competition for the use of land.	
Contribution to the FAO Strategic Framework:	
A) Strategic Objective/Organizational Outcomes: SO-2: OO1, OO2, OO4	
B) Regional Objective/Priority Area: Priority 2 for Africa	
C) Country Programming Framework Outcome: Priority 2, Outcome 2.1 and 2.2	
Date of entry in the GEF work plan: 29/02/2012	
CEO GEF approval: 28/01/2014	
Start of project implementation: 23/04/2014	
End of project proposal: June 2018	
Mid-term Review: June 2016	
Implementation status: 1st PIR (2015); 2 nd PIR (2016); 3rd PIR (2017)	
Financial plan (USD):	
GEF/LDCF/SCCF:	3 013 636.00
Co-funding:	
FAO	550 000.00
Ministry of Environment	300 000.00
Ministry of Agriculture	9 641 000.00
Ministry of Commerce	5 000 000.00
Province of Namibe	1 800 000.00
Co-funding sub-total	17 291 000.00
Total Budget	20 304 636.00
<p>The national partners of the project include government structures at central level (MINAMB, MINAGRIF, MASFAMU),⁷ at provincial level (provincial governments of Namibe, Huíla, Benguela - namely through the Provincial Departments of Environment and Agriculture) and at municipal level (Municipal Administrations of Virei, Bibala, Camucuio, Quilengues, Chongoroi). It also includes the provincial departments of specialist technical institutions such as the Agriculture Development Institute (IDA), the Forestry Development Institute (IDF), the Veterinary Service Institute (ISV) and the Zootechnical Stations and Agronomic Stations as well as UNMLCP that are coordinated by the Municipal Administrations. It also includes other partners such as NGOs, community organizations and universities.</p>	

⁵ Least Developed Countries Fund.

⁶ Special Climate Change Fund.

⁷ The Ministry of Commerce was initially included as a partner, given that it included the Anti-Poverty Unit. When the National Programme for the Fight against Poverty was passed on to MASFAMU, this Ministry became a RETESA partner.

2.3 Theory of Change

27. The sustainable management of land and rangelands continues to be a huge challenge that Angola faces in terms of the sustainability of natural resources and the improvement of the living conditions of the agro-pastoral populations, particularly in the south of Angola. As a starting point, **four key problems** were identified which **this project aims to respond to**. It was on the basis of these key problems that the main components of the project were defined, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Key problems and main components of the project

Key problems	Project components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low institutional capacities to evaluate land degradation and incorporate these aspects into territorial planning for the sustainable management of land at national, provincial and local level (municipal and of the community). 	<p>Component 1 Rangeland management and planning</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existence of traditional agriculture/livestock practices and lack of adapted soil and water conservation measures that reduce agro-ecosystem services and worsen soil degradation. 	<p>Component 2 Rangeland rehabilitation through best range and herd management practices</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weakness of the institutional structure and limited awareness/knowledge in the communities about the regulatory framework in place. ▪ Lack of cross-sector coordination and investments to reduce and prevent soil degradation. 	<p>Component 3 Mainstreaming sustainable land management into agricultural and environmental sector policies and programmes</p>
<p><i>This component contributes in a cross-cutting manner to respond to these problems through project management based on outcomes and the dissemination of good practices.</i></p>	<p>Component 4 Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.</p>

Source: Own preparation based on the Project Document

28. The **project's overall strategy** was therefore defined to address the lack of capacities at national, provincial and local level to prevent and revert land degradation by introducing and adopting participatory approaches to identify and rehabilitate degraded areas in a participatory manner, coordinated among the multiple stakeholders.
29. In terms of **design**, the project was structured into **four components**. Altogether, these components present a logical and coherent strategy to make changes, and respond directly to the main problems identified in the baseline scenario. The following table systematizes the project's intervention strategy for each component.

Table 2: Project's intervention strategy for each component

Components	Project strategy
Component 1 Rangeland management and planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to facilitate the planning and integrated management of rangelands, providing the knowledge and tools to analyse soil degradation (e.g. LADA), building capacities at central, provincial and local level, strengthening the decision makers for mitigating disputes between different interest groups, particularly throughout the transhumance route.
Component 2 Rangeland rehabilitation through best range and herd management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to increase the knowledge and adoption of sustainable land management practices at community level, to improve herd management and rehabilitate degraded rangelands. It particularly includes initiatives with the Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) methodology, community planning with a focus on pilot rehabilitation based on the ecosystem, the rehabilitation of water points, improvement of rangelands with a community basis and the establishment of <i>mise en défense</i> areas.
Component 3 Mainstreaming sustainable land management into agricultural and environmental sector policies and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to reinforce public policies by introducing the sustainable land management approach, investment and frameworks. It focuses particularly on the government structures aiming for cross-sector dialogue and the adoption of suitable legislative and regulatory frameworks.
Component 4 Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It aims to ensure systematic monitoring based on outcomes and the evaluation of the progress made by the project, as well as the documentation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned.

Source: Own drafting based on the Project Document

30. In **geographical** terms, the project covers the country's main transhumance route (see Appendix 1) and takes into consideration five towns in three provinces: the province of Namibe (towns of Virei, Camucuió, Bibala), the province of Huíla (town of Quilengues) and the province of Benguela (town of Chongoroi).
31. The project design presents a well-defined **chain of outcomes** with a logical and coherent sequence of inputs/activities-outputs-outcomes-impact to produce change in the communities and on the land. The resources made available to the project will also be used to implement a set of activities that will lead to **20 outputs**, which will contribute towards achieving **eight outcomes**.
32. During the Mid-term Review there was a proposal for an adjustment in some outputs and also in the content of some activities, as shown in Annex 4. The following table summarizes the structure of the project after the MTR.

Table 3: Structure of the project after the Mid-term Review

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
Component 1: Rangeland management and planning	
<p>Outcome 1.1 - At the end of the project, skills are built upon and knowledge is available for the participatory planning of the mainstreamed management of land at national, provincial and local level (community).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 1.1.1 - 40 MA, MINADER, and provincial government civil servants trained on-the-job in the implementation of the LADA methodology and land degradation knowledge (including local degradation processes and causes). • Output 1.1.2 - The capacities of 20 decision makers and of 20 civil society organizations at local level have improved, for ecosystem-wide participatory land management planning. • Output 1.1.3 - Six integrated land management plans developed with the participation of farmers/herders and customary associations in a 3 000-hectare area.
Component 2: Rangeland rehabilitation through best range and herd management practices	
<p>Outcome 2.1 - At the end of the project, integrated APFS-herd management practices led to an increase in agro-pastoral production with a total of 2 800 herders (30% women) benefiting therefrom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 2.1.1 - A core group of 20 programme managers, trainers and extension service staff trained as APFS facilitators in SLM and herd management practices. • Output 2.1.2 - 35 SLM APFS established and 1 400 herders/farmers (at least 25% women) adopting SLM and herd management practices through a community action plan.
<p>Outcome 2.2 - At the end of the project, ecosystem-based rehabilitation of over 13 500 ha, of which 600 ha are rehabilitated and 900 ha set as <i>mise en défense</i> leading to an improvement in vegetation cover.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 2.2.1 - Communities trained in ecosystem-based rehabilitation principles and soil degradation assessments by seeding an area covering 500 ha. • Output 2.2.2 - Implementation of six APFS-based verification and experimentation systems for grasses adaptability and palatability and six forage and/or natural grazing land areas established and managed by communities. • Output 2.2.3 - Improved water management and livestock water availability, at community level, through participatory rehabilitation of 15 water points. • Output 2.2.4 - 900 ha of <i>mise en défense</i> areas established in three communities for strategic livestock feeding, pasture improvement, as well as land and biodiversity conservation.
<p>Outcome 2.3 - At the end of the project, the livelihoods of families in at least 70 communities have improved through: i) scaling up the production of livestock products; and ii) supporting two small-scale non-livestock-based production systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 2.3.1 - Agro-pastoralists and farmers in five pastoral communities adopt improved production technologies. • Output 2.3.2 - Agro-pastoralists incorporated ethnoveterinary practices.
Component 3: Mainstreaming sustainable land management into agricultural and environmental sector policies and programmes	
<p>Outcome 3.1 - Increased mainstreaming of SLM into policies and programmes and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.1.1 - One policy reinforcing SLM application in pastoral areas is proposed for approval.

reinforcement of existing policies, regulations and their relative application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.1.2 - Review of community delimitation of land method and dissemination of VGGT Voluntary Guidelines. • Output 3.1.3 - SLM is integrated into National Commission for Climate Change and Biodiversity projects and/or programmes.
Outcome 3.2 - At the end of the project, decision-making is reinforced through the establishment of a sector-wide discussion panel on LD (including civil society research, international agencies, and government) focusing on transhumance areas to reduce duplication and increase awareness; the lessons learned and collaborations on SLM are established between at least three programmes in progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.2.1 - Creation of an online platform for discussing and exchanging opinions on and experiences of sustainable land management in Angola.
Outcome 3.3 - Investments increased through specific budgetary provisions made by MINAMB, MINAGRI, and decentralized administrations to improve SLM in agro-pastoral systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.3.1 - Draft governmental investment plan developed to support small credits for SLM and land rehabilitation complementing the existing National Environmental Management Plan, and monitoring of donor investments.
Component 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.	
Outcome 4.1 - The implementation of the project is based on the results of the management and lessons learned to facilitate future operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 4.1.1 - Operational system for monitoring the project, to provide two reports per year on the progress made in the achievement of the project outputs and outcomes. • Output 4.1.2 - Mid-term and Final Evaluation completed • Output 4.1.3 - Project-related best practices and lessons learned disseminated

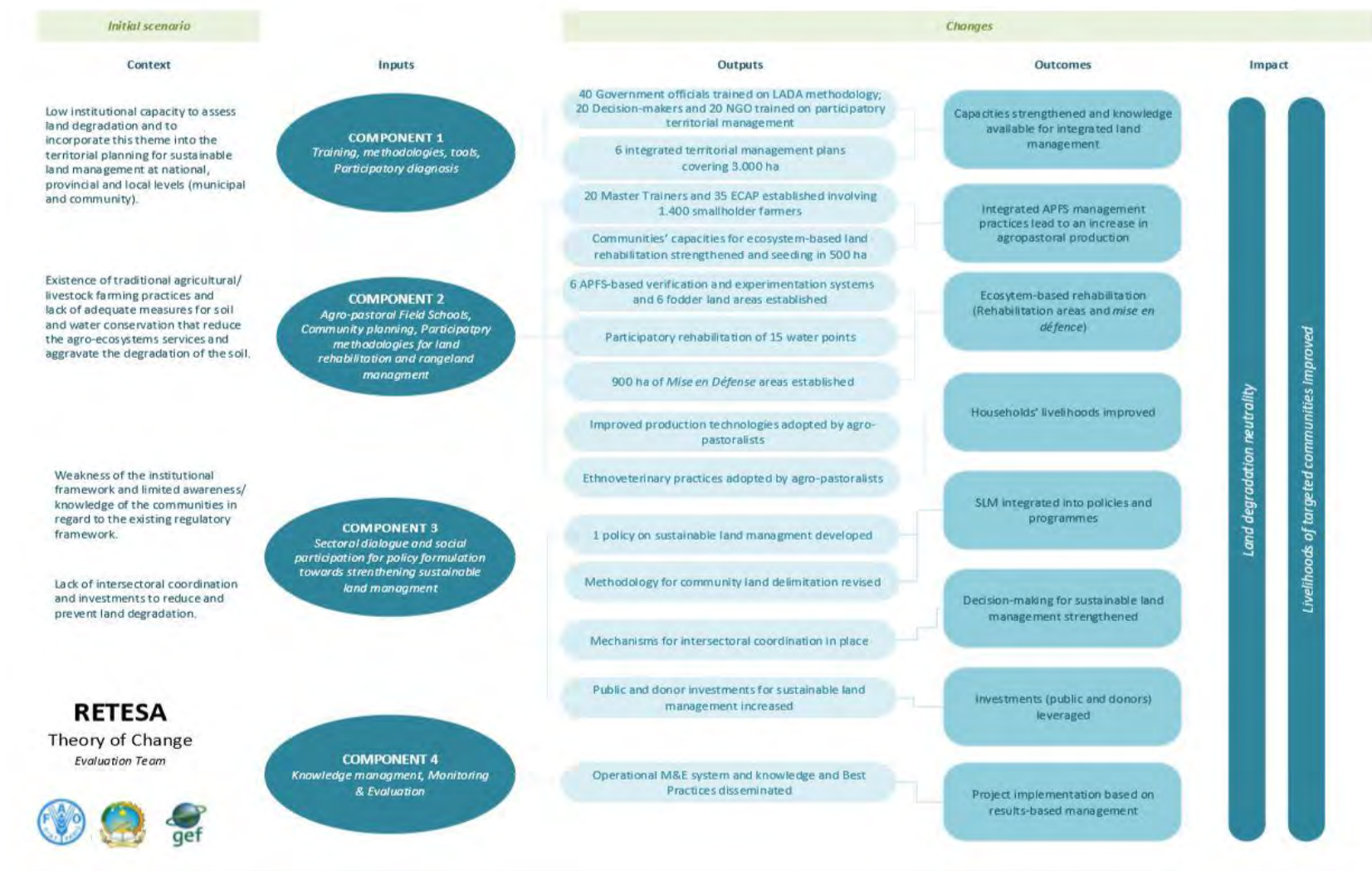
Source: Project Document

33. Lastly, these expected outcomes should contribute towards achieving three of the project's **main objectives**:

- **General objective:** To enhance the capacity of southwest Angola's smallholder agro-pastoral sector to mitigate the impact of land degradation processes and to rehabilitate degraded lands by mainstreaming sustainable land management technologies into agro-pastoral and agricultural development initiatives.
- **Environmental objective:** To pursue land degradation neutrality by enhancing the capacity of southwest Angola's smallholder agro-pastoral sector to mitigate the impact of land degradation processes and to rehabilitate degraded lands by mainstreaming sustainable land management technologies into agro-pastoral and agricultural development initiatives.
- **Development objective:** To increase local livelihoods by introducing locally adapted sustainable land management approaches and by strengthening and diversifying livestock and non-livestock-based value chains.

34. The following figure shows the **Theory of Change diagram**, which displays the logical links between the problems identified in the baseline scenario, the project components and the outcomes that are intended to be achieved, as detailed in the preceding paragraphs.

Figure 1: Theory of Change



3 Evaluation questions: main findings⁸

3.1 EQ1. Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all the beneficiaries and other stakeholders?

Finding 1: Highly satisfactory

- The project strategy responded to Angola's priorities in terms of sustainable land management and the project was aligned with the priorities identified in the main national policies existing in this matter.
- The project was coherent and in line with the FAO Strategic Objective (SO2), the FAO Strategic Framework for Africa, the United Nations Strategy in Angola (UNPAF, 2015-2019), the FAO strategy in the country (CPF 2013-2017) and the GEF strategy in relation to "Land Degradation".
- The project's strategy was suitable for the training needs of the public institutions by means of the introduction of innovative methods and was also suitable for responding to the needs of the beneficiaries promoting their involvement in a participatory manner.
- The project team adequately managed the risks, which were updated throughout the implementation period.
- The project had an adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that made it possible to gather information systematically in the field and to produce reports in different formats and in good time.

Relevance in terms of Angola's priorities

35. The project meets **Angola's priorities** in terms of sustainable land management. Although national public resources are scarce, due to the recent financial crisis, there is evidence that this topic is a priority in the political agenda. The RETESA project is coherent and aligned with the priorities identified in the following **programmes and policies**: National Programme to Combat Desertification (PANCOD, 2014), National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention, National Adaptation Action Plan (PANA, 2011), Biodiversity Action Plan and National Strategy (ENPAB, 2006), Angola Long-Term Development Strategy (Angola, 2025), National Development Plan 2013-2017 (PND), Agricultural Sector Mid-Term Development Plan 2013-2017 (PDMPSA) and the Municipal Programme for Rural Development and the Fight against Poverty (PMIDRCP, 2010).

⁸ Appendix 6 provides a summary of the FAO - GEF ratings.

Coherence and alignment with GEF and FAO

36. The project was in line with the **FAO strategic objective (SO2)** – To make agriculture, forestry and fishery more productive and efficient, particularly with Organizational Outcomes OO1, OO2 and OO4.⁹ In effect, the introduction of sustainable land management practices at community level, namely through the Agro-Pastoral Field Schools (APFS), contributed towards increasing the knowledge and capacities of the families to provide goods and services in the agricultural production systems in a more sustainable manner. This also contributed towards generating evidence that will facilitate decision-making. Actions on a macro level, in terms of the planning and management of rangelands were aligned with FAO's efforts to achieve a transition for more sustainable agricultural production systems, reinforcing governance at national level.
37. The project was also aligned with the **FAO Regional Strategic Framework for Africa (2010-2015)**, namely with Priority 2 that aims to promote the sustainable management of natural resources.
38. At a national level, the project was coherent and in line with the **FAO Country Strategy (CPF 2013-2017)**, and particularly Strategic Priority 2 - Sustainable management of natural resources for the mitigation and adaptation to the impact of climate change, contributing towards promoting and developing sustainable land management (OO 2.1); and supporting the implementation of the National Climate Change Mitigation Plan (OO 2.2). It was also aligned with the **United Nations Partnership Framework in Angola (UNPAF, 2015-2019)**, particularly with Outcome 3.2, which aims to reinforce sustainability by improving the management of natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity.
39. Lastly, the project contributed towards the **GEF Strategy** in the matter of "Land Degradation", namely in its strategic objectives LD-1 - Agricultural and Rangeland Systems: Maintenance or improvement of the flow of agro-ecosystems services that sustain the livelihoods of local communities; and LD-3 - Integrated landscapes: reduction of pressure on natural resources in the competition for the use of land. The project actions contributed towards these objectives by mainstreaming sustainable land management in the practices and routines of the public institutions at local level, and through the action of the communities (including rangeland reserve areas) that improved the flow of agro-ecosystems services in the region.

Intervention strategy and design

40. **The project strategy was coherent in addressing the main problems that affect the south of the country** in terms of land degradation and sustainability of natural

⁹ OO1 - Producers and managers of natural resources adopt practices that sustainably enhance and improve the provision of goods and services in agricultural production systems;

OO2 - The governance of the member countries is reinforced in the sense of a transition towards sustainable agricultural production;

OO4 - The stakeholders make evidence-based decisions to plan and manage the agricultural sector and natural resources to support the transition towards sustainable agricultural production systems through monitoring, statistics, evaluation and analyses.

resources (see Theory of Change), which are serious problems that continue to affect the country.

41. **However, the duration of the project (4 years) was not long enough** to achieve the necessary changes in terms of intervention in the landscape and participatory management, given that these are long processes that require a substantial amount of time to become consolidated in the field. **The financial resources assigned were also insufficient taking into account the ambitious project outcomes.** Another design problem relates to the weak initial evaluation of the real capacities existing at national level to monitor the project. As will be shown below, this flaw in the design phase restricted the efficiency of the project.
42. The four project components are complementary and respond to the need to build capacities to improve the planning and management of rangelands (Component 1), directly involving the communities and public institutions in the adoption of sustainable practices for land management and improving livelihoods (Component 2), focusing on the gaps in the legislative panorama and in public policies to reinforce the government response in institutional and governance terms on this matter (Component 3), disseminating experience-based good practices and lessons learned (Component 4).

Response to the needs of the beneficiaries and public institutions

43. The lack of capacities at national, provincial and local level to prevent and revert land degradation was one of the key problems that this project aimed to address. The project's overall strategy aimed to address this problem by focusing on a strong training and capacity-building component aiming to adopt participatory approaches to identify and rehabilitate degraded areas in a participatory manner, coordinated among the multiple stakeholders.
44. **The project's strategy was suitable for the needs of the communities and public institutions** as it aimed to directly involve both agro-pastoral smallholders and land specialists to reinforce their capacities for collective action, planning and management.

Risk management

45. **The project team adequately managed the risks**, which were updated throughout the implementation period, including political, financial and institutional risks. The Project Document included a fairly detailed risk assessment, and identified 15 main risks and respective mitigation measures.
46. New risks were identified by the team and reported in the Project Implementation Reviews (2015, 2016 and 2017), including respective mitigation measures. The Mid-term Review also updated the risk matrix and its mitigation measures, which were monitored by the team (see Annex 5).
47. The last renewal of the project risk matrix (December 2017) shows that most of the risks were low or moderate. This final evaluation found that, in general, the project team sufficiently implemented the mitigation measures proposed to tackle these risks. The rating of the overall risk of the project was "moderate".

Monitoring and Evaluation System

48. **The project had an adequate monitoring and evaluation system.** This system included the constant gathering of information in the field together with the beneficiaries through monitoring visits by the local technical teams and central project team, as well as periodic meetings with different stakeholders involved (including the Steering Committee), and FAO/GEF-Rome backstopping missions.
49. The reporting of information was systematically performed in different reports, namely: i) initial project report; ii) twice a year Project Progress Reports; iii) Annual Project Implementation Reviews; iv) technical Reports; v) co-funding Reports; vi) Land Degradation Monitoring Tool (LD-GEF); vii) Mid-term Review Report.

3.2 EQ2. In what way did the modes of intervention, institutional structure and partnerships, financial, technical and operational resources and procedures help or hinder the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes?

Finding 2 - Satisfactory

- The project had an institutional structure appropriate to the national capacities that facilitated decision-making, coordination and execution of the project in the field.
- The Steering Committee was an important body for deepening the dialogue, sharing information, answering questions, raising awareness and motivating the stakeholders, delivering accountability and providing support for defining the project's strategy.
- Implementation of the project was delayed in its first year but it recovered well from the second year onwards, showing satisfactory progress in the completion of the activities and the achievement of outputs.
- The FAO Representation in Angola provided administrative, organizational and financial management support to the project. It also played a very important role in the institutional relationship with the Ministries at central level. The teams from Rome, namely the Lead Technical Officer and the FAO-GEF unit, provided ongoing technical support throughout the execution of the project.
- At the time of the final evaluation, the project reported a financial implementation rate of 95 percent, a GEF grant disbursement rate of 100 percent and a partner co-funding rate of over 100 percent.

Institutional structure and national capacities

50. **The project had an institutional structure appropriate to the national capacities that facilitated decision-making, coordination and execution of the project in the field.** The steering committee was the highest body for making project decisions. This was an important body for deepening the dialogue, sharing information, answering questions, raising awareness and motivating the stakeholders, delivering accountability and providing support for defining the project's strategy. When monitoring the Mid-term Review recommendations, the Municipal Administrations

were included in this committee, therefore contributing to better institutional appropriation at this territorial level.

51. During the evaluation, all the stakeholders interviewed expressed their great satisfaction with the usefulness and quality of the work performed by the **Steering Committee** to support project implementation. This Committee met in November 2015, August 2016, June 2017 and March 2018. The project reports were discussed and validated in the Committee meetings. The minutes and recommendations were widely disseminated by different stakeholders.
52. In addition to the Steering Committee, the institutional structure of the project involved three levels of coordination: i) a Project Coordination Unit (PCU); ii) three Provincial Coordination Units; and iii) five Municipal Coordination Units. It also involved local technical units, in addition to the support of FAO/GEF and of the FO Representation in Angola (FAO-AO). The roles and responsibilities were well understood by the different stakeholders (see Appendix 3).
53. **However, the national authorities reported that the project should have had a "national coordinator", linked to one of the partner institutions**, for example, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Environment or Ministry of Social Action, Family and the Promotion of Women. In accordance with the opinion of those interviewed, this person could have assumed a more political role in the dialogue between the different sectors. They also mentioned that the lack of such a national coordinator was one of the factors that restricted greater appropriation by the government. However, it is important to mention that a national coordinator figure was not planned for in the initial institutional structure. As an alternative, the project established three provincial coordinators (appointed by the provincial governments) and five municipal coordinators (appointed by the municipal administrations), in addition to the overall coordination led by the Steering Committee. In general, the evaluator found that this structure was sufficient to fulfil the project coordination obligations and that there was no need to appoint a national coordinator.
54. **The size of the technical and administrative team was sufficient** for the project requirements and included: two permanent international consultants, five short-term international consultants, six national consultants, seven administrative personnel, in addition to the budget holder and GEF and FAO technical teams (see Appendix 3).

Project implementation performance

55. The project was officially declared operational in April 2014. It lasted 48 months (until April 2018) and was later extended until June 2018. However, it was found that there were **very substantial delays in starting the project in the first year**, namely in terms of the selection and establishment of the team, assembly of the institutional structure and logistical conditions of the project. Consequently, the initiation of activities in the field was delayed.
56. The reasons for this delay were detailed in the Mid-term Review and included: i) difficulties with on-site implementation by FAO, given that it had not historically had a very significant presence in the project's geographical areas of intervention, compared with other regions in the country; ii) logistical difficulties due to a wide

geographical area of intervention and to delays in the signing of protocols and concession of facilities for the project by local authorities; iii) renewal of the Letter of Agreement with the Italian NGO COSPE¹⁰ for the hiring of consultants and subsequent difficulties hiring international staff fluent in Portuguese, as well as delays in hiring the Chief Technical Advisor, who only began to work four months after the project began; iv) difficulties with hiring local personnel with the right profile and experience for the project; and v) the economic and financial crisis in the country that began in the second half of 2014.

57. However, **the project managed to recover well and complete the activities planned as from the second year**, once these difficulties had been overcome (i.e. logistical problems resolved, the Chief Technical Adviser began his/her duties, the technical and coordination teams were operating at full capacity, consultants were hired to support the implementation of activities).
58. **At the time of the Final Evaluation, it was found that the project showed satisfactory progress in the execution and achievement of outcomes**, with most of the activities having been concluded, except Component 3. Many activities of this component were not concluded given that they depended, to a great extent, on the availability of, and progress made by, the Government with regard namely to the following: i) the sustainable land management policy was prepared but its approval depends on the government's political will and timeliness; ii) the establishment of new coordination systems depends on the Government's approval and on institutional changes that require time; iii) the mainstreaming of the sustainable land management approach in sectoral programmes and policies depends on the timing and timeliness to review these instruments; iv) the allocation of financial resources by the Government depends on budgetary cycles and on the availability of resources at sector level. In summary, Component 3 focuses on political, institutional, legislative and budgetary changes that require time, which is not always compatible with the limited duration of the projects.

Budget Holder and Lead Technical Officer support

59. **The FAO Representation in Angola provided quality and timely administrative, organizational and financial management support to the project.** It also played a very important role in the institutional relationship with the Ministries at central level and facilitated dialogue with the interested parties. However, during the final evaluation interviews several stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with FAO administrative/bureaucratic procedures (recruitment, resource transfer, signing of contracts, etc.) This led, for example, to delays in signing letters of agreement with the Agricultural and Zootechnical Stations of Caraculo and Cacanda, which did not agree with several FAO procedures, despite being obligatory.
60. **The teams from Rome, namely the Lead Technical Officer and the FAO-GEF unit, provided ongoing technical support throughout the execution of the project.** This support was well received by the local project team, namely in terms of planning, the definition of work plans, clarification of technical and methodological queries and

¹⁰ COSPE - Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti.

budgetary reviews. At least four backstopping missions were registered by the teams in Rome (2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017).

Financial implementation

61. The total project budget is USD 20 304 636,¹¹ of which USD 3 013 635 (15 percent) is funded by GEF, and the rest comes from contributions from the partners. Component 2 had almost 60 percent of the financial resources, which was justified given the type of interventions planned (implementation of the APFS, rehabilitation of rangelands, water points, etc.).
62. At the time of the Mid-term Review the project reported a financial implementation rate of 51 percent. **At the time of the Final Evaluation (March 2018) the financial implementation rate of the project was 95 percent.** At the moment there is almost USD 150 000 available that will be spent by the end of the period of execution (June 2018) to conclude some activities and close the project.
63. Appendix 4 shows the financial implementation of the GEF grant, separated by expense category, up until the Final Evaluation. In general, **no great budget deviations were found in the different items**, with the exception of procurement, technical services and operational expenses. Most of the expenses corresponded to consultants (52 percent) and travel (16 percent).
64. **The project team managed the finances in line with GEF and FAO norms.** Financial reports were systematically shared with the Steering Committee, Provincial Governments and Ministries, demonstrating complete transparency in the management of finances. The Budget Holder supervised this management and the financial and administrative assistant provided support.
65. **The GEF disbursements were made in a timely manner:** up until the Mid-term Review, 75 percent of the GEF grant had been disbursed, and by the time of the Final Evaluation, 100 percent had been disbursed.

Co-funding

66. The project planned for co-funding from the partners of approximately USD 17 291 000 (85 percent). At the time of the Mid-term Review, the project reported a very low co-funding rate from the partners, of just 33 percent. This was, to a large extent, due to the fact that different support was provided by the partners that was not being considered as co-funding, as highlighted in the Mid-term Review conclusions.
67. At the time of the final evaluation, it was found that the **co-funding reached USD 17 485 000, in other words, it exceeded what had initially been foreseen**, as shown in Appendix 5. This recuperation was due to the new co-funding strategy adopted by the project after the Mid-term Review: on the one hand, the past contributions made by the partners until the Mid-term Review that had not been

¹¹ The project experienced a substantial reduction in the initial GEF grant amount, from USD 8 million to USD 3 million, approximately, which constitutes a decrease of almost 40% compared to that initially foreseen for the country.

registered and accounted for were reviewed; on the other hand, as from that moment the project team, together with the Steering Committee, began to register and account for all the support granted by the partners systematically, including existing contributions from other institutions, namely Municipal Administrations.

68. The team prepared a detailed report of the co-funding which was validated by the Steering Committee. It included a breakdown of the type of support granted and its allocation by activity/output, as shown in Appendix 5.

3.3 EQ3. How effective was the project in achieving its objectives (overall, development and environmental) and which outcomes, expected or unexpected, were achieved in the different project components?

Finding 3.1: Scope of the objectives - Satisfactory

- There is evidence that the capacities of the communities were reinforced by adopting the fertilization, irrigation and seeding techniques that are more sustainable for the agricultural systems, and at the level of managing the rangelands (particularly reserve areas) that are contributing towards the project's overall objective.
- The evidence in relation to the environmental objective is less visible given that it relates to more long-term outcomes. For example, the direct rehabilitation of rangelands with plantations of local forage crops as well as the recuperation of rangelands due to the effect of reserve areas takes a significant amount of time to generate effects on the land.
- There is evidence of an improvement in the livelihoods of the beneficiary families as a result of this project (e.g. human capital, social capital, physical capital, natural capital), and the adoption of practices and activities that generate income and contribute towards achieving the development objective.

69. **Evaluation of the overall objective – Satisfactory.** The project's overall objective was to enhance the capacity of southwest Angola's smallholder agro-pastoral sector to mitigate the impact of land degradation processes and to rehabilitate degraded lands by mainstreaming sustainable land management technologies into agro-pastoral and agricultural development initiatives. There is evidence that shows that the capacities of the communities were reinforced, including specific examples of a transition towards fertilization, irrigation and seeding techniques that are more sustainable for the agricultural systems. There is also evidence of the communities having more capacity in terms of sustainable rangeland management, for example observing reserve areas and implementing rotational herding. In addition, there is evidence of enhanced capacities in terms of the identification of degraded areas and of the importance of their recuperation for the equilibrium of the ecosystems.

70. **Evaluation of the environmental objective - Moderately satisfactory.** The project's environmental objective was to pursue land degradation neutrality by enhancing the capacity of southwest Angola's smallholder agro-pastoral sector to mitigate the impact of land degradation processes and to rehabilitate degraded lands by mainstreaming sustainable land management technologies into agro-pastoral and agricultural development initiatives. The evidence in this area is not very visible given that it relates to more long-term outcomes. Direct rehabilitation by planting local

forage species takes time. It takes time for the impact on degradation neutrality and on the recuperation of rangelands as a result of the reserve areas identified and delimited by the project to produce results. However, there is clear evidence of the motivation of the communities, their leaders and traditional authorities to observe the agreements reached, in order to mitigate land degradation which could contribute to achieving this objective in the long-term.

71. **Evaluation of the development objective – Satisfactory.** The project's development objective was to increase local livelihoods by introducing locally adapted sustainable land management approaches and by strengthening and diversifying livestock and non-livestock-based value chains. There is evidence that the livelihoods of the beneficiary families have improved as a result of this project (e.g. human capital, social capital, physical capital, natural capital). There is evidence of the improvement of the livestock conditions and management of the herds through the adoption of techniques introduced by the project (e.g. forage production, animal health and handling) that can lead to direct increases in family income. In many communities there are already differentiated product sale strategies (changes in plants produced in the nurseries) that are contributing towards generating income.

Component 1 - Rangeland management and planning

Finding 3.2: Outcome 1.1 – Satisfactory

- Compared to the start of the project, there is now more capacity and knowledge available for the participatory planning of mainstreamed land management at national, provincial and local level. Close to 200 people received training on different innovative methods (LADA, SHARP, GIS, GreeNTD).
- The project made a significant effort, in terms of access to information and knowledge through the provision of manuals, methodological guides and technical reports in appropriate formats, which are important tools for supporting the work of specialists and decision makers.
- There is little evidence that public institutions are going to introduce these methods in their daily work routines and practices given that this process entails ongoing monitoring, by learning by experience, which the project does not have any more time available to support.
- Six land development plans were negotiated and agreed upon. However, this activity was performed and completed very close to the end of the project, which may undermine the effectiveness of the outcome and the changes in the land.

Evaluation of Outcome 1.1 – Satisfactory

72. Compared to the start of the project, there is now more capacity and knowledge available for the participatory planning of mainstreamed land management at national, provincial and local level. The project made a substantial effort in terms of building capacities through this component. A substantial number of people (almost 200) received training on different innovative methods to support decision-making

and intervention in the field (see Annex 6). However, in many cases, this training was geared towards intermediate management and directors, and not to field specialists, which may compromise the effectiveness in the practical application of the competencies and knowledge acquired. There is also a high turnover in specialists and decision makers, which may limit the appropriation of the capacities created by the project.

73. In addition to the training, the public institutions now have documentation in different formats (manuals, guides, reports) that were produced and provided by the project to support the work routines. Compared to the initial situation, there is now more knowledge available at the level of the public institutions regarding the topic of land degradation and territorial development.

Evaluation of Output 1.1.1 and Output 1.1.2 - Highly satisfactory

74. This Output aimed to improve the capacities of 40 people from public institutions regarding land degradation, particularly the land degradation assessment in drylands methodology (1.1.1) and the capacities of 20 decision makers and 20 people from civil society regarding participatory land management and planning (1.1.2). In quantitative terms, the project far exceeded the target initially set forth (80 people trained).
75. **Close to 200 people received specific training regarding different innovative methods, which are important for facilitating analysis of and decision-making on land degradation, in order for integrated territorial planning.**¹² In general, the evaluator found that the institutions/addressees were satisfied with the training received, with the exception of the SHARP method.¹³
76. The vast majority of people who received training were specialists from public institutions (Municipal Administrations, Agriculture Services, Veterinary Services) and also from civil society. In addition to theoretical training in the classroom, these people benefited from activities in the field (particularly for LADA and GreeNTD) where they could apply the methodologies learned in practice.
77. **The project also made a substantial effort in terms of access to information through the provision of manuals, methodological guides and technical reports.** These are important tools that will remain available to support the work of specialists and decision makers in the practical application of approaches and methodologies. In total, the project provided 12 publications through this component (see Annex 7), the majority available in Portuguese.
78. The project team improved the quality of these materials, following the findings of the Mid-term Review. In effect, the Mid-term Review warned that these materials

¹² Two training sessions for 60 people on land degradation assessment; two training sessions for 42 people on the Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP); two training sessions for 41 people about geographical information systems (GIS); two training sessions for 51 people about participatory and negotiated territorial development (GreeNTD).

¹³ As mentioned in the MTR, those interviewed believe that this method is not very useful for the situation in Angola, in addition to considering that its process is not very practical and too "invasive" for the communities.

were too theoretical and therefore difficult for the specialists to use. The project team subsequently prepared more simple and practical "field guides" adapted to the local context, therefore facilitating their use by the addressees.

79. **There is evidence that the knowledge was transferred and is available and accessible.** For example, the people interviewed understand the use of these approaches and are capable of identifying their main methodological steps.
80. **However, there is little evidence that these public institutions will introduce these approaches in their work routines and practices.** This is due to the following main problems: i) on many occasions the people receiving the training were intermediate management and directors (municipal directors or managers of technical services) and not field specialists as the latter are in fact those responsible for applying the methodologies introduced by the project, in the field;¹⁴ and ii) the appropriation of these tools requires practical work in the field on an ongoing basis - in addition to the training - that the limited duration of the project did not manage to achieve.
81. **The appropriation of these methods by the public institutions and their mainstreaming in day-to-day work entails ongoing practice of their use, through learning by experience.** In the future, ongoing monitoring by the institutions will continue to be necessary as the project can no longer dedicate time for this. In the case of land degradation assessment in drylands, where several field actions took place and specific reports were produced of all of the towns, it is noted that more time and more support for consolidating this method is required. Nevertheless, the evaluator found that some towns showed an interest in using the land degradation assessment in drylands method, namely in the case of the town of Quilengues. In the case of the GreeNTD method, the project managed to make more progress with the practical dimension, as will be shown below.

Evaluation of Output 1.1.3 – Satisfactory

82. This Output aimed to develop integrated land management plans, in a participatory manner, in an area of 3 000 hectares. Following the training and publications produced by the project regarding the GreeNTD method, it was possible to advance with its practical application in the field.
83. **Six participatory land management plans using this method and involving an extensive group of stakeholders were negotiated** (provincial governments, municipal administrations, agricultural services, veterinary services, traditional authorities, communities, civil society). The application of this method in the south of Angola was based on "Jangos Pastoris", an already existing traditional structure to facilitate discussion and negotiation in the field. The six plans developed are divided into three types:
- a) Rangeland reserve areas (*mise en defense*): Chitemo (2 527 ha); Lola (1 382 ha); Tchicolongilo (3 430 ha); Virei (25 320 ha);

¹⁴ As already identified in the Mid-term Review, this occurred because the identification of the recipients of training was performed by those responsible from the public institutions.

- b) Dispute resolution: Impulo, town of Quilengues;
 - c) Regional plan for the transhumance route: Five towns in the three provinces of the project (Huíla, Namibe, Benguela).
84. **During the visits and interviews, the evaluator found that public institutions and local communities were satisfied with the results achieved.** In practice these plans contributed towards resolving some problems existing in the field, both in terms of rangeland reserves and of dispute resolution. The evaluator believed that these plans were well appropriated by the institutions and can function as planning and management instruments in the medium-term.
85. **However, the evaluator found that this activity was completed very close to the end of the project, which poses a significant risk for the effectiveness of the outcomes.** The practical and visible effects in the field can only be appreciated in the medium- and long-term. As a result, it would have been more beneficial to progress with this activity in the first half of the project, therefore providing more time to monitor its evolution in the field and support the institutions and other stakeholders.

Component 2 - Rangeland rehabilitation through best range and herd management practices

Finding 3.3: Outcome 2.1 – Satisfactory

- The methodology of the APFS was central to this project as it turned out to be instrumental for working with the communities and introducing new ecosystem-based production, management, community planning and rehabilitation practices.
- The initial number of APFS was reduced from 70 to 35 after the Mid-term Review. The final evaluation found that of these, 15 APFS are at an advanced stage (43 percent), 12 APFS are at a mid-term stage (34 percent) and eight APFS are at a delayed stage (23 percent).
- The APFS constitute a complex method that require significant time to gain the trust of the communities, implement changes in behaviour and work routines and promote social transformation. This is difficult to achieve in a project of such limited duration.
- Despite the limited amount of functional APFS, there is clear evidence of autonomous use and appropriation of agricultural techniques, animal production and improvement of livelihoods as a result of the project's intervention.

Evaluation of Outcome 2.1 – Satisfactory

86. There is evidence that at community level, the project increased its knowledge and contributed to the adoption of more sustainable agricultural and livestock farming practices, including land management at community level. The methodology of the APFS was well received by the public institutions and communities. Several communities are already implementing integrated natural resources management techniques, including soil and water conservation, fertilization, seeding, herd handling and forage production measures, among others.

Evaluation of Output 2.1.1 and Output 2.1.2 - Satisfactory

87. These outputs aim to train a group of 20 trainers, programme managers and extension service staff on the methodology of the APFS (2.1.1) and establish 70 APFS, covering 2 800 herders/farmers to adopt sustainable land and herd management practices (2.1.2). In Component 2 as well, the project made a substantial effort in terms of building capacities. Almost 30 master trainers and close to 80 APFS facilitators were trained.
88. **The methodology of the APFS was central to this project and instrumental for working with the communities and enabling the adoption of new ecosystem-based production, management, community planning and rehabilitation practices.** In total close to 60 APFS processes were initiated in the first half of the project, with the initial target of the project being 70 established APFS. In the Mid-term Review it was found that this figure was very ambitious and unrealistic given the project duration and the difficulties with working in the field. After the Mid-term Review, it was proposed that the target be reduced to 35 APFS, in order to increase their quality rather than quantity. In addition, more master trainers were trained, training sessions were completed, a guide on "minimum quality guidelines for the APFS" was produced including an impact evaluation as well as technical brochures.
89. **However, the quantitative outcomes achieved are modest given that initially foreseen.** Annex 8 includes the list of the 35 APFS supported by the project and their respective development stage.¹⁵ The Final Evaluation found that 15 APFS are at an advanced stage (43 percent), 12 are at a mid-term stage (34 percent) and 8 are at a delayed stage (23 percent). In total, close to 1 159 people were directly involved in the APFS, 43 percent of which were women.
90. **The main problems that affected this outcome were:**
- i) extensive project territory area (three provinces) and difficulties in reaching isolated communities (distance, transport routes, resources available);
 - ii) new methodology in Angola, requiring significant initial effort for building capacities (masters and trainers, awareness-raising among local authorities, identification of the communities);
 - iii) cultural characteristics of the people of the south of Angola, many of them nomads and not very receptive to changes in their work routines and practices;

¹⁵ In discussions with the project team, the following classification was proposed for the development stage of the APFS: "**Advanced**" - The APFS has an established sustainability plan, the capacity to work autonomously as the group is well organized, the facilitator works actively and, in some cases, there are activities that generate income. There is evidence of changes in the agricultural and/or livestock practices attributable to the APFS. "**Medium**" - The APFS has established an organized group and plan of activities but it needs constant support to guarantee the sustainability of the APFS. "**Delayed**" - The APFS was functional but problems arose throughout the development of the learning activities. Before any planning, the problems that condition the normal operation of the APFS must be resolved.

- iv) difficulties with identifying areas that have access to water and physical space available (land) to implement the APFS;
- v) demotivation, withdrawal of or changes in some facilitators, which invalidated the continuity of the various APFS;
- vi) internal disputes among community members (disputes over resources, ethnic and cultural matters, etc.);
- vii) absence of project resources to acquire basic goods for the operation of the APFS (e.g. sprinklers, hoes, motor pumps, seeds, tools, etc.).

91. **Despite these problems, this evaluation found that the most visible positive effects resulting from the project intervention were found at the level of the APFS.** During the visits and focus group with the communities, it was found that there is clear evidence of autonomous appropriation and utilization of improved agricultural techniques that were introduced by the APFS.¹⁶ Similarly, there is clear evidence of autonomous appropriation and utilization of animal production and rangeland management techniques introduced by the APFS.¹⁷
92. **Although the quantitative outcomes are modest, these must be assessed in perspective.** The APFS constitute a complex method that require significant time to gain the trust of the communities, implement changes in behaviour and work routines and promote social transformation. This is difficult to achieve in a project of such limited duration. **These are new practices that are being used by communities and that were achieved in a very limited space of time.** The effects of these changes also began to become visible in terms of the improvement of the livelihoods of the communities.¹⁸

¹⁶ Namely, fertilization techniques, use of organic waste; identification of pests and diseases; introduction of row-seeding techniques; installation of nurseries, production of vegetable crops and seedlings; efficient water use - irrigation techniques; diversification of agricultural crops; use of composting and using biological techniques to combat pests and diseases.

¹⁷ Namely delimitation of rangeland reserve areas, introduction of forage species; forage production by the communities themselves; assessment of the state of animal health by the beneficiaries; assessment of the animal's condition and subsequent application of vaccines and dosages depending on its weight, use of ethnoveterinary practices.

¹⁸ Namely, natural capital - ecosystem services access and management by the communities; human capital - capacities and knowledge created based on traditional knowledge combined with new techniques; physical capital - access to inputs, equipment and infrastructures that the project introduced; social capital - there are new dynamics of cooperation and collective action among the APFS members with particular evidence shown in the joint work and relationship with public institutions; political capital - there is already a clear institutionalization and recognition of the APFS by the public institutions as a favoured *locus* for the intervention of municipal administration and central government actions and policies.

Finding 3.4: Outcome 2.2 - Highly satisfactory

- The project introduced innovative methods that were well received by the communities: i) participatory selection of species for the rehabilitation of agro-pastoral ecosystems; ii) participatory rehabilitation of ecosystems with the support of the community; and iii) verification and experimentation systems for adaptability and palatability.
- By means of these participatory methods, it was possible to rehabilitate over 750 hectares of rangelands, establish almost 30 000 hectares of rangeland reserve areas (*mise en défense*) and rehabilitate 28 water points.
- Using participatory methods it was possible to make progress with the production of plant seedlings (forage and fruit plants) at two levels: communities and agronomic stations. There was a high level of interest in producing these species, taking into account the potential they offer for additional income in the communities, as well as the benefits of forage production.
- As for the rehabilitation areas (*mise en défense*), the practical effects on the land and particularly on the rangelands can only be appreciated in the medium- and long-term. However, based on the interviews and field visits, the evaluation found that the communities and public institutions are committed to continuing with this activity and monitoring the reserve areas, making it possible to recuperate some rangelands.

Evaluation of Outcome 2.2 – Highly satisfactory

93. The project introduced innovative methods that were well received by the communities: i) participatory selection of species for the rehabilitation of agro-pastoral ecosystems; ii) participatory rehabilitation of ecosystems with the support of the community; and iii) verification and experimentation systems for adaptability and palatability. The enhancement of these methodologies resulted in two pioneering publications for the context of the country, contributing towards the production and dissemination of knowledge.
94. By means of these participatory methods, it was possible to rehabilitate over 750 hectares of rangelands, establish almost 30 000 hectares of rangeland reserve areas (*mise en défense*) and rehabilitate 28 water points. It is difficult to estimate the increase in vegetation cover generated by these interventions given that their effects will only be visible in the long term. However, the satisfaction of the communities and public institutions with these interventions is very evident, as well as the change in the rangeland management and herd handling practices.

Evaluation of Output 2.2.1 – Highly satisfactory

95. This output aimed to train the communities in ecosystem-based rehabilitation principles and soil degradation assessments by seeding an area covering 500 hectares.
96. **On the basis of the participatory identification performed, it was possible to make progress with the production of plant seedlings with forage potential.** This was performed on two levels: i) at community level using the APFS themselves by means of the installation of nurseries and training of the beneficiaries for the

production of seedlings (forage and fruit plants);¹⁹ and ii) at public institution level, through an agreement with the Zootechnical Stations of Caraculo and Cacanda. In this case, aside from the improvement in the infrastructure of these public institutions, the project managed to produce 9 000 plants, which were provided to the communities.

97. **The participatory rehabilitation of the rangelands involved the communities and took place on two levels:** i) installation of 30 *grazing cages*²⁰ for observing/experimentation, 16 of which installed in Bibala and 14 in Virei; and ii) direct rehabilitation by planting plants in the selected geographical areas. In total over 750 hectares of rangelands were rehabilitated using this methodology: Chiclongilo (Bombo): 530 hectares, Chicolongilo (Cahungo) 120 hectares and Lola (Tchitemo) 102 hectares.
98. **During the interviews with authorities and contact with the communities, the evaluator found that receptiveness to these methods was limited.** This is due to the visible impacts in the field being very low, given the dimension of the total geographic area. However, there was a high level of interest in producing these species, taking into account the potential they offer for additional income in the communities, as well as the benefits of the production of forage. In summary, it is probable that the communities continue to use these species to plant in areas close to their crop areas, for example with the intention of producing forage or selling seedlings; yet, it is not very probable that they will be used for the direct rehabilitation of large-scale rangelands.

Evaluation of Output 2.2.2 – Highly satisfactory

99. This aimed to implement six APFS-based verification and experimentation systems for grasses adaptability and palatability and six forage and/or natural grazing land areas established and managed by communities.
100. **The project introduced the innovative methodology regarding the "System of verification and adaptability and palatability of forage species".** The enhancement of this methodology resulted in a pioneering publication for the context of the country, contributing towards the generation and dissemination of knowledge.
101. **This methodology was tested in a participatory manner and subsequently implemented by the project in six APFS** (Montipa, Chicolongilo-Lucia, lumbilo, Cavelocamue, Dinde and Quicuco). The evaluator found that the communities were receptive to this methodology because the visible outcomes are obtained in a short period of time. Clear evidence of the positive outcome of the project in this regard is that many participants in the APFS are already developing specific rangelands to

¹⁹ Close to 30 APFS established nurseries and over 3 000 plant seedlings were produced. The species produced in the APFS were: *Leuceaena leuceofala*, *olifera de moringa*, *Faiderbria albida*, *Carica papaya*, *Eugenia uniflora*, *Cistus reticulada*, *Lablab purpureus*.

²⁰ They are "boxes/crates" that protect the plants from the animals enabling them to develop without the impact of herding. The aim is for people to observe what happens in practice. It involves experimenting and observation, although it may also have a relative impact on the ecosystem given that the seeds can be transported through the air and sow other areas.

produce forage in their own private land, in addition to the APFS areas of land. It is noted that the forage production technique is completely new for these communities.

102. **This change introduced by the project has been very positive because it enables families to have additional feed for the livestock during the dry season.** In essence, these new rangeland areas, associated with the production of forage, operate as a "security net" for families, and have clear benefits in terms of performance and the improvement of the animals' condition.

Evaluation of Output 2.2.3 – Satisfactory

103. This output aimed for improved water management at community level and of livestock water availability through participatory rehabilitation of 15 water points. The project exceeded the target set forth, and rehabilitated 28 water points in total, including 2 "chimpacas",²¹ 8 "cacimbas"²² and reservoirs and 18 holes, as well as the respective irrigation systems.
104. **In the field, the evaluator determined the quality of several interventions performed, and their utilization and degree of satisfaction among the communities and local authorities.** The outcomes achieved by the project in this output were very significant, taking into account the available financial resources of the project. Nevertheless, the project managed to exceed the targets set forth. This was only possible due to the partnerships established between the RETESA project and the PIRAN project,²³ also implemented by FAO, which contributed with some equipment, which was not suitable for RETESA or did not fit into the budget. In addition, the evaluator found that the direct involvement of the communities was fundamental to the success of these interventions, as they contributed with labour and with some materials.
105. It is noted that access to and availability of water is a crucial issue in this region (arid and semi-arid) for livestock and the families themselves. For this reason, the evaluator found that the project's design should have highlighted these interventions more, reinforcing its budget. This observation was also raised during the Mid-term Review. In addition to the economic and social effects, a greater reinforcement of this aspect regarding access to water could have contributed towards increasing the communities' motivation and supporting the implementation of more APFS, many of which do not have access to water, which invalidates their learning activities.

Evaluation of Output 2.2.4 – Satisfactory

106. This Output aimed to establish 900 hectares of *mise en défense* rangeland reserve areas in three communities for strategic livestock feeding, pasture improvement, as well as land and biodiversity conservation. The project's intervention in this aspect was performed together with Output 1.1.3, in other words using the GreenTD plans

²¹ "Chimpaca" is a local term that refers to a way of capturing and storing water, forming a small lagoon.

²² "Cacimba" is a local term that refers to an artisan well geared towards retaining water infiltrated from adjacent water tables.

²³ PIRAN project - South Angola and North Namibia Integrated Resilience Project.

method to identify and delimit reserve areas. In total almost 30 000 hectares of reserve areas were delimited as mentioned previously.

107. **The practical effects on the land and in particular on the rangelands of the reserve areas can be appreciated in the mid- to long-term.** It is not very likely that an area of this dimension (close to 30 000 hectares) can be observed by herders and adjacent communities. However, based on the interviews and field visits, the evaluator believes that the communities and public institutions are committed to continuing with this activity and monitoring the reserve areas, making it therefore possible to progressively recuperate some rangelands.

Finding 3.5: Outcome 2.3 - Moderately satisfactory

- Few interventions were carried out in relation to reinforcing value chains, therefore limiting the scope and effectiveness of this Outcome (only the production of mumpeke cosmetic oil was developed as an activity that generates income, and some training on entrepreneurship and milk processing).
- Investment in training livestock handlers was relevant and there is evidence of benefits for the communities, including partnership with public veterinary services.
- The enhancement of ethnoveterinary medicine, based on traditional knowledge and on partnerships with the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences (ISCED) was relevant and can open-up new opportunities for the communities to tackle animal health issues. However, these activities only took place close to the end of the project and as such there was not enough time to deepen their practical application and obtain greater effectiveness in the interventions.
- The partnership with the herbarium of Lubango, associated with ISCED, was decisive in increasing access to information and the use of ethnoveterinary procedures, capitalizing on the traditional knowledge of the communities.

Evaluation of Outcome 2.3 – Moderately satisfactory

108. The project actions deviated a little from that initially foreseen. An effort was made to provide training on micro-entrepreneurship, but in practice only one activity generating income was supported (production of mumpeke cosmetic oil). With regard to the value chain, only training on milk processing was completed. However, the investment in training livestock handlers was relevant and there is evidence of benefits for the communities, including partnerships with public veterinary services.
109. The enhancement of ethnoveterinary medicine, based on traditional knowledge and on partnerships with ISCED was relevant and can open-up new opportunities for the communities to tackle animal health issues. However, these activities only took place close to the end of the project and as such there was not enough time to deepen their practical application and make the interventions more effective.
110. It is difficult to assess the improvement in family income in quantitative terms but there is evidence that family livelihoods improved in different aspects, in addition to new opportunities for the generation of income associated with the APFS.

Evaluation of Output 2.3.1 – Moderately satisfactory

111. This output aimed for the agro-pastoralists and farmers in five herding communities to adopt improved production technology. Following the Mid-term Review recommendations, the project established an agreement with the Social Support Fund (FAS), a public institution linked to the Ministry of Land, which was important for the activities involved in this outcome.
112. **Three training sessions were performed, encompassing over 60 participants.** In addition, a manual was produced by the FAS about entrepreneurship (at no additional cost for the project), which was used in the training sessions and distributed to other local stakeholders.
113. **In addition to capacity-building efforts, over 60 community micro-projects were also prepared** – income-generating initiatives - that were submitted to the FAS for funding (the result of the analysis of the proposals is awaited). In Bibala the communities were supported in the production of mumpeke cosmetic oil.²⁴ This oil is an important source of income for families as it is very sought after in the country (a 75cl bottle can fetch up to USD 10 in local markets).

Evaluation of Output 2.3.2 – Satisfactory

114. This output aimed to improve the production and the value chain of meat in five herding communities by means of the APFS. Four training sessions were carried out for livestock handlers in which over 50 people participated, one training session was given on ethnoveterinary medicine for 16 participants and one training session was given on milk processing for 30 participants. One manual about "Milk transformation" was produced and distributed by the project. The APFS facilitators that received the training for livestock handlers were equipped with "basic veterinary kits", which contributed to increase the revenues of the facilitators and to extend access to minimum veterinary services in the communities.
115. **The ethnoveterinary aspect was introduced by the RETESA project and constitutes an innovative action.** The project capitalized on the traditional knowledge of the communities to increase access to information and use of ethnoveterinary procedures. The partnership established with the herbarium of Lubango, associated with ISCED, was decisive for this. By conducting surveys in 15 towns of three provinces, plant samples were collected for the herbarium. The herbarium was responsible for cataloguing and systematizing information in a database. A manual and 16 technical brochures were prepared about plants with ethnoveterinary potential.
116. **Veterinary services specialists received training and are already replicating the ethnoveterinary knowledge and practices together with the communities.** This will be a way to reduce costs by providing veterinary services for livestock farmers, increasing access to veterinary care in an accessible manner, resulting in an improvement in the livestock's health. Consequently, it is pointed out that ISCED already has students developing research and doctoral studies on this topic, which

²⁴ The mumpeke is a bush native to the south of Angola; the traditional communities extract its oil which is used for treating the hair and skin.

will contribute towards deepening the dynamic and knowledge introduced by the RETESA project.

Component 3 - Mainstreaming sustainable land management into agricultural and environmental sector policies and programmes

Finding 3.6: Outcome 3.1 - Moderately satisfactory

- The proposal of a “National Policy for Sustainable Land Management” was concluded and widely discussed at national level, but there is no evidence that it will be approved in the short-term.
- The project managed to raise greater awareness of the need to reinforce responsible governance of tenure of land (VGGT) and the decision makers became aware of the need to adapt national policies and legislation to the commitments taken on globally.
- There is still little evidence of the mainstreaming of sustainable land management in projects of the Multisectoral Commission for the Environment (CMA) or in other existing coordination and dialogue structures.

Evaluation of Outcome 3.1 – Moderately satisfactory

117. There is still little evidence that the project contributed towards greater mainstreaming of sustainable land management in national programmes and policies. However, the proposal of a “National Policy for Sustainable Land Management” was concluded and widely discussed at national level but it has not been approved yet. The awareness-raising and distribution of information about the VGGT was relevant but there is still no evidence of their appropriation by the national authorities, namely in terms of mainstreaming of the guidelines in public policies.

Evaluation of Output 3.1.1 – Satisfactory

118. This output aimed to propose a policy to reinforce the application of sustainable land management in rangelands for approval by the Government.
119. **The proposal of a “National Policy for Sustainable Land Management” was concluded after six public consultations at national level** that involved the central Government, civil society, academia, provincial governments and municipal administrations. To prepare this policy proposal, five case studies were conducted that included the analysis of the conceptual framework, legislation inventory, national programmes and policies, and specific legislation assessment (namely Decree 216/11).
120. **The policy has not been approved yet.** During the interviews performed, together with the Ministry of Environment namely, there was substantial interest in this policy although its approval depends on the Council of Ministers.

Evaluation of Output 3.1.2 – Satisfactory

121. This output aimed to reinforce the implementation of the Land Law and therefore facilitate the execution of sustainable land management in rangelands. During the Mid-term Review it was proposed that this output be adjusted, namely to also include

the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests (VGGT), given that it is a topic on FAO's political agenda and a commitment assumed at global level.

122. **Public consultations were completed and a methodological guide was proposed to support the dissemination of the land law and the community delimitation of land.** In addition, land was delimited in the community of Khoisa, in the province of Huíla. The review and renewal of the participatory land delimitation method took place through three public seminars encompassing over 200 people (national authorities and technicians) and also included the work of national specialists. This method is being used by NGOs and other FAO projects (e.g. IRCEA project) and was already proposed to the inter-ministerial land registration commission.
123. **In relation to the VGGT, three national seminars took place to raise awareness, disseminate information and share the commitments of the VGGT with multiple stakeholders,** namely the Government and civil society. The project managed to raise greater awareness of the need to reinforce the responsible governance of tenure of land and the decision makers became aware of the need to adapt national policies and legislation to the commitments taken on globally.
124. **In general the evaluator found that there is awareness of this topic, although the national legislation and policies require a lot of work to adapt to these commitments.** With regard to the policy proposal prepared with the support of the project, the evaluator perceived that there was not a lot of confidence among the institutions, namely the Ministry of Environment, that such would be approved in the short-term.

Evaluation of Output 3.1.3 – Unsatisfactory

125. This output aimed to mainstream sustainable land management in the projects of the Multisectoral Commission for the Environment. The Final Evaluation found that very little was done by the project in this respect. **Only preliminary studies were carried out on the Multisectoral Commission, including the comparison with similar institutions in Brazil and Mozambique.**
126. In the Mid-term Review, and on the basis of the interviews and opinions of the parties responsible from the Ministry of Environment, it was proposed that the *locus* of this activity move from the Commission for the Environment to the Commission for Climate Change and Biodiversity, as it would be a more suitable institution to give continuity to these actions after the completion of the project. A work plan was established and the process of hiring a lawyer is underway to review the commission status, but there are still practically no visible results to highlight.

Output 3.1.4 (eliminated in the Mid-term Review)

127. This output aimed to create a platform to implement Decree 2016/11. During the Mid-term Review it was proposed that this output be eliminated given that other projects are going to start in the field that include initiatives for the creation of multisector platforms in this matter and that have more substantial financial resources (FRESAN project of the European Commission).

Finding 3.7: Outcome 3.2 – Unsatisfactory

- The project's contribution to the reinforcement of governance and dialogue among several stakeholders and different sectors of the Government was very limited.
- Only preliminary meetings were held with the FAO Land Tenure team and AGPM for the creation of an online forum. A proposal was prepared for a website, but it is not operating yet.

Evaluation of Outcome 3.2 – Unsatisfactory

128. The project's contribution to the reinforcement of governance and dialogue among several stakeholders and different sectors of the government was very limited. It was not possible to create any national platform, coordination mechanism or dialogue forum for this topic.

Evaluation of Output 3.2.1 – Unsatisfactory

129. This output aimed to create inter-sector coordination mechanisms for sustainable land management involving the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, provincial and local governments. The Mid-term Review proposed that the content of this product should be replaced with the creation of an online platform to discuss and exchange opinions on and experiences of sustainable land management in Angola.
130. **The Final Evaluation found that very little was done by the project in this respect.** Only preliminary meetings were held with the FAO Land Tenure team and AGPM for the creation of an online forum. A proposal was prepared for a website, but it is not operating yet. In accordance with the information collected, this was due to the short time available to complete this activity but also to the Government's low interest.

Finding 3.8: Outcome 3.3 - Moderately satisfactory

- No government investment plans were prepared to reinforce sustainable land management.
- Instead, the project established negotiations with the donor community (European Commission, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and GEF) and at the moment there are good prospects for channelling resources to maintain continuity of the RETESA project outcomes.

Evaluation of Outcome 3.3 – Moderately satisfactory

131. There is no evidence of an effective increase in public investments for sustainable land management and it was not possible to prepare investment plans. However, the effort made by the project to share the experience and lessons learned from the methods and approaches introduced together with the donor community, was relevant. There is evidence that some donors and development partners are interested and available to channel financial resources to South Angola in order to give continuity to the RETESA project outcomes.

Output 3.3.1 – Moderately satisfactory

132. This output aimed to draft the governmental investment plan developed to support small credits for sustainable land management and land rehabilitation, complementing the existing National Environmental Management Plan, but this was not drafted by the project.
133. **Instead, the project established negotiations with the donor community (European Commission, IFAD and GEF) in order to channel resources to maintain the continuity of its outcomes.** Up until the final evaluation, the following potential investments were confirmed, although they have not been fully approved yet: USD 2.6 million (GEF 6),²⁵ EUR 4 million (CE – FRESAN)²⁶ and USD 2.5 million for the revitalization of the Agro-Ecological Centres of Bibala through the African Development Bank.

Component 4 - Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation

Finding 3.9: Outcome 4.1 – Satisfactory

- The project had a monitoring and evaluation system in place, which provided for the systematic collection and distribution of information about the progress made, in good time.
- An effort was made to disseminate manuals and methodological guides in appropriate formats. Good practices were systematized and disseminated in different formats

Evaluation of Outcome 4.1 – Satisfactory

134. The project had a monitoring and evaluation system in place, which provided for the systematic collection and distribution of information about the progress made, in good time. In the second half of the project, a significant effort was made to document experiences and disseminate good practices. There is evidence that the RETESA outcomes are informing new projects in preparation in the country that will incorporate the same methods and approaches.

Evaluation of Outputs 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 - Satisfactory

135. These outputs aimed for the establishment of an operational monitoring system for the project (4.1.1) and the completion of the Mid-term and Final Evaluation (4.1.2) and the dissemination of good practices and lessons learned from the project (4.1.3).
136. **The project had an operational monitoring and evaluation system and reported up-to-date information in good time**, through different reports. The Mid-term

²⁵ The “Sustainable Land Management in target landscapes in Angola’s south western region” project, which will be implemented in the province of Namibe, Cunene, Huíla and Benguela and that focuses on reversing land degradation by using a lot of the RETESA approaches.

²⁶ The Project for Strengthening Resilience and Food and Nutrition Security in Angola that will be implemented in the provinces of Huíla, Cunene and Namibe and whose design was based on the experience of FRESAN. This project has a total budget of EUR 65 million, of which it is hoped that EUR 4 million will be geared towards a contract with FAO to execute activities in the field.

Review was completed in 2016 and the vast majority of suggestions and reviews to adapt the project were implemented by the team.

137. At the time of the Mid-term Review, several deficiencies were identified regarding communication and visibility. Afterwards, the project improved substantially in this area, and had to prepare a strategy to support its actions at different levels (international, national, local). This new strategy made it possible to resolve the existing visibility problems (for example, coherence with GEF and FAO norms, including the use of logotypes), and to make the knowledge generated on the basis of the project's experience public.
138. **An effort was made to disseminate manuals and methodological guides in appropriate formats.** Good practices were systematized and disseminated in different formats (brochures, websites, local media). News about the project and its good practices was disseminated in the FAO bulletin, GEF website, FAO newsletter about agroecology, and WOCAT platform, among others.

3.4 EQ4. To what extent did the project design include aspects of gender equality and contribute to the empowerment of women through its implementation?

Finding 4 - Moderately unsatisfactory

- The project design did not include an adequate gender analysis.
 - In general, the project provided equal opportunities to women (e.g. 43 percent women beneficiaries of the APFS), although no specific strategy was prepared for this matter.
 - No negative consequences or effects on women were reported in any of the project's components.
 - Separating the indicators by gender was carried out on very few occasions.
139. **The project design did not include a gender assessment and no gender assessment was carried out during the project implementation phase.** The Project Document does not mention specific actions or any strategy focused on gender matters, limiting itself to vague references, such as the inclusion of gender equality in all project activities and decision-making stages.
140. **No negative consequences or effects on women were reported in any of the project's components.** The evaluator interviewed men and women in the field who were directly involved in the activities, both on the part of public institutions and of beneficiaries. In particular in the APFS, there is a high level of motivation among women.
141. **In general the project provided equal opportunities to women and men to participate in the project's activities, with the APFS being a highlight.** In effect, the percentage of women beneficiaries of the APFS is 43 percent, clearly higher than the target set forth which was 25 percent. However, the number of women who were trained as "masters" of the APFS was just 3 out a total of 29 and the number of

"female facilitators" of the APFS was just 5 out of a total of 80. The number of women who regularly participated in the Steering Committee was also very low.

142. **The final evaluation did not observe significant efforts by the project team with regard to gender aspects.** Separating the indicators by gender was carried out on very few occasions. The ratio of men/women participants of the training sessions is difficult to determine due to the absence of records separated by gender (see Annex 6).

3.5 EQ5. What was the project's approach for working with local communities, and to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to the project?

Finding 5 - Satisfactory

- The project adopted an inclusive and participatory approach with the communities. There is evidence that the communities are satisfied with the project activities and with their involvement in the different stages of implementation. The communities are more confident and motivated, and they feel like participating stakeholders in the project's strategy.
- The project promoted the active participation of different stakeholders but the level of appropriation by government institutions was low throughout the whole project, particularly at provincial level.
- The project had several difficulties making agreements in the field and therefore the establishment of the partnerships, as initially planned, was not achieved in full.
- However, the project generated very positive synergies and complementarities with other stakeholders that were not planned in the Project Document, namely the PIRAN and IRCEA projects implemented by FAO, with the Social Support Fund and the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences.

Involvement of local communities

143. **The project adopted an inclusive and participatory approach with the communities.** The team strategy was to work on the creation of opportunities for economic and social development, including the shared access to and management of natural resources. During the final evaluation, it was possible to hold different focus groups with communities and community leaders. The degree of satisfaction among the communities with the project activities and with their involvement in the different stages of implementation was evident. The communities are more trusting and motivated, for example compared with the time of the Mid-term Review, in particular with the APFS which are fully operating. Satisfaction with the work of the technical teams (including the international consultant responsible for the technical support in the implementation of the APFS) was also evident.
144. **From the outset, community meetings were promoted to explain the objectives and actions of the project, namely regarding the APFS.** The communities actively participated in the definition of their own work plans, including the selection of topics

to learn about, locations to implement the APFS and the main support needs. The grants the project provided for the APFS were managed by the communities in a transparent manner and in accordance with their preferences and priorities. The sustainability plans of the APFS (prepared in the final phase of the project) were defined by the members themselves, therefore showing their involvement in decision-making.

145. **Success in the involvement of the communities was also due to the rights-based approach the project adopted.** Clear examples are access to information an legislation and the practical application of land delimitation processes (see Output 3.1.2) or the contribution to access to water (see Output 2.2.3).
146. **Lastly, the use of the traditional “Jangos Pastoris” contributed decisively to this involvement of the communities.**²⁷ These traditional meetings bring together traditional authorities, community leaders and herders. And more recently other stakeholders as well (municipal administrations, technicians, NGOs, others). With this approach, the communities are directly involved in the discussion and decision-making processes.

Appropriation and participation of the different stakeholders

147. **The project promoted the active participation of the different stakeholders but the appropriation by government entities was low.** The institutional structure of the project, in particular via the Steering Committee, promoted the participation of different institutions in the decision-making processes.
148. **The low appropriation by the government institutions, particularly at provincial level, was a constant throughout the project.** This is due to the following main aspects:
 - i) The Ministry of Environment is the project owner, but FAO provided technical and methodological assistance. The financial resources were channelled through FAO and as such the project was not entirely assumed by the Government, and in many cases was considered "an FAO project", above all locally. This view is normal at local level, where it is still difficult to understand the difference between interventions performed in partnership between government institutions and international agencies.
 - ii) Several responsible parties in government, in particular from provincial governments, expected they would be remunerated for their coordination and supervision duties despite this not being set forth in the budget. In addition, the GEF norms do not permit hiring specialists from the government or, for example, providing a top up to their salary.
 - iii) The high turnover in specialists and in intermediate management in provincial and local governments made it difficult to perform ongoing monitoring and greater appropriation of the project by these stakeholders.

²⁷ See “Restoration of traditional pastoral management forums in Angola”, with reference to the experience of the RETESA project in Angola: https://qcat.wocat.net/af/wocat/approaches/view/approaches_3173/.

- iv) The high ambitions of the project and its limited duration, combined with the limited means available (financial and technical resources, vehicles, fuel, etc.) by the public institutions, led to frustration and demotivation, compromising the appropriation of the project.

Synergies and complementarities

- 149. **The initially foreseen establishment of partnerships with different stakeholders, namely NGOs, was not fully achieved.** The project had several difficulties establishing agreements in the field, particularly with NGOs. In the case of NGOs, the difficulty was due to there being few stakeholders in the field or the poor quality of those available. Consequently, the project opted to review its strategy and replace the agreements initially foreseen with the NGOs with other support agreements, namely through consultants. This issue should have been identified in the project design through an assessment of the stakeholders and of the actual existing capacities.
- 150. **Despite these difficulties, the project generated very positive synergies and complementarities with other initiatives in the field that were not planned for in the Project Document,** namely the PIRAN²⁸ and IRCEA projects implemented by FAO, with the Social Support Fund and the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences. These synergies included the supply of materials and equipment for the rehabilitation of water points, and support for some activities in terms of mobilization of communities, organization of discussions, complementary technical assistance, training sessions and the production of knowledge.

3.6 EQ6. How sustainable are the outcomes achieved by the project in environmental, technical, social, financial and institutional terms?

Finding 6 - Moderately satisfactory

- It is not very likely that there will be an increase in public investment to be able to continue with the project outcomes. However, there are good prospects for the donor community to ensure their continuity, namely through new projects in the short-term (European Commission, GEF, IFAD).
- In general, public institutions showed interest in maintaining the consistency of the project's outcomes. However, it is more likely that this continuity will take place through the communities themselves, in the scope of the APFS, particularly those that are at a more advanced stage of the methodological process.
- Despite the progress made in recent years in terms of land legislation, in general, the legislative and public policy framework in Angola still needs to be strengthened to more clearly include the ecosystem rehabilitation and sustainable management aspect.
- The impact of climate change continues to be very visible in the south of Angola. It is likely that this region will continue to be affected by extreme climate phenomena, namely prolonged droughts, which may compromise some of the project's outcomes.

²⁸ Angola-Namibia Integrated Resilience Project

151. Financial risk for sustainability - Moderately unlikely. **Taking the country's economic and financial crisis into account, it is not very likely that there will soon be substantial public investment for sustainable land management and the rehabilitation of degraded land, one of the main outcomes of the project.** However, the prospect of approval of the National Sustainable Land Management Policy (see Output 3.1.1.) can open-up new opportunities for an increase in public funding. At local level there are better prospects for the allocation of public services through the municipal administrations, namely to continue with the support and some APFS.
152. **In addition, there are good prospects for the donor community to give continuity to and support the RETESA project outcomes,** namely through the new GEF, IFAD and European Commission projects.
153. Socio-political risk for sustainability - Moderately likely. **The fight against desertification and against the advancing of arid and semi-arid areas will continue to be one of the Government of Angola's political priorities,** in particular in the context of climate change. In general, the public institutions expressed an interest in giving continuity to the project outcomes, given that this topic is an intervention priority in its plans. There is a substantial number of specialists from public institutions who were trained and it is quite likely that some approaches introduced by the project may continue, namely some of the APFS. In addition, the territorial development plans (GreenNTD) raised a lot of interest and it is likely that the municipal administrations and other local public services will give continuity to these outcomes.
154. **In terms of the communities, it is likely that several APFS will continue autonomously after the project ends, particularly those that are at a more advanced stage of the methodological process.** A substantial number of facilitators have been trained, and a significant number of members of the communities received specific training on animal health and handling. It is very likely that some of these will continue to exercise their duties autonomously, including the rendering of basic services to the community.
155. Lastly, it is important to underline that the dissemination of the RETESA outcomes have led several NGOs to demonstrate an interest in adopting the methods introduced, namely the APFS.
156. Institutional risk for sustainability - Moderately unlikely. Despite the progress made in recent years in terms of land legislation, in general, **the legislative and public policy framework in Angola still needs to be strengthened to more clearly include the ecosystem rehabilitation and sustainable management aspect.** The approval of the National Sustainable Land Management Policy in the short-term could improve this scenario. It was found that great efforts were made by the project to raise awareness of the VGGT but their inclusion in the panorama of public policies may still take several years.
157. In terms of institutionalization and governance, there are national structures that work directly or in a cross-cutting manner on the topic of sustainable land

management, namely in the area of the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture (e.g. National Commission for the Environment, National Commission for Climate Change, etc.). These structures will continue to place the topic of sustainable land management on the political agenda. These institutions also have the knowledge and technical capacity to inform decision-making and support the implementation of projects and national programmes.

158. Environmental risk for sustainability – Unlikely. The impact of climate change continues to be very visible in the south of Angola. **It is likely that this region will continue to be affected by extreme climate phenomena, namely prolonged droughts, which may compromise some of the project's outcomes,** for example in terms of rehabilitation of rangelands and of rangeland reserve areas. If these phenomena turn out to be stronger, they may also compromise the families' livelihoods, particularly affecting herds (death of livestock) and the agricultural subsistence crops.

3.7 EQ7. What are the key lessons that can be learned from the design, implementation and sustainability of the project?

- The implementation of capacity-building processes requires a substantial amount of time, which may exceed the duration of the project.
 - The projects must cover a realistic geographical range of areas.
 - The projects must consider less ambitious targets for the outputs, particularly in terms of the implementation of APFS.
 - The involvement of local governments in the decision-making processes of the projects is important, as well as the measures that favour appropriation by the national institutions.
 - The APFS need a minimum set of initial resources to operate sufficiently.
 - The publications (guides, manuals, reports, etc.) produced and distributed to the public institutions must be suitable for their context and easy as well as practical to use.
 - The integration of specialists from public institutions in the local technical teams of the projects must be prioritized over hiring external personnel.
159. The implementation of capacity-building processes requires a substantial amount of time. The social transformation processes and changes in the management and planning practices and routines of the public institutions and communities require time to be sufficiently appropriated and institutionalized. In addition to the theoretical training, it is also important to promote practical actions in the field, as part of ongoing monitoring over time. Projects with a very limited duration (three to four years) do not have enough time to consolidate these processes.
160. The projects must cover a realistic geographical range of areas. The implementation of the RETESA project revealed that it was very difficult to work with three provinces that cover an extensive geographical area. That limited closer monitoring more suited

to the communities most removed, and had an impact on the quality of the outcomes.

161. The projects must consider realistic targets for the outputs, particularly in terms of the implementation of APFS. The experience of RETESA proved that it is not possible to introduce a new method in a country by placing a high number of APFS as a target. In practice, the project showed that only a low number of APFS were functional. This is not due to the lack of team capacities, but to the high ambition of the project targets. It is better to form fewer APFS of higher quality than initiate dozens of processes that later result in non-functional APFS.
162. The involvement of local governments in the decision-making processes of the projects is important. The experience of RETESA revealed that it was also favourable to include the Municipal Administrations in the Steering Committee, as the highest body for discussions and decision-making. The involvement of these authorities contributed towards increasing their motivation, knowledge of the strategy and project interventions as well as the appropriation of outcomes.
163. The APFS need a minimum set of initial resources to operate sufficiently. The project experience revealed that it is fundamental to have resources (financial, material, equipment) for the initial installation of the APFS. The absence of these resources available in the project budget was one of the factors that restricted the effectiveness of the APFS. The availability of this minimum package of initial resources has a dual purpose: i) to provide a minimum of basic tools and money to start the operation (purchase seeds, purchase equipment, etc.); and ii) increase the participants' motivation and interest.
164. The publications (guides, manuals, reports, etc.) produced and distributed to the public institutions must be suitable for their context and easy as well as practical to use. The materials produced and provided by the projects must be simple, eye-catching and easy for the beneficiaries to understand. It is preferable to invest in brochures, methodological guides and technical notes of practical nature instead of investing in theoretical manuals difficult to read and understand, which nobody will use nor read.
165. The integration of specialists from public institutions in the local technical teams of the projects must be prioritized over hiring external personnel. The experience of RETESA showed that it is important to include specialists from the local public institutions (administrations, IDA, EDA, ISV) in the project technical teams. When the technical teams of the projects are composed exclusively of external specialists they lose their continuity after the end of the projects. Future actions must take into consideration the selection of specialists from the local institutions to assume the responsibilities involved in the technical monitoring of the project, rather than hiring external personnel, therefore increasing the possibilities of replicating and monitoring the actions after the projects end.

166. The projects' design must include a suitable gender analysis and this approach must be applied consistently throughout the execution. RETESA's design did not include a gender assessment or provide recommendations for defining a strategy, by the team. The adoption of a gender-based approach is decisive in cases of projects that involve a lot of work with local communities.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

167. On the basis of evidence collected during the evaluation process, the following main conclusions were identified, which were organized in the order of the evaluation questions. This order does not imply any order of priority.

EQ1. Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all beneficiaries and other stakeholders?

Conclusion 1. The project was relevant given the context of the country and its geographical area of intervention, as the desertification and progression of arid and semi-arid areas are visible, particularly in the south of the country, and negatively affect the livelihoods of the populations and contribute towards substantial environmental and natural changes. The project was coherent and aligned with the main instruments of public policy in Angola regarding environmental, development and poverty reduction matters. It was also coherent with FAO and GEF objectives and strategies. In general, the project's strategy and actions contributed to addressing the lack of capacities at national, provincial and local level to prevent and revert land degradation by introducing and adopting participatory approaches to identify and rehabilitate degraded areas in a participatory and coordinated manner among the multiple stakeholders.

EQ2. In what way did the modes of intervention, institutional structure and partnerships, financial, technical and operational resources and procedures help or hinder the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes?

Conclusion 2. In general, the institutional structure of the project was suitable, and facilitated decision-making, decentralized management and coordination processes. It also had a good dynamic with the Steering Committee. However, it was found that there was a low degree of appropriation by the partner government institutions, as these had assumed a passive position, limiting themselves to waiting for the project team to fund and implement the activities. The capacities and size of the team were suitable for the project requirements.

Conclusion 3. In terms of performance it was found that there were very substantial delays in starting the project in the first year, namely in terms of the selection and establishment of the team, assembly of the institutional structure and logistical conditions of the project. Consequently, the initiation of activities in the field was delayed. However, the project recovered well in the execution of the activities planned from the second year onwards when these difficulties were overcome. At the time of the final evaluation, the project reported a financial implementation rate of 95 percent, a GEF grant disbursement rate of 100 percent and a partner co-financing rate of over 100 percent.

EQ3. How effective was the project in achieving its objectives (overall, development and environmental) and expected outcomes? Which outcomes, expected or unexpected, were achieved in the different project components?

Conclusion 4. In terms of Component 1, a substantial number of people were trained in different methods to analyse land degradation and the climate resilience of the communities. The institutions are interested in adopting these methodologies and increasing the capacity and knowledge available for the participatory planning of mainstreamed land management, but there are few signs that the public institutions are going to introduce these methods in their daily work routines and practices. The six land development plans negotiated and agreed upon with the project's support are important and garnered a lot of interest from national authorities and beneficiaries.

Conclusion 5. In terms of Component 2, the APFS method was very well received by public institutions and beneficiaries. However, the number of APFS installed was much lower than that initially planned (reduction from 70 to 35, and of these only 15 are at a fully functional and advanced stage). Despite the limited number of functional APFS, it is concluded that this method was useful and contributed to introducing new community work methods, resulting in clear evidence of an improvement in agricultural techniques, animal production and the livelihoods of the communities. This component also emphasizes the rehabilitation of rangelands based on the ecosystem and its participatory management. The project introduced innovative methods that were well received by the community. It was possible to rehabilitate over 750 hectares of rangelands, establish almost 30 000 hectares of rangeland reserve areas (*mise en défense*) and rehabilitate 28 water points. However, these are social and natural transformation processes that require time to consolidate. Lastly, the enhancement of ethnoveterinary medicine, based on traditional knowledge and on partnerships with the ISCED was relevant and can open-up new opportunities for the communities to tackle animal health issues.

Conclusion 6. In terms of Component 3, the project made significant progress as for the preparation of a proposal for a sustainable land management policy although this has not been approved yet. However, the other actions of this component were much less effective given that the project's contribution to reinforcing the governance and dialogue among multiple stakeholders and different sectors of the Government was very limited and no governmental investment plan was prepared in order to reinforce sustainable land management.

Conclusion 7. In terms of Component 4, the project's monitoring and evaluation procedures were suitable and the project managed to disseminate manuals and methodological guides, and systematize good practices that were disseminated among the relevant stakeholders.

Conclusion 8. In general, the scope of the objectives was satisfactory, namely in terms of the overall and development objectives. It was found that there is evidence that shows that the capacities of the communities were reinforced by adopting the fertilization, irrigation and seeding techniques that are more sustainable for the agricultural systems, and at the level of managing the rangelands, particularly reserve areas (overall objective) and that there are signs that the livelihoods of the beneficiary families have improved (development objective). However, evidence in

relation to the environmental objective is less visible given that it relates to more long-term outcomes.

EQ4. To what extent did the project design include aspects of gender equality and contribute to the empowerment of women through its implementation?

Conclusion 9. The project design is limited in terms of the mainstreaming of gender matters, as there is no sufficient strategy in place to this end. Throughout the implementation of the project, no significant efforts were observed to be made by the project team in terms of the gender matters, with the exception of the separation of some quantitative data by gender (e.g. participants of training, members of the APFS, etc.).

EQ5. What was the project's approach for working with local communities in relation to rangeland management and sustainable land management practices, and to ensure the participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes related to the project?

Conclusion 10. The project had some difficulties in establishing agreements and partnerships as planned in the initial Project Document, but this limitation was overcome by means of strong synergies and complementarities that were established with other actions in progress in the field, namely implemented by FAO. With regard to the communities, the project adopted an inclusive and participatory approach, which translated into a high degree of satisfaction among the communities with the project's activities and in their active involvement in the different stages of implementation.

EQ6. How sustainable are the outcomes achieved by the project in environmental, technical, social, financial and institutional terms?

Conclusion 11. In financial terms, it is very unlikely that in the next few years there will be an increase in public investment in this area, given the country's current economic and financial situation. In technical terms, it is observed that, in general, public institutions have more training in and more knowledge about the approaches introduced for the management and planning of environmental matters. In terms of environmental sustainability, it is likely that this will be guaranteed, namely by the action of the communities themselves, given that they are going to adopt methods, practices and technologies that are more suited to the conservation of the soil, water and the management of the rangelands. However, the impact of climate change continues to be very visible in the south of Angola.

4.2 Recommendations

168. On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this final evaluation, seven recommendations are proposed below that may inform future GEF-FAO projects taking into account the upscaling, replication or monitoring of the RETESA outcomes:

Recommendation 1. It is recommended that FAO, as an implementing Organization, provide immediate monitoring and encourage the different partners to comply with the plan of action agreed upon for the project outcome sustainability strategy (see Annex 9). These actions were agreed upon in the last meeting of the Steering

Committee in March 2018. They contained a set of steps to guarantee a minimum monitoring of the main outcomes, in order to guarantee their sustainability. Each action proposal is identified with the respective responsible parties. The timing must be maintained to make progress with this plan.

Recommendation 2. Future GEF projects must be of a longer duration, for example six to eight years instead of three to four years, or consider the possibility of having two project phases. This is particularly important in projects that focus on building capacities and promoting institutional changes for planning and management. This will make it possible for public institutions to perform more ongoing monitoring, consolidating the knowledge transferred and the practices/methods introduced. This is also particularly important in the case of projects that include aspects regarding the reinforcement of legislation and public policies, taking into account the time required for national governments to approve laws and policies.

Recommendation 3. Future GEF/FAO projects must focus on the establishment, by means of targeted training, of national specialists in the area of the methods that they aim to introduce (e.g. APFS, LADA, GreetND, etc.). The aim is to build capacities in the country, by means of the training/certification of specialists with international training, capable of replicating the training after the projects are over. In this manner, subsequent projects that use these methods do not need to depend on the systematic hiring of international specialists/consultants to perform the training. In practical terms, the projects must allocate resources to this end under the items "travel" or "international training" geared towards international certification.

Recommendation 4. Future GEF/FAO projects must be designed based on realistic diagnoses that show the real existing capacities at national level, particularly at the level of local institutions. This must preferably be carried out during the project design phase. It is essential to know what the real capacities are for the institutions to collaborate/cooperate with the projects, in financial, human, logistical and transportation terms. This avoids the risk of designing projects based on the assumption that public institutions have the capacity to monitor/execute the actions, but then do not have any means to such end (e.g. money for fuel, available vehicles, appropriate facilities, etc.).

Recommendation 5. Future GEF and FAO projects that cover the topics of production and dissemination of knowledge must provide effective partnerships/collaborations with universities and research centres existing in the countries. This must be achieved by means of a prior analysis of the existing institutions and their capacities (stakeholders' analysis) during the design phase. Subsequently, from the outset contracts/agreements with these institutions for the performance of the project activities must be provided. This aims to promote the generation of knowledge in conjunction with national researchers/specialists, and to contribute to reinforcing the services to extend research and development (R&D) at country level.

Recommendation 6. Future GEF/FAO projects must also include formal education (secondary and higher education) as beneficiaries of the capacity-building processes, to complement the exclusive training of specialists from public institutions (municipal services, agricultural, veterinary and environmental services). In practice

the aim is for secondary and higher education students to also benefit from the training actions and therefore have access to information on the innovative methods introduced by the projects. In the short-term, they will be the potential public institution specialists. Apart from the completion of training geared towards this target audience, future GEF/FAO projects must also focus on the capacity-building of the countries by adjusting or reviewing the curricula of the courses offered in schools, in order to include the new methods.

5 List of Appendices

Appendices available in Portuguese at <http://www.fao.org/evaluation>

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