Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Terminal evaluation of the project "Climate-smart livestock production and land restoration in the Uruguayan rangelands"

Project Evaluation Series
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Project code: GCP/URU/034/GFF
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Abstract

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed the "Climate-smart livestock production and land restoration in the Uruguayan rangelands" project for a total amount of USD 2 091 781. Various state institutions provided a co-financing of USD 14 241 567. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay co-executed the project from February 2018 to September 2023.

The project aimed to mitigate climate change and restore degraded lands through the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector. It emphasized the role of family farming and three enforcement components: institutional strengthening; the implementation of sustainable practices; and management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The evaluation conducted an independent assessment of the project. This involved the following aspects: strategic relevance of the design and implemented actions; coherence of the intervention; effectiveness in achieving the expected outputs, outcomes and objectives; efficient use of resources; incorporation of cross-cutting perspectives; likelihood that the effects will be sustained post-financing; and other factors that may have affected execution. The evaluation aimed to capture lessons learned and offer recommendations to improve the potential impact of this project and future initiatives.

The overall rating of this project is satisfactory. Its execution led to outputs and outcomes that contributed to its objective. The methodology that was used among beneficiaries demonstrated that environmentally sustainable livestock production systems can be established without a negative impact on related productivity or economic activities. Through public policy instruments, the project also proposed an institutional pathway to promote the replication and scalability of this experience.

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Acknowledgements

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Abbreviations

CCM	climate change mitigation
CSLM	climate-smart livestock management
FAGRO	Faculty of Agronomy at the University of the Republic in Montevideo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	greenhouse gas
INIA	National Agriculture Research Institute, by its Spanish acronym
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MRV	monitoring, reporting and verification
OVI	objectively verifiable indicator
PIR	Programme Implementation Report
PPR	project progress report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TOC	theory of change

Executive summary

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed the "Climate-smart livestock production and land restoration in the Uruguayan rangelands" project for a total amount of USD 2 091 781. Various state institutions provided a co-financing of USD 14 241 567. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay co-executed the project from February 2018 to September 2023.

2. The project aimed to: mitigate climate change and restore degraded lands through the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector. It emphasized the role of family farming and three enforcement components: institutional strengthening; the implementation of sustainable practices; and management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

3. The project's first and third components (institutional strengthening, and management and M&E) had a national scope, while the second component (implementation of sustainable practices) had a regional scope. The latter covered the following areas: the Basaltic Slope (Northern Zone); the Gondwana Sedimentary Basin (North-eastern Zone); the Sierras del Este (Eastern Zone); and the Crystalline Shield (Central Zone).

4. The evaluation conducted an independent assessment of the project. This involved the following aspects: strategic relevance of the design and implemented actions; coherence of the intervention; effectiveness in achieving the expected outputs, outcomes and objectives; efficient use of resources; incorporation of cross-cutting perspectives; and likelihood that effects will be sustained post-financing. The evaluation aimed to capture lessons learned and offer recommendations to improve the potential impact of this project and future initiatives.

5. Evaluation questions and subquestions associated with ten criteria were formulated: strategic relevance; coherence; effectiveness; efficiency; knowledge management and communications; cross-cutting perspectives; implementation and execution; stakeholder engagement; M&E; and sustainability.

6. A participatory and collaborative methodology based on a theory of change (TOC) addressed these questions. This process was oriented towards learning in a way that was non-experimental and qualitative.

7. Primary and secondary data were collected through a desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and on-site observations.

8. Purposive sampling was used to select the interviewees. There was a sample of 65 key actors from six categories: beneficiaries; project steering committee members; external consultants; project team personnel; FAO officials; and professionals from local partner institutions.

9. The sources were triangulated to identify trends based on details from different sources and information collection tools. This obtained sufficiently contrasted findings.

10. Data from the project's M&E system were used to assess the achievement of results, both expected and unexpected. This information was compared to primary source details. The TOC was a reference to assess the achievement of outputs, outcomes and objectives.

Results of the evaluation

11. **Strategic relevance.** Components 1 and 2 of the project were designed and implemented to support the development of climate-smart livestock management (CSLM) and improve ecosystem services in agriculture. It also sought to demonstrate the positive impacts on climate change mitigation (CCM) and biodiversity conservation for the promoted sustainable practices. This addressed the FAO-identified national and global challenges, as well as the objectives outlined by the GEF-6 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.

12. The project aligned with national strategies, such as the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change and Variability and Uruguay's second nationally determined contribution. Although alignment with the beneficiaries' priorities was not immediate, the technical assistance generated interest as the positive productive, economic and environmental impacts of the project became evident.

13. In terms of **coherence**, the project was linked to previous processes, avoided a duplication of efforts and generated enabling conditions to continue the initiatives. The relationships established by the project expanded its territorial reach and improved its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

14. In terms of **effectiveness**, the project strengthened institutional capacities and overcame barriers related to weak public policy instruments and insufficient technical assistance. However, the lack of incentive mechanisms for the establishment of sustainable practices was an unresolved barrier. Component 2 of the project overcame barriers linked to the perception of risk in new practices and technologies. This ensured that beneficiaries adopted sustainable practices to reduce emissions and restore degraded lands. In addition, the project developed research that increased the availability of data and scientific knowledge on the effects of CSLM. This overcame the lack of evidence on the impacts of the assistance provided.

15. In terms of **communications and knowledge management**, the developed activities were a key strength of the project and disseminated the advantages of CSLM. However, upon project closure, it was not clear as to how the generated knowledge would be used beyond the direct beneficiaries.

16. In terms of **efficiency**, the GEF financial resources were used appropriately, the activities were executed on time and more outputs were produced than expected. Although co-financing was 9 percent less than the amount committed, this did not affect the achievement of outputs or outcomes.

17. FAO, as the **implementing and executing agency**, and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries as the co-executing entity, satisfactorily fulfilled the responsibilities specified in the GEF Guidelines on the Project and Programme Cycle Policy (GEF, 2020), such as: management of the day-to-day tasks of the GEF project; quality assurance; financial and technical monitoring and accountability; and evaluations. In

addition, the **stakeholders actively participated** in the project. They freely expressed their points of view and were aware of the different activities developed.

18. The **M&E system** facilitated project implementation, but there were some challenges. For example, the emphasis was on extracting lessons learned and, to a lesser extent, on tracking indicators and monitoring project effects. In addition, there was a disconnect between the monitoring of the effects generated by the execution of Component 2 and the gender strategy, which also considered its own indicators. This made it difficult to have fluid access to information on the evolution of these indicators which, in turn, hindered the possibility of adequately managing that information.

19. The project did not initially consider the systematic incorporation of the **gender approach**. During execution, however, a gender strategy was developed and actions were implemented to avoid exacerbating inequalities. Regarding **environmental and social safeguards**, in line with the low risk level assigned to the project, no harmful effects were observed on habitats or communities.

20. There are signs of **sustainability** from the project's actions, with producers compliant and willing to maintain sustainable practices through their own funds. In addition, continuity initiatives are being promoted, such as projects led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment. However, the scalability of the project's initiatives at the state and private levels, without external financial support, is subject to institutional support from public policy instruments promoted by the project. This also depends on the design and implementation of incentive mechanisms and the expanded availability of trained extension agents, among other requirements.

Conclusions

21. The strategic alignment of the project with the priorities of the Uruguayan State and international organizations concerned with CCM and sustainable livestock development facilitated support for its implementation. This also stimulated the interest of the stakeholders in learning about the results of the practices promoted and the methodologies used.

22. The project generated knowledge to fulfil its objective: institutional capacities were strengthened; the beneficiaries adopted and implemented sustainable practices to reduce emissions and restore degraded lands on their properties; and the beneficiaries increased their income. All of this arose simultaneously. Indeed, the project increased and improved the availability of data and knowledge on the environmental, economic and productive effects of the sustainable livestock practices promoted by the project. It demonstrated that mitigating climate change and restoring degraded lands is in fact possible while improving livestock productivity.

23. The project generated intersectoral and international alliances that contributed to the quality of the outputs. It developed outputs that had not been considered in the design. The project also strengthened the technical execution. The obtained results contributed to sustainability. The positive productive, economic and environmental impacts generated interest and promoted ownership of the project by the beneficiary producers and government entities. This brought greater sustainability.

24. The project proposed, through the public policy instruments developed, an institutional pathway for the replication and scaling up of this experience. The next steps are crucial in moving towards intermediate states that will allow for the materialization of this opportunity. The interest and will expressed by government parties, and the knowledge generated by the project, have created a favourable scenario to organize an institutional response to the challenge of establishing sustainable livestock management in Uruguay.

Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1. The strategy implemented by the project proved to be effective for the profile of the participating producers. However, given its specific focus on the livestock sector, its replicability in other contexts or among types of beneficiaries would require adjustments and additional studies.

Lesson learned 2. Incorporating a communications plan as a pillar of the intervention strategy was a good decision since it was a catalyst for the results achieved.

Lesson learned 3. Having reliable data and counterfactual evidence of the effects achieved increases the possibilities of successfully implementing CSLM.

Lesson learned 4. Together with the environmental performance, having information to compare possible economic and productive outcomes is important for making investment decisions.

Lesson learned 5. Raising awareness and highlighting the effects of the project on soil restoration and biodiversity, along with its CCM potential, would have improved the commitment of stakeholders interested in the conservation of rural areas.

Lesson learned 6. The project's design as an initiative to test innovative methodologies and practices through the implementation of pilot projects, which could then be scaled up to the institutional level, is an appropriate approach to achieve the desired impacts at the territorial scale.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. For the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Environment and FAO on the sustainability and scalability of the results. Convene a broad and intersectoral workspace to enrich and validate the public policy instruments promoted by the project and develop a plan with concrete actions that ensure their implementation.

Recommendation 2. For the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and FAO on the inclusion of a scalability study in future research projects. As an output in new projects, conduct a study to provide evidence on the scaling up potential among producers of different sizes, characteristics and sectors.

Recommendation 3. For the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, FAO, the Ministry of Environment, the Faculty of Agronomy at the University of the Republic in Montevideo (FAGRO) and the National Agriculture Research Institute (INIA, by its Spanish acronym) on the management of the knowledge generated by the project. Design a management strategy for the knowledge generated – and to be generated in the future – by the project (good practices, lessons learned and effects). This should consider actions at different scales (national, regional and global) with different target audiences (researchers, decision-makers, producers, consumers, multilateral organizations and states) and different aims (to influence policies, strengthen capacities, promote Uruguay abroad and share experiences).

Executive summary table 1. The GEF evaluation criteria rating table

The GEF criteria	Rating	Summary comments
A. Strategic Relevance	HS	Project design and implementation addressed national and international priorities in a coherent manner and responded to the interests and needs of the beneficiary producers.
B. Coherence	S	The project was linked to previous processes and complemented by actions that were either ongoing or began during the project. This generated enabling conditions to continue the initiatives.
C. Effectiveness	S	The project advanced in overcoming barriers, developing quality products and obtaining results that contribute to achieving the desired impact.
D. Efficiency	S	The financial resources provided by the GEF were used efficiently. The activities were executed on time, and the outputs established in the project document were obtained within the budget.
E. Sustainability	ML	The project's positive effects on the beneficiaries have a good chance of being maintained upon completion. Its scalability will be subject to anchoring the CSLM national strategy, the proposed incentives and expanding the supply of trained extension workers.
F. Implementation	S	In general, FAO met the basic functions and standards required by the GEF for the implementing agencies.
G. Execution	S	FAO and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries satisfactorily carried out the execution and management of the daily project tasks.
H. M&E	S	An M&E system was designed and implemented to meet the monitoring and accountability needs of the project. A disconnect was observed between the M&E system, with the monitoring of the effects generated by the execution of Component 2 (under the responsibility of FAGRO and INIA), and the gender strategy that considered its own indicators in addition to those in the M&E system.
H.1 Design	S	
H.2 Implementation	MS	
Overall project rating	S	In general terms, the project was relevant, coherent, efficient and effective. Its execution showed that it is possible to mitigate climate change, restore degraded land and improve livestock productivity at the same time.

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

1. Introduction

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed the "Climate-smart livestock production and land restoration in the Uruguayan rangelands" project for a total amount of USD 2 091 781. Various state institutions provided a co-financing of USD 14 241 567. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay co-executed the project from February 2018 to September 2023.

2. The project was executed from February 2018[1] to September 2023[2] (see Table 1).

Table 1. Project overview

Project title: Climate-smart livestock production and land restoration in the Uruguayan rangelands **FAO project code:** GCP/URU/034/GFF **The GEF ID:** 9153
Project duration: five years • start date: February 2018 • end date: September 2023
Strategies of the GEF-6: climate change mitigation (CCM) (CCM-2, Programme 4); and land degradation (Land degradation-1, Programme 2)
Financing partner: the GEF **Co-executing partner:** Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries **Implementing and executing agency:** FAO
Total project budget: USD 16 333 348 **National contribution:** USD 14 241 567 **The GEF contribution:** USD 2 091 781

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

3. The GEF requires a terminal evaluation upon closure of financed projects. This report serves this mandate.

1.1 Project context

4. Agriculture is the main driver of Uruguay's economy, with livestock farming as the most important activity. In 2016, the sector generated USD 6.4 billion in exports, representing almost 80 percent of the total value of goods exported by Uruguay. It also accounts for 12 percent of national employment and 70 percent in rural areas.

5. Family farmers face greater difficulties in achieving the productivity levels required to stay in business. Consequently, they tend to increase their livestock production as a way to improve their income. This leads to greater pressure on natural resources and greater vulnerability to climate change.

[1] Although February 2018 appears in the project document, the project began in February 2019.
[2] The project was to end in February 2023 but had two extensions: one until May 2023; and another until September 2023.

6. The agricultural sector is responsible for 57 percent of net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Uruguay. Further, the unsustainable management of beef production on large areas of grassland has exacerbated soil degradation. This has caused organic matter loss, CO_2 release into the atmosphere and biodiversity loss with a gradual reduction in productivity.

7. The government is committed to addressing the challenges of the sector through a holistic approach that focuses on increasing productivity and efficiency in a sustainable manner. However, the vast majority of small-scale producers continue to apply livestock management approaches that do not generate good economic returns, lead to unnecessarily high GHG emissions and continue to degrade land.

8. According to the project document, the barriers that prevent small- and medium-sized producers from adopting climate-smart practices and technologies are: 1) a perceived high risk in using new practices and technologies; 2) a lack of knowledge about alternatives to current management practices; 3) inadequate incentives and technical assistance to guide the transition towards climate-smart livestock management (CSLM); 4) a lack of an interinstitutional strategy for CSLM; and 5) a lack of scientific knowledge and data on CSLM practices and their impacts on GHG emissions, soil conservation and biodiversity.

1.2 Project intervention logic

9. The project was formulated to advance in overcoming these barriers. In this regard, an intervention strategy was designed to mitigate climate change and restore degraded lands through the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector. It emphasized the role of family farming.

10. The project, following its intervention logic, aimed to achieve this objective by developing outputs that fulfil four outcomes with three associated components (see Table 2).

11. Regarding the intervention territory where the actions were carried out, the project intervened in the following regions of Uruguay: the Basaltic Slope (Northern Zone); the Gondwana Sedimentary Basin (North-eastern Zone); the Eastern Sierras (Eastern Zone); and the Crystalline Shield (Central Zone).

Table 2. Project intervention logic

Barriers	Outputs	Outcomes
Lack of an interinstitutional strategy for CSLM Perception of high risk in the use of new practices and technologies Lack of knowledge about alternatives to current management practices Lack of scientific knowledge and data on CSLM practices and their impacts on GHG emissions, soil conservation and biodiversity Inadequate incentives and technical assistance to guide the transition to CSLM	Output 1.1.1. A national CSLM strategy designed and validated with key stakeholders Output 1.1.2. A nationally appropriate mitigation actions system, including a national monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for the livestock sector	Outcome 1.1. Policy and planning frameworks strengthened to support CSLM implementation and national communications on livestock emissions
	Output 1.2.1. Capacities developed to effectively support the implementation of the CSLM with a gender-sensitive perspective Output 1.2.2. A training programme established to support the expansion of improved and climate-smart approaches in livestock management	Outcome 1.2. National capacities strengthened to support the implementation of CSLM
	Output 2.1.1. Short- and medium-term strategies implemented at the institutional level with a gender approach Output 2.1.2. A capacity development programme focused on the application of CSLM practices and technologies Output 2.1.3. Monitoring system established at each facility to monitor GHG emissions, adaptation strategies, financing, land degradation and biodiversity	Outcome 2.1. Sustainable CSLM implemented on degraded or degrading lands
	Output 3.1.1. A series of manuals and audiovisual products that describe improvements in CSLM practices, and measures and technologies to be used by extension agents and producers Output 3.1.2. M&E system established for the project Output 3.1.3. Knowledge exchange with other countries and the dissemination of verifiable data and proven methodologies Output 3.1.4. Mid-term review and terminal project evaluation Output 3.1.5. Communications strategy implemented	Outcome 3.1. Results-based management project implementation and lessons learned; good practices documented and disseminated
Project objective		
Mitigate climate change and restore degraded lands through the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector with an emphasis on family farming		

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

1.3 Theory of change of the project

12. The theory of change (TOC) was reconstructed as part of the evaluation process and shared with the project team. Unlike the intervention logic reviewed in the previous section, it was understood as an exercise that helps to identify milestones that must be achieved on the pathway of desired change in the short, medium and long term. This allowed for the projection of future realities that are not only evident but also likely and desirable.

13. The proposed design was influenced by similar exercises that had been carried out by the project team. The mid-term review, the project document, the results matrix and the background provided by the key informants of the evaluation also influenced this.

14. The TOC is outlined in the following points.

i. **Barriers:** these were obstacles identified during project design that could hinder progress towards the desired impact. It involved the mitigation of climate change and the restoration of degraded lands on family livestock farms.

ii. **Change strategies:** these correspond to the intervention axes. For the evaluated initiative, three strategies that initiate, guide and trigger the path of change were identified. These were research, strengthening institutional capacities and the transfer of technologies to livestock producers.

iii. **Short-term changes:** these corresponded to the changes that occurred, or should have occurred, as a result of and during the course of the project's execution.

iv. **Medium-term changes:** these were understood as the direct and measurable impacts once project implementation is complete. Some of these have already been achieved and others may be achieved in the future.

v. **Intermediate states:** these were medium- and long-term changes or preconditions that were necessary to achieve the desired long-term change or impact.

vi. **Long-term changes:** these were the impacts to which the project would contribute if the expected effects and assumptions materialize.

vii. **Assumptions:** these were the factors and conditions that influence the final realization of the project's results and impact but were beyond the immediate power or influence of the initiative.

15. Table 3 presents the changes and assumptions that were identified for each stage or phase.

Table 3. Reconstruction of the project's theory of change

Long-term changes			
Mitigation of climate change and restoration of degraded lands on family livestock farms			
Intermediate states			
Producers consistently access incentives	Increase in the number of producers who adopt the CSLM approach		
A public, institutional and multisectoral response established to promote CSLM in Uruguay	The Uruguayan State maintains a large-scale MRV system at the property level		
Assumptions			
Changes in state administration do not substantially affect the government's strategic priorities on livestock matters			
Knowledge is disseminated and used to promote the scalability and replication of CSLM in the country	The supply of trained extension agents is sufficient to respond to an increase in demand for their services	Public policy instruments are institutionalized in the Uruguayan State	
Medium-term changes			
Strengthened capacity of Uruguayan public institutions to promote CSLM	Increased availability of extension agents prepared to apply the CSLM approach	Increased and improved availability of data and scientific knowledge on the effects of CSLM	In the pilot properties, emissions are reduced, degraded lands are restored, income increases and costs are reduced
Assumptions			
Government stakeholders validate and institutionalize the public policy instruments developed	Extension workers are interested in trainings on CSLM	The collected data are of good quality and have scientific support	Sensitized and trained producers adopt sustainable practices
Short-term changes			
Policy instruments developed to promote sustainable livestock farming	Training programme for extension agents designed and implemented	Data generation and scientific research production	Extension programme for producers to raise awareness and develop capacities
Assumptions			
Government stakeholders maintain support for the project and show interest in its results	The proposed methodology and approach are consistent with the needs of producers and effective in reducing emissions and restoring degraded lands	The beneficiary producers and the farm owners of the control farms are available to participate in data collection	
Strategies			
Strengthening institutional capacities	Transfer of technologies to livestock producers	Research	
Barriers			
Weak and insufficient public policy instruments	Perception of high risk in the use of new practices and technologies	Lack of scientific knowledge and data on the effects of CSLM practices	
Insufficient technical assistance to guide the transition to CSLM	Inadequate and/or non-existent incentives	Lack of knowledge about alternatives to current management practices	

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

2. Methodology

2.1 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

16. The evaluation had a temporal scope that covered the project's execution period from February 2019 to August 2023.

17. The geographical scope coincided with the territory of intervention and the interaction between the different scales of implementation. In this regard, institutions and actions of national and local scope were considered in the evaluation.

18. The evaluation conducted an independent assessment of the project. This involved the following aspects: strategic relevance of the design and implemented actions; coherence of the intervention; effectiveness in achieving the expected outputs, outcomes and objectives; efficient use of resources; incorporation of cross-cutting perspectives; and likelihood that effects will be sustained post-financing. The evaluation aimed to capture lessons learned and offer recommendations to improve the potential impact of this project and future initiatives.

2.2 Users of the evaluation

19. The main users of this evaluation are outlined in the following points.

i. FAO, as the implementing agency, and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries as the co-executing partner, can use the findings, lessons learned and recommendations to improve the design and implementation of future interventions in the country or region. This includes ongoing projects in similar areas of work.

ii. The involved local governments, partners and beneficiary communities can use the evaluation to improve and strengthen the scope of the results and give continuity to the processes triggered by the project.

iii. The FAO-GEF Coordination Unit will use the results to report to the GEF and report on the achievement of project objectives and indicators. In addition, it will use the evidence to improve the implementation of the FAO-GEF portfolio at regional and country levels. It will also share good practices developed by this project with the FAO-GEF community.

iv. FAO Representation in Uruguay, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO headquarters will use the main results of the evaluation for their strategic planning and design of future GEF and non-GEF proposals.

v. The GEF, as a financial partner, will use the results as evidence to improve the implementation of the FAO-GEF portfolio.

2.3 Methodological design

2.3.1 Approach

20. The evaluation used a participatory and collaborative methodology. It was based on the TOC and oriented towards learning, which was non-experimental and qualitative in nature.

21. The aim was to identify existing relationships between the inputs, outputs, and outcomes and the expected and unplanned effects to which the project contributed or should have contributed. It also aimed to identify the conditions for this to occur and what actually happened in practice.

2.3.2 Evaluation questions

22. The information needs were determined by the evaluation criteria and questions described in the terms of reference. Each element was analysed by taking into consideration the design, performance, promoted processes, structure and results of the project. Table 4 presents a list of evaluation questions associated with ten evaluation criteria.

Table 4. Criteria and evaluation questions

Strategic relevance
Question 1. To what extent are the project's results aligned with the focal areas/strategies of the FAO-GEF operational programme, the country priorities and the FAO Country Programming Framework?
Coherence
Question 2. How well was the intervention harmonized with other interventions by the implementing agency and other institutions?
Effectiveness
Question 3. What results, either intentional or unintentional, did the project achieve, and to what extent did these contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives?
Knowledge and communications management
Question 4. How did the project document and share its results, good practices, lessons learned and experiences? Did the communications products and activities contribute to the sustainability and expansion of the project's results?
Efficiency
Question 5. To what extent was the project implemented efficiently and cost-effectively? To what extent was it able to adapt to any changes in conditions (government and/or policy changes, the COVID-19 pandemic, project team changes, etc.) to improve the efficiency of project delivery?
Implementation and execution
Question 6. To what extent did FAO and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries exercise their roles and assume the responsibilities of implementing agency and co-executing entity, respectively?
Stakeholder participation
Question 7. Did other actors – such as civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples or the private sector – participate in the design or execution of the project? How was the level and quality of the participation and involvement of partners, key counterparts and other stakeholders assessed?
Monitoring and evaluation system
Question 8. Was the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan and its implementation efficient and did it contribute to the management and accountability of the project? Was information from the M&E system used appropriately to make timely decisions and promote learning during project implementation?

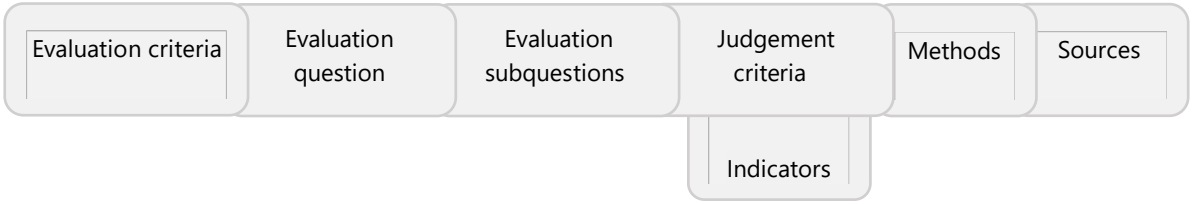
Cross-cutting perspectives
Question 9. To what extent were gender considerations and safeguards considered in the design and implementation of the project?
Sustainability
Question 10. How sustainable are the results achieved to date at an environmental, social, institutional and financial level? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project's achievements?

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

2.3.3 Evaluation matrix

23. An evaluation matrix was prepared to develop a methodological guide for the collection and analysis of information (see Appendix 5). This included ten questions and subquestions associated with the evaluation criteria that had been established in the terms of reference. Figure 1 presents the matrix structure.

Figure 1. Structure of the evaluation matrix



Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

2.3.4 Sampling

24. The selection of the key evaluation agents was carried out through purposive sampling. To choose the sample, three general criteria were applied: a) information management level; b) level of responsibility; and c) level of intensity of connection with the project. Each criterion was assigned a rating of high, medium or low. An agent was considered eligible only if he or she met two high scores. This ensured that the sample as a whole met the following requirements:

i. territorial: ensure the representation of the four areas of intervention;

ii. performance: have properties with different environmental and productive performance;

iii. type of actor: include people from the project team, FAO, government institutions, partners and representatives of beneficiary organizations, and producers;

iv. type of initiative: include beneficiary properties that are representative of the entire project with different practices implemented, and that farms in a control group (paired) are considered among the sample; and

v. gender equality: include female producers in the same proportion as their participation in the project.

25. As a result of this exercise, a sample of 65 people located in Montevideo and the four geographic areas of project intervention was obtained (see Appendix 1).

26. Methodologically, it was decided to first consult agents with an understanding of the intervention as a whole, then informants in specialized areas (specialists, external consultants, etc.) and finish with the project beneficiaries. This allowed for new hypotheses to be developed in the field and tested as the scale of consultation was reduced.

2.3.5 Information collection techniques

27. The evaluation consulted different sources – primary and secondary – and used different methods of producing information. These are detailed in the following points.

i. Document analysis. The desk review included: the project document; semi-annual and annual progress reports; technical reports generated for the three components; training materials; studies; consulting reports; legislation and national public policy instruments; key press releases; publications; communications products; strategic and technical documents from the GEF-6 and FAO; protocols; treaties and conventions signed by Uruguay; other relevant documents from the United Nations system; and other available sources.

ii. Semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews (in-person or virtual) were carried out with different key agents to obtain information about people's impressions or experiences. Priority was placed on those responsible for the project's co-execution (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment), implementation, and execution (FAO), state officials, partner institutions, external consultants and beneficiary producers.

iii. Focus group discussions. The focus groups allowed for comparing the opinions and different points of view of the project beneficiaries, as well as their understanding and perception of the processes and results of the project.

iv. On-site observation. This technique was used during visits to the intervention territories. The objective was to obtain information about how the project was implemented and the activities carried out, as well as the processes, debates, social interactions and observable results seen directly in the field.

2.3.6 Information analysis

28. The background information collected from the different techniques and sources was systematized by evaluation subquestions. This information was then refined considering analytical subcategories developed based on the indicators and evaluative judgement criteria reflected in the evaluation matrix.

29. A methodological triangulation based on multiple information sources was carried out to identify trends in the background information obtained from the different sources and tools for collecting information. This also aimed to get sufficiently contrasted findings.

30. To assess planned and unplanned results, data reported by the project through its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was considered among other judgement criteria. This information contrasted the background information from primary sources. In addition, the TOC was used as a reference to assess the achievement of outputs, outcomes and effects based on progress towards overcoming the barriers identified, the materialization of the assumptions and the changes observed in the short and medium term.

2.3.7 FAO–GEF evaluation frameworks

31. The FAO Office of Evaluation and the GEF developed reference frameworks that provide technical and methodological guidance for the evaluation of gender inclusion (FAO, 2013, 2017; GEF, 2017a), capacity development (FAO, 2019a), the participation of Indigenous Peoples (FAO, 2010a, 2016) and environmental and social safeguards (GEF, 2018) in the projects, programmes and strategies that FAO implements, executes, finances and supports. These tools incorporate general methodologies and guidelines for an effective evaluation of each of these dimensions, along with a battery of evaluative questions, indicators, judgement criteria and recommended information collection methods. Following the guidelines established in these instruments, the Evaluation Team developed a selection of elements for each framework to be incorporated into the evaluation matrix. This provided an analysis of these perspectives.

32. Finally, it is important to mention that the evaluation aligned with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG, 2016) and the FAO Office of Evaluation's project evaluation guide (FAO, 2019b). This way, it adopted a consultative, transparent and independent approach with the internal and external stakeholders of the project.

2.4 Limitations

33. The time allocated to the evaluation's fieldwork was a limitation. The available resources made it possible to carry out a mission of only ten days. This restricted the sample size and was insufficient to consult all key project beneficiaries in the field.

34. To overcome this situation, purposive sampling was done to ensure the inclusion of all types of identified informants (project team, FAO officials, external consultancies, partner institutions and beneficiary producers). This involved visits to the four intervention areas and a representation of women and properties that were characteristic of the practices implemented. In order to optimize the time spent in the field, virtual interviews were conducted with some institutional agents once the mission was completed.

35. The delivery and approval of key project outputs was still pending at the time of this evaluation. This included the mitigation plan and the report on the intensive environmental analysis of the pilot and control properties. Both of these are important documents for the assessment of environmental, economic and institutional impacts. As a mitigation measure, the evaluation referred to data from the draft documents and corroborated these with the project team and academics responsible for their preparation.

2.5 Structure of the report

36. The report was structured based on guidelines from the FAO Office of Evaluation. These were formulated in accordance with the GEF evaluation policy (GEF, 2019) and the guidelines for GEF agencies in conducting terminal evaluations (GEF, 2017b).

37. Following the introduction, objectives, scope and methodology, the results linked to the evaluation criteria are in presented Section 3.

38. Section 4 presents the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

39. This document includes eight appendices: 1) People interviewed; 2) The GEF evaluation criteria rating table; 3) The GEF rating scheme; 4) Results matrix; 5) Evaluation matrix; 6) Co-financing table; and 7) Fieldwork agenda.

3. Results of the evaluation

3.1 Strategic relevance

Finding 1. The project satisfactorily addressed the challenges and priorities of FAO, the GEF and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in terms of CCM, the restoration of degraded lands and sustainable production.

3.1.1 Response to the GEF

40. The actions of Components 1 and 2 aimed to support CSLM, improve the flow of agricultural ecosystem services and gather evidence on the impacts of the sustainable practices implemented on CCM and biodiversity conservation. These objectives responded satisfactorily to the climate change (Goal 2, Programme 4)[3] and land degradation focal areas of the GEF-6 strategy (Goal 1, Programme 2).[4]

3.1.2 Response to FAO

41. The project remains relevant, even though it was formulated prior to the current FAO global and national programmatic documents.

42. FAO's strategic priorities to achieve better production and a better environment, and five out of the nine institutional challenges[5] established in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 (FAO, 2021), were a key part of project design and execution. The project addressed institutional shortcomings in Uruguay through the development of public policy proposals. By promoting innovative practices on livestock farms, it also facilitated the establishment of more resilient agrifood systems and the sustainable use of natural resources. This contributed to climate change preparedness and boosted productivity among small- and medium-sized producers. It also contributed to the core areas of the other four institutional challenges. Further, it addressed improvements in production and the environment, which are prioritized in the FAO Strategic Framework.

43. These aspects were also relevant to the 2022–2025 FAO Country Programming Framework. They provided a coherent response to Work area 1: environmentally sustainable and resilient agricultural and livestock production that generates opportunities for territorial development. The development of research to generate evidence on its effects was a strong point of the project. This also made it consistent with: Cross-cutting area 1 on the

[3] This involves the climate change focal area. Specifically, Objective 2 demonstrates the systemic impacts of mitigation options. Programme 4 promotes the conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forests and other land uses, and supports climate-smart agriculture.

[4] This involves the land degradation focal area. Specifically, Objective 1 maintains or improves the flow of agricultural ecosystem services to sustain food production and livelihoods. Programme 2 supports climate-smart agriculture.

[5] The FAO institutional challenges addressed by the project are: i) in collaboration with other organizations, face climate change and the intensification of natural hazards by drastically reducing GHG emissions from global agrifood systems and the entire economy; ii) make agrifood systems more resilient to climate shocks and hazards; iii) ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and the restoration of the natural resource base; iv) address institutional deficiencies and the lack of coordination between different sectors, governance processes and legal frameworks at all levels, including their implementation problems and consequences for agrifood systems; and v) manage innovative technologies and systemic approaches and their potential drawbacks to sustainably improve food and agricultural productivity.

generation of data and information for decision-making; and Cross-cutting area 2 on the development of science, technology and innovation.

3.1.3 Response to the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda

44. The project's objectives of CCM, slowing and reversing land degradation, and moving towards more sustainable forms of production were consistent with SDG 12, SDG 13 and SDG 15. Specifically, this aimed to: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12); take urgent action to combat climate change and its effects (SDG 13); and sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss (SDG 15).

Finding 2. The strategic priorities and national commitments on climate change were satisfactorily addressed during project design and implementation.

45. The project addressed three out of four priorities from Uruguay's national adaptation plan for climate change and variability for agriculture (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2019) namely: develop and adopt animal production systems that are less vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; conserve agroecosystems and their services; and strengthen institutional capacities for the management of sustainable production systems.

46. The National Climate Change Policy (National System of Response to Climate Change and Variability, 2017) includes, among the lines of action mentioned in Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the document, the following measures: a) promote the sustainable management of rural areas that consider adaptation and a contribution to reducing the intensity of GHG emissions; and b) promote the adoption of technologies and practices that support environmental, social and economic sustainability, as well as the reduction of emissions intensity in agricultural production systems – especially beef, dairy and rice.

47. In its second nationally determined contribution, Uruguay committed to incorporating good farm and herd management practices on livestock production farms by 2030. This covers a total of 1.5 million ha (2.5 million ha conditional) to prevent carbon losses and enhance soil carbon sequestration.

48. These three instruments established priorities and goals that the project incorporated into its design and execution, and to which its outputs and results contributed.

Finding 3. Without associated investments, technical assistance for sustainable practices did not arise spontaneously based on the needs of producers. However, the effects achieved by the project generated the interest of producers in implementing these practices.

49. The project's technical assistance did not include investments in infrastructure or the provision of agricultural inputs. Initially, this made it less attractive than other conventional interventions that generally focus on transfers of this type. This is why the interviewed key stakeholders stated that, at least initially, the requests to participate were neither spontaneous nor on a mass scale.

50. Considering this situation, the project raised awareness and identified producers who were likely to become beneficiaries and commit to the promoted actions. Once this challenge was overcome, and with the extension work in place, the promoted practices began to generate productive, economic and environmental effects that were positive. This triggered

the interest of other producers and improved adherence to the proposal of those already committed.

3.2 Coherence

Finding 4. The project, which was linked to previous processes, was complemented by other actions. These were either ongoing or began during execution. They generated the conditions so that the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (internal coherence) could continue the initiatives alongside those of other actors that focused on similar issues (external coherence).

51. When the project began, Uruguay had already made progress towards establishing sustainable, low-emission livestock production. Specific initiatives had contributed to the development of a trend that the project continued and deepened. These initiatives include: Co-Innovation for Agricultural Systems (2007–2010) (Lopez Ridaura and Mouret, 2010); Co-innovating for the Sustainable Development of Rocha's Family Production Systems (2012–2015) (Albicette *et al*., 2016); Development and Adaptation to Climate Change (2011–2021) (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2012); and Building Resilience to Climate Change and Variability in Vulnerable Small-scale Producers (2012–2020) (Benitez *et al*., 2021).

52. Actions were also coordinated with other institutions during execution.

    i. The pilot initiative led by the General Directorate for Rural Development with producers from the El Fogón cooperative in Sarandí del Yí sought to replicate the project's achievements.

    ii. Cooperation with the Ministry for Primary Industries of the Government of New Zealand financed the development of a mitigation plan for the livestock sector in Uruguay and developed capacities among national public officials.

    iii. The relationship established with the University of the Republic in Montevideo (FAGRO) and its academic staff led to the signing of a letter of agreement to execute Component 2. Additionally, alliances were established that allowed four research initiatives to be linked to the project along with ten postgraduate theses and one internship.

    iv. The team cooperated to use project-generated data to measure the environmental impact caused by the livestock industry (Livestock Environmental Footprint). It also prepared the second nationally determined contribution.

53. The establishment of collaborative and complementary relationships based on the project's results were also useful to support the creation and strengthening of initiatives that will be continued. Some examples include the following:

    i. The second phase of the Agroecological and Climate Resilient Systems in Uruguay project opened its call in August 2023. This initiative, which has similar objectives to the livestock and climate goals of the project, will include the participation of trained extension workers and project team members.

    ii. The Sustainable Livestock Management EUROCLIMA project was executed by the Ministry of Environment. This will replicate actions and the approach proposed by the project in other territories.

iii. There was support in the preparation of a concept note for an application to the Green Climate Fund. This involved the funding of a continuity project that will be expanded to other livestock sectors.

3.3 Effectiveness

Finding 5. Some of the outcome indicators were below the expected level, while others met or exceeded initial estimates.

54. The reported performance of compliance with the project's outcome indicators was not homogeneous. This is because some indicators either reached or exceeded their expected level, while others were below the goals stipulated in the project document (see Table 5).

Table 5. Reported level of progress on the outcome indicators

Outcome 1.1. Policy and planning frameworks strengthened to support CSLM implementation and national communications on livestock emissions		
Indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
Objectively verifiable indicator (OVI) 1.1.1. Indicator 10 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool. An MRV system for emissions reductions has been established and reports verified data (the GEF Core indicator 3)	8	7
OVI 1.1.2. Indicator 9 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool. Degree of support for the reduction of GHG emissions in policy planning and the regulatory framework	6	7
Outcome 1.2. National capacities strengthened to support the implementation of CSLM		
OVI 1.2.1. Number of institutions committed to supporting the implementation of CSLM	6	8
Outcome 2.1. Sustainable CSLM implemented on degraded or degrading lands		
OVI 2.1.1. Indicator 5 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool and Core indicator 4 of the GEF-7 onwards. Land area under effective rangeland management practices and/or support for climate-smart agriculture	35 000 ha	32 931 ha
OVI 2.1.2. Indicator 1 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool and Core indicator 6 of the GEF-7 onwards. t CO_2 e of GHG directly and indirectly reduced or avoided	379 000 t CO_2 e	458 124 t CO_2 e
t CO_2 e reduced or avoided directly	118 950 t CO_2 e	133 716 t CO_2 e
t CO_2 e reduced or avoided indirectly	260 166 t CO_2 e	324 407 t CO_2 e
OVI 2.1.2. Increased income on pilot farms	80% of farmers increase their income by at least 10%	54.4% of farmers increased their income by 10% or more
OVI 2.1.3. Indicator 5 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool and Core indicator 4 of the GEF-7 onwards. Hectares subjected to technologies and practices with low GHG content	35 000 ha	32 931 ha

Source: FAO. 2020. *Terminal evaluation of the project "Climate-smart livestock production and land restoration in the Uruguayan rangelands" – Project Implementation Report.* Rome.

55. Progress was made towards the goal (35 000 ha) of Indicator 2.1.1 on the area of land with effective grassland management practices or climate-smart agriculture, and Indicator 2.1.3 on the area under low-emission practices and GHG technologies. This, however, was reported as not achieved. The project reached an area of 32 931 ha, or 94 percent of the goal.

56. The goal of Indicator 1.1.1 on the establishment of a monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for the reduction of emissions was also included in the project's tracking tools but not fully achieved. According to the project's reports, it scored seven out of eight (GEF, 2014).[6]

57. The goal of Indicator 2.1.2 on increasing income at the farm level was not achieved. The target was for 80 percent of the farmers on pilot farms to achieve a minimum increase in their income of 10 percent. However, it was reported that 74 percent of producers increased their income, and only 54 percent did so by 10 percent or more. However, the average income of beneficiary families increased by 28 percent.

58. The goal of climate change Indicator 1 involved a total of 379 000 t CO_2 e of GHG directly and indirectly reduced or avoided. This was reported as achieved. However, the estimate of indirect emissions (324 407 t CO_2 e) was not completely reliable. Initially, the indirect emissions goal was expected from the contribution of the second phase of the Development and Adaptation to Climate Change project, which was ultimately not executed. Therefore, alternatives were sought to make up for this gap and still achieve the goal of the indicator. However, for the purposes of the evaluation, the solution is methodologically weak since it provides a proxy that is measured based on assumptions regarding the potential effects of other initiatives, and consultations and surveys carried out with the technicians who execute them.

59. The failure of the project to fully achieve some goals is explained by a drought that affected Uruguay during the project period. Indeed, this negatively impacted the productive performance of livestock farms throughout the country, including the project beneficiaries. This failure is also explained by a change in the institutional context that resulted in the withdrawal of funds from the Development and Adaptation to Climate Change project. Although these risks were duly identified, the mitigation measures implemented were not sufficient to achieve the project goals or prepare a justification for their eventual moderation. However, the Evaluation Team determined that these cases did not significantly affect the contribution of the project towards overcoming the barriers identified, obtaining results or its progress towards the expected result.

Finding 6. Results: the project's outputs and outcomes showed that it is possible to simultaneously mitigate climate change, restore degraded lands and improve livestock productivity.

[6] The GEF-6 guide for climate change tracking tools establishes that this indicator must be measured with a score between one and ten. The score of seven obtained by the project means that "GHG measurement is carried out in a broad manner (with widely acceptable methodologies), but more sophisticated analyses are needed to improve policies; reporting is regular with improvements in transparency; and verification is carried out using more sophisticated methods, even if only partially." However, the goal was a score of eight, which is understood as the existence of "solid standardized measurement processes established for key indicators and incorporated into the implementation of institutional policies; reports are widely available in multiple formats; and verification is performed for a larger set of information" (GEF, 2014).

60. Designing the field interventions on a pilot scale was the right decision. This allowed for measuring the potential contribution of the promoted practices and methodologies to the mitigation of climate change, the restoration of degraded lands and improved productivity. This then generated knowledge that could be used in the development of a larger scale intervention.

61. Considering this, the evaluation confirms that the execution of actions, the development of outputs and the results achieved by the project contributed to the achievement of its objective to mitigate climate change and restore degraded lands through the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector. It emphasized the role of family farming.

62. According to measurements carried out by FAGRO and the National Agriculture Research Institute (INIA, by its Spanish acronym), the farms that participated in the project show favourable environmental performance compared to their baseline: a 7.6 percent reduction in emissions per hectare was achieved with an 18.5 percent reduction in the emissions intensity of t CO_2 e per kg of meat. In addition, 13 out of 20 farms achieved greater pasture grazing heights (0.5–1 cm higher) and significant increases in pasture coverage compared to the control farms.

63. The environmental indicators also had a favourable productive performance: the beneficiaries increased their net family income by an average of 28 percent; work productivity increased by 51.3 percent; and they reduced their costs by an average of 1.9 percent. In addition, the total production of beef and sheep increased by 7.1 percent in kg per ha and 20.1 percent in terms of kg per livestock unit. Finally, weaning percentages rose 6.4 percent for cattle and 12.9 percent for sheep. The breeding rate increased by 64 percent, and the weight of weaned calves rose by 12 percent.

64. As cited, the presented figures were recorded in an unfavourable context since the country experienced a severe water crisis during the years of project execution. For this reason, key participants in the evaluation valued the environmental, productive and economic performance of the project as highly satisfactory.

65. It is worth highlighting that, in addition to mitigating climate change and restoring degraded lands, the project demonstrated that it is possible to achieve a triple positive effect in terms of environmental, economic and climate sustainability through an innovative approach. This shows the additionality of the project's actions compared to traditional livestock activities in Uruguay.

Finding 7. Outputs and outcomes: the institutional capacities for the promotion, implementation and management of CSLM in the country were strengthened.

66. On capacity building, the project made progress in overcoming two out of three barriers identified in the reconstructed TOC (see Table 6).

Table 6. Barriers, outputs and outcomes related to strengthening institutional capacities

Barriers to overcome	Outputs achieved	Outcomes
Weak and insufficient public policy instruments	CSLM national strategy Mitigation plan MRV system	Strengthened capacity of Uruguayan public institutions to promote CSLM
Technical assistance to guide the transition to managing insufficient CSLM	Design and implementation of a CSLM training course for extension agents	Increased supply of extension agents prepared to apply the CSLM approach
Inadequate and/or non-existent incentives	No outputs indicated any progress in overcoming this barrier	No results observed

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

67. The design of a national strategy for CSLM, the preparation of a mitigation plan and the development of a proposal for an MRV system for emissions from the livestock sector were outputs that contributed to overcoming the first barrier of weak or insufficient public policy instruments. As an intermediate result, it strengthened the capacity of Uruguayan public institutions to promote sustainable livestock farming.

68. Although the result aligned with the provisions of the project document, the instruments developed were not formally institutionalized as state public policy. This was a key assumption to move towards intermediate states that promote a greater contribution of the livestock sector to the mitigation of the effects of climate change in the country.

69. Insufficient technical assistance was another barrier that the project helped to overcome. The design and implementation of a training course on CSLM aimed at extension agents was the main output that contributed to this goal. This increased the availability of professionals prepared to apply the approach promoted by the project. In total, 61 extension agents were trained (11 were part of the project, plus an additional 50 agents). However, this number is still insufficient to consider the barrier as overcome. According to the 2011 general agricultural census in Uruguay, there were 25 580 family livestock farms with producers that had a profile similar to that of the project beneficiaries (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries-Directorate of Agricultural Statistical Research, 2011).

70. Designing and implementing a system of incentives for CSLM production is a pending task. The key agents agree that overcoming this barrier is central to enabling the scalability of the project.

Finding 8. Outputs and outcomes: the sensitization of beneficiary groups and the development of their capacities enabled them to implement sustainable practices that reduced emissions, restored degraded lands and increased income from livestock production.

71. The technical assistance methodology was successful. As a result, it was possible to change inefficient and unsustainable productive behaviours and establish management practices that contributed to the objective of the project. This shows that, through the implementation of an extension programme, it is possible to overcome the perception of high risk in the adoption of technologies and the lack of knowledge of sustainable management alternatives among producers (see Table 7).

Table 7. Barriers, outputs and outcomes related to farms and beneficiary producers

Barriers to overcome	Outputs achieved	Outcomes
Perception of high risk in the use of new practices and technologies	Extension programme to raise awareness and develop capacities among beneficiary producers	Sensitized and trained producers adopt sustainable practices
Lack of knowledge about alternatives to current management practices		On the pilot farms, emissions reduced, degraded lands restored, incomes increased and costs reduced

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

72. Practices such as reducing the size of the herd, shortening the breeding period, improving the nutritional level of the calves in their first winter, keeping rigorous records and planning for the medium term contributed to greater efficiency and productivity. This also brought improvements in the quality and biodiversity of the pastures and the reduction of emissions on the properties. These were low-cost and, at first glance, simple strategies, but they generated resistance from beneficiary producers. Removing animals to reduce the herd size was, according to all informants interviewed, the most difficult decision because it went against the grain of traditional livestock management beliefs and practices.

73. The work of the extension agents was crucial in convincing farmers to adopt these practices and confirm the assumptions of the TOC. After a demanding selection process, the agents were trained in co-innovation and ecological intensification approaches. During project execution, they then had the permanent technical support of field supervisors and, importantly, access to a space for the discussion of cases between peers. There were aspects of the co-innovation approach that were highly valued by the beneficiaries. These explain the adoption of practices and good results that came from their implementation: building trust; actively including the producer's family; developing a comprehensive and systemic view of the farm with its owners; and analysing, planning or redesigning, executing and monitoring the approach in a periodic and participatory manner.

Finding 9. Outputs and outcomes: the availability of data and knowledge of the environmental, economic and productive effects of CSLM practices promoted by the project increased and improved.

74. The project contributed significantly to reducing the gap in scientific knowledge and data on CSLM practices, as well as their impact on the reduction of GHG emissions, soil conservation and biodiversity. This is the fifth barrier identified by the evaluation and the project document that prevents progress towards achieving the project objective (see Table 8).

Table 8. Barriers, outputs and outcomes related to data generation and knowledge production

Barriers to overcome	Outputs achieved	Outcomes
Lack of scientific knowledge and data on CSLM practices and their impacts on GHG emissions, soil conservation and biodiversity	Generation and consolidation of data and the production of scientific research	Increased and improved availability of data and scientific knowledge on the effects of CSLM

Source: Elaborated by the Evaluation Team.

75. A letter of agreement was signed with specialized research institutions such as FAGRO and INIA. This meant that the project could collect environmental, productive and socioeconomic data and generated knowledge about the effectiveness of the sustainable practices promoted.

76. The information produced was consolidated in databases, and the studies carried out were systematized in project reports. The following are some examples:

    i. protocols for collecting and analysing data on productive, social, economic and environmental variables;

    ii. annual, mid-term and final impacts on land mitigation and restoration indicators with respect to the baseline on each farm;

    iii. an analysis of the evolution of environmental variables (quality of faeces, biomass, grass height, forage productivity, plant biodiversity, water quality and cover of shrubs and subshrubs) at the level of each farm studied under intensive environmental monitoring;

    iv. an analysis of the behaviour of productive and socioeconomic variables at the farm level;

    v. study of the evolution of socioeconomic, productive and environmental variables during the project period; and

    vi. seven databases with all the measurements carried out related to the three variables studied.

77. The analyses and data generated by the project were systematized in project reports. However, this does not mean that the production of new knowledge that may arise from the analysis of data cannot be published in peer-reviewed and specialized scientific journals. In fact, this would provide greater support to the conducted research.

78. Finally, it should be mentioned that the environmental analyses carried out established control properties. This allowed for comparative studies of the effects on biodiversity, soil and CO_2 emissions. The socioeconomic results, on the other hand, only provided information on the beneficiary families (without a control group). In this regard, carrying out a counterfactual study would have further enriched the research possibilities and provided state institutions with more evidence for future decision-making.

3.4 Communications and knowledge management

Finding 10. The communications plan contributed to disseminating activities and products, as well as raising awareness and prioritizing the advantages of CSLM on the public agenda.

79. Communications activities were a strong point of the project. Indeed, key institutional agents highlighted this aspect as one of the main success factors of the project. This issue was a priority on the ministerial agenda. The benefits of CSLM were communicated to the general public.

80. Having a specialized communications unit on the team was a good decision. In fact, this ensured a systematic presence in the media, kept the website and project accounts on social networks (Instagram and Twitter) active, and helped generate alliances with state

institutions to expand coverage and generate and disseminate quality communications products. A total of 21 videos were produced to disseminate the activities and effects achieved by the project. This included the creation of seven case studies of beneficiary producers, as well as a project database and brochures, among other products.

81. The consulted beneficiaries declared their satisfaction with the usefulness and quality of these products. However, they highlighted that the development of educational communication materials (output not achieved) would have facilitated peer learning and the dissemination of sustainable practices at the community level.

82. Knowledge management was shared between those responsible for communications, monitoring and follow up of the project. For these purposes, audiovisual production also played a role: 28 recordings of presentations, workshops and workdays were made and shared. Meanwhile, based on information from the M&E system, the lessons learned from the implemented processes and the results achieved were integrated in real time.

83. The mechanisms and channels through which the environmental, productive, social and economic knowledge and data generated will be managed once the project is complete have yet to be defined. This is important because these mechanisms have the potential to promote institutional anchoring, establish incentive mechanisms and sensitize producers, among other objectives that could be proposed.

3.5 Efficiency

Finding 11. The financial resources provided by the GEF were used efficiently since the activities were executed on time and the outputs established in the project document met the budget.

84. The financing provided by the GEF (USD 2 091 781) was used for the agreed purposes and in accordance with the technical execution planning. The activities and outputs were developed in a timely manner and with the expected quality. Further, as a result of the reorganization of the workload established by the team's original organizational chart and the coordination of actions with other institutions, the planned outputs were enriched and new ones were added. This strengthened the results obtained and contributed to the sustainability of the project.

85. Communications were an example of this reorganization and generation of synergies. The project design included the hiring of a part-time Communication Specialist financed by FAO. Ultimately, however, this did not occur (the reasons are specified in Finding 12). Instead, it was decided to hire a full-time specialist directly but with a low budget (USD 10 000) for the implementation of actions and the generation of communications products. Thanks to the partnerships established with the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Environment, and other state institutions, it was possible to optimize resources, implement a robust strategy, and develop high-quality communications products (see Section 4.3).

86. Another partnership that contributed to the project's efficiency was with the Ministry for Primary Industries of the Government of New Zealand. This financed the development of a mitigation plan for the livestock sector that was not stipulated in the project document. FAO, through the Lead Technical Officer, had the main responsibility for managing this relationship.

87. The partnership with FAGRO and INIA also helped to promote efficiency through a letter of agreement. First, it ensured quality in the execution and generation of products of Component 2 and facilitated administrative procedures for the project team and FAO Uruguay (hiring of extension agents, management of the field team, purchase of materials, travel expenses, etc.). In addition, it leveraged human resources from the academic field (teachers and postgraduate students) who contributed their time to the development of the research carried out and other studies that are in progress.

88. This, however, was not the case for the letter of agreement signed with the Agricultural Planning Institute, which did not contribute to efficiency. The responsibility of preparing the National Strategy for Sustainable Livestock Farming required support from the project team, in addition to what was originally planned. The document ended up being written by the Office of Agricultural Programming and Policy, the National System of Rural Innovation and Development, and the General Directorate of Rural Development. All of these institutions are part of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries.

89. Finally, the evaluation considered other contributions to efficiency. This included the formation of a cohesive, interdisciplinary and quality team, and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On the latter, planned field activities could continue through the establishment of a health protocol validated by the Pan-American Health Organization.

Finding 12. Although the co-financing reported as materialized was 9 percent lower than the amount committed, this did not affect the obtainment of the outputs or the achievement of the project outcomes.

90. The co-financing reported as materialized reached USD 12 943 779, while the amount committed in the project document was USD 14 241 567. The main reasons for this gap were: a) the withdrawal of FAO's commitment to provide USD 360 000 in cash, which was informed and justified in a timely manner; and b) the lack of accounting for the in-kind contributions of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (USD 2 660 000), which means that at least a part of the co-financing committed (that the evaluation cannot determine) was materialized. Examples include the project team's office, which was located in the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as meeting rooms, transportation and communications equipment.

91. With regard to the reporting of co-financing, the GEF co-financing policy establishes that the amounts and contributions made must be identified and documented through official sources. However, this did not occur for all institutions. Although all of them reported and ratified the contributions through institutional emails, the details of the amounts and items contributed were not included in all of the reports.

3.6 Implementation and execution

Finding 13. FAO and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries fulfilled the responsibilities required by the GEF for implementing agencies and co-executing entities, respectively.

92. FAO, as implementing and executing agency, and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, as the co-executing entity, satisfactorily fulfilled the responsibilities and roles specified in the GEF Guidelines on the Project and Programme Cycle Policy (GEF, 2020).

93. FAO, in its role as implementer, supported the execution and, through its team of regional professionals, contributed to ensuring good technical quality of the actions and products. At the same time, FAO provided institutional support for the design, execution, and mid-term and terminal evaluations of the project. It also guaranteed the correct use of the financial resources provided by the donor.

94. As executing and co-executing entities, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and FAO satisfactorily completed the daily tasks of the project. This involved: procurement; hiring of personnel; monitoring; execution of activities; and other multimanagement tasks.

95. However, areas for improvement were identified with respect to other functions, including:

i. the management of institutional risk associated with the withdrawal of resources for the Development and Adaptation to Climate Change project;

ii. the development of capacities among the project team on cross-cutting issues like gender; and

iii. the training of the team and transfer of knowledge related to administrative procedures, visibility and communications standards, as well as FAO editorial requirements for the publication of documents.

96. Finally, the evaluation recognized the technical team's capacity and commitment. This was highly valued by stakeholders in the field and made a positive contribution to the project's implementation.

3.7 Stakeholder engagement

Finding 14. Stakeholders actively participated in the project and had access to information during its implementation.

97. The project aligned with the GEF stakeholder policy (GEF, 2017c). The stakeholders included beneficiary producers, Uruguayan State officials, implementing partners, partner institutions and FAO. They had the opportunity to participate and freely express their points of view, and were informed about the different activities developed by the project.

98. The project steering committee established a governance body that convened the institutional stakeholders. According to its members, it fulfilled the function of reporting on overall project progress and the execution of planned activities. It also allowed for communicating any unplanned actions. It acted as a discussion table and a space for receiving suggestions to improve the project's operational performance and strategic orientation.

99. As established by the co-innovation methodology, the decisions that affected the beneficiary producers were made together with them. This allowed for informing them of the possible benefits, harms and risks of the different options in a timely and transparent manner.

3.8 Monitoring and evaluation system

Finding 15. An M&E system was designed and implemented. The system adapted to the project's reporting needs, which was useful for decision-making.

100. The project's M&E system had design, planning and monitoring instruments. A person was responsible for it. These aspects facilitated the planned and organized implementation of monitoring actions. There was an emphasis on the extraction of lessons learned, the evaluation of actions, the systematization of experiences and, to a lesser extent, the monitoring of indicators and project effects.

101. Some examples of the work carried out related to knowledge generation and management. This included: the extraction of lessons learned from the implementation of the first letter of agreement with FAGRO and INIA; the preparation of a closing document that incorporated lessons learned from the entire project implementation cycle; an evaluation of the workshops that were carried out; and the systematization of the perception and experience of the beneficiaries.

102. Regarding monitoring, the periodicity of the reports was in accordance with the demands of FAO and the GEF (the progress of output development was reported semi-annually, and the monitoring of outcome indicators was annual). However, the evaluation considered the lack of a centralized control system to review the situation of each output and outcome indicator as a weakness of the project.

103. There was also a disconnect between the M&E system – on the monitoring of the effects generated by the execution of Component 2 (under the responsibility of FAGRO and INIA) – and the gender strategy that considered its own indicators in addition to those included in the M&E system. This made it difficult to have fluid access to information on the evolution of these indicators and, therefore, negatively impacted the possibilities of properly using that information.

104. Both shortcomings could have been overcome with better technological adoption. The design of a virtual space for the management and socialization of progress and the verification of sources associated with the project's activities and indicators would have been a possible solution to this weakness.

3.9 Cross-cutting issues

Finding 16. Gender: the inclusion of the gender approach in the project document was weak, but the project took measures to include this approach during its implementation cycle.

105. Although the design of the project included indicators disaggregated by sex, no systematic incorporation or budget for the integration of the gender approach was considered. During project execution, some actions were developed that highlighted the importance of incorporating this approach and that partially corrected this weakness.

106. A gender strategy was prepared based on FAO-GEF recommendations. In the opinion of the Evaluation Team and the key agents, its quality was good, yet it was difficult to implement given the financial and human resources available. Despite restrictions, some of the contemplated actions were still carried out. Among them, the following stand out: the adoption of measures so that women can participate in training spaces; the training of

extension workers to include the gender approach in fieldwork; and the development of a guide to ensure that communications are gender sensitive. In addition, the gender strategy considered monitoring variables associated with the use of time, social capital and autonomy, as well as the development of activities linked to each project output. However, these tasks were only partially implemented and, for the most part, not regularly monitored.

107. Despite difficulties, the evaluation positively values the decision to go beyond what was proposed in the project document. It also highlights the importance of gender equality in the development of the livestock sector in Uruguay.

Finding 17. Safeguards: consistent with its risk classification, the project did not generate negative effects on the environment and the communities where it was implemented.

108. The project maintained a low risk rating from start to finish. The evaluation found this to be an appropriate decision. Based on the GEF environmental safeguards policy (GEF, 2018) and FAO guidelines (FAO, 2022), the project was not required to carry out a plan for the implementation of mitigation measures. As expected with this level of risk, no harmful effects were observed in the habitats or communities where the intervention was carried out.

3.10 Sustainability

Finding 18. There is a high probability that the effects of the project on the beneficiaries will be maintained after project closure. However, its scalability will be subject to the institutionalization of the CSLM national strategy, the incentives proposed and the expansion of the supply of trained extension agents.

109. The producers were satisfied with the effects achieved from the implementation of the sustainable practices promoted by the project. They expressed their willingness to continue implementing them. This is confirmed by the fact that more than 50 percent of the beneficiaries decided to retain the services of the extension agents who supported them during the project with their own funds.

110. In August 2023, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries called for a second phase of the project: Agroecological and Resilient Systems in Uruguay or Agroecological Pathway. This initiative, supported by the good results obtained in the first phase, includes some of the methodologies and objectives from the FAO CSLM project. In addition, some of the extension workers who were either trained or part of the project's field team will continue working for the Agroecological Pathway. The EUROCLIMA programme, in alliance with the Ministry of Environment and the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies from Spain, began to execute the Sustainable Livestock Management initiative. This initiative will replicate what was carried out by the project in other territories. In addition, the Uruguayan State, together with FAO, is interested in presenting a sustainable livestock project to the Green Climate Fund. However, this is still incipient and, at the time of this evaluation, a first version of the concept note was being drafted.

111. The scalability of the project at the public or private sector level, without external financial support, is subject to support and resources. These factors would be provided by the

institutionalization of public policy instruments developed by the project, the design and implementation of incentive mechanisms, and more trained extension agents.

112. The failure to institutionalize public policy instruments developed within the project framework, and others that may be proposed in the future (such as an incentives mechanism), is the main risk identified by the evaluation. In 2024, there will be presidential and parliamentary elections in Uruguay. A possible administration change could reprioritize the state's approach to the livestock sector. Such a process may not ensure the continuity of current priorities.

4. Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Conclusion 1. Results

113. The strategic alignment of the project with the priorities of the Uruguayan State and international organizations concerned with CCM and sustainable livestock development facilitated support for its implementation. This also stimulated the interest of the stakeholders in learning about the results of the practices promoted and the methodologies used.

114. The management of human and financial resources and the processes established to execute the activities and develop the outputs necessary to achieve these results was efficient. The financing provided by the GEF was used in a timely manner and for the intended purposes.

115. Despite not achieving all of the indicators, progress was made in overcoming barriers. This was a result of project execution. In fact, outcomes were generated that contributed to the fulfilment of its objective. Institutional capacities were strengthened. At the same time, the beneficiaries learned about and implemented sustainable practices to reduce emissions and restore degraded lands on their farms. These practices also contributed to greater income. In addition, the availability of data and knowledge on the environmental, economic and productive benefits of the promoted sustainable livestock practices increased and improved. This demonstrates that it is possible to mitigate climate change and restore degraded lands while improving livestock productivity. These results serve to highlight CSLM as an attractive alternative for the Uruguayan State to achieve its environmental goals without compromising the efficiency of production systems.

116. The fact that the productive, economic and environmental effects of the project were positive helped to generate interest and promote ownership by the beneficiary producers and relevant government entities. In this regard, the beneficiaries stated that they will continue to implement the practices learned. Over 50 percent of them said that they planned to retain, through their own means, the services of the extension professionals who provided technical assistance during the project. Meanwhile, the state is supporting and leading three continuity initiatives. Two of these are already in progress (Agroecological and Resilient Systems in Uruguay and Sustainable Livestock Management) with another in the design phase (the possibility of presenting a sustainable livestock project to the Green Climate Fund).

117. The intersectoral and international partnerships generated, and the letter of agreement with FAGRO and INIA, led to an expansion of synergies. This ensured the quality of the expected outputs and added others that had not been contemplated. At the same time, technical execution was strengthened and results were obtained to contribute to project sustainability.

118. These are all signs of project sustainability. However, the project's scalability and maintenance in the long-term is subject to the availability of financial resources. It is also subject to the institutional support that would be provided by institutionalizing public

policy instruments, the design and implementation of incentive mechanisms, and expanding the supply of trained extension workers.

4.1.2 Conclusion 2. Factors affecting performance

119. The project's performance was affected by programmatic and management successes and failures that acted as catalysts or moderators of its effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

120. The design and implementation, albeit partially, of a gender strategy that went beyond what was made explicit in the project design enhanced project performance. The project's communications plan, the formation of an interdisciplinary and quality team, and the links established with academic institutions were also drivers of project performance.

121. However, the letter of agreement to develop the sustainable livestock strategy did not deliver the expected results. Also, the availability of human and financial resources for the full integration of the gender perspective was insufficient and risk management was inadequate. All of these shortcomings threatened the maximization of the results obtained and reduced efficiency in the use of available resources.

4.1.3 Conclusion 3. Overall project rating

122. The evaluation determined that the overall project rating is satisfactory. As a consequence of its execution, outputs and lessons learned were generated that contribute to the stated objective. The project also generated evidence showing that, based on the methodology used with the beneficiaries, it is possible to establish environmentally sustainable livestock production systems without reducing productivity or income. Through the public policy instruments developed, it also created an institutional pathway for the replication and scalability of this experience in other locations.

123. The next steps will be crucial to move towards intermediate states – identified in the TOC – that will allow this opportunity to be fully realized. The political will expressed by the interested government parties and the knowledge generated by the project have created a favourable scenario to coordinate an institutional response to the challenge of establishing sustainable livestock management in Uruguay.

4.2 Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1. The strategy implemented by the project proved to be effective for the profile of the participating producers. However, given its specific focus on the livestock sector, its replicability in other contexts or among types of beneficiaries would require adjustments and additional studies.

Lesson learned 2. Incorporating a communications plan as a pillar of the intervention strategy was a good decision since it was a catalyst for the results achieved.

Lesson learned 3. Having reliable data and counterfactual evidence of the effects achieved increases the possibilities of successfully implementing CSLM.

Lesson learned 4. In addition to environmental performance, having information to compare possible economic and productive outcomes is important for making investment decisions.

Lesson learned 5. Raising awareness and highlighting the effects of the project on soil restoration and biodiversity, along with its CCM potential, would have improved the commitment of stakeholders interested in the conservation of rural areas.

Lesson learned 6. The project's design as an initiative to test innovative methodologies and practices through the implementation of pilot projects, which could then be scaled up to the institutional level, is an appropriate approach to achieve the desired impacts at the territorial scale.

4.3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. For the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Environment and FAO on the sustainability and scalability of the results. Convene a broad and intersectoral workspace to enrich and validate the public policy instruments promoted by the project and develop a plan with concrete actions that ensure their implementation.

i. Suggestion 1. Use and strengthen existing coordination bodies (National System of Innovation and Rural Development [SNIDER by its Spanish acronym], Natural Livestock Farming Roundtable or others).

ii. Suggestion 2. Focus on the development of incentive mechanisms (types, sources, segmentation of recipients, etc.) and their necessary coordination with the MRV.

iii. Suggestion 3. Consider the creation of an accreditation system for extension agents in CSLM as a stimulus for professionals to train in the approach.

iv. Suggestion 4. Explore alternatives to reduce technical assistance costs.

Recommendation 2. For the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and FAO on the inclusion of a scalability study in future research projects. As an output in new projects, conduct a study to provide evidence of the scaling up potential among producers of different sizes, characteristics and sectors.

i. Suggestion 1. Study alternatives for technical assistance differentiated by type of producer.

ii. Suggestion 2. Investigate the differential investment costs and the resulting environmental benefits and co-benefits according to the type of producer receiving technical assistance.

Recommendation 3. For the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, FAO, the Ministry of Environment, FAGRO and INIA on the management of the knowledge generated by the project. Design a management strategy for the knowledge generated – and to be generated in the future – by the project (good practices, lessons learned and effects). This should consider actions at different scales (national, regional and global) with different target audiences (researchers, decision-makers, producers, consumers, multilateral organizations and states) and different aims (to influence policies, strengthen capacities, promote Uruguay abroad and share experiences).

i. Suggestion 1. Agree on a protocol for the use and dissemination of data.

ii. Suggestion 2. Include communications as a pillar of the strategy.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Aguerre	Verónica	Researcher	INIA
Alzate	Pablo	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Arellano	Iris	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Arial	Miguel	Producer, Central Zone	Beneficiary
Balderrín	Valentín	Responsible for project M&E	FAO
Balián	Carolina	National consultant for nationally appropriate mitigation actions	FAO Consultant
Barros	Isabel	Extension agent, North-eastern Zone	Extension agent
Bergós	Soledad	Project Coordinator	FAO
Bernheim	Ruth	Project Gender Specialist	FAO
Bessio	Diego	Administration Manager	FAO
Betizagasti	Graciela	Producer, Northern Zone	Beneficiary
Betizagasti	Juana María	Producer, Northern Zone	Beneficiary
Burgueño	Camila	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Cáceres	Diego	Project steering committee member, General Directorate of Natural Resources	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Caseaux	Gustavo	Producer, Central Zone	Beneficiary
Coelho	Lilián	Producer, Northern Zone	Beneficiary
Correa	Rosa	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
De los Santos	María Teresa	President	Rural Development Society Basalto Ruta 31
Delgado	Wilson	Producer, Central Zone	Beneficiary
Dogliotti	Santiago	Coordinator, Component 2	FAGRO
Durán	Verónica	Director, Office of Agricultural Programming and Policy	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Erramuspe	Marlene	Producer, Northern Zone	Beneficiary
Fernández	Paola	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
García	Felipe	Assistant Project Coordinator	FAO
Gari	Carolina	Extension agent, Central Zone	Extension agent
González Riggio	Valeria	Funding Liaison Officer	FAO
Guedes	Olivia	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Henderson	Diego	Producer, Northern Zone	Beneficiary
Henderson	Lorenzo	Producer, Northern Zone	Beneficiary
Hernández	Beatriz	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Honorio	Carlos	Project steering committee member, Project Management Unit	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Insúa	Judith	Producer, Central Zone	Beneficiary
Iriarte	Beatriz	Secretary	Rural Development Society Velázquez
Iroldi	Bernardo	Spokesperson	Rural Development Society Velázquez
Kmaid	Gonzalo	FAO Representative	FAO
Márquez	Cecilia	Project communications manager	FAO

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Marzaroli	Jorge	Former Director, Project Management Unit	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Mattos	Fernando	Minister	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Mello	Ana Laura	Project steering committee member, National Directorate of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	Ministry of Environment
Meza	Jorge	FAO Representative	FAO
Mora	Pedro	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Muniz	Omar	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Núñez	Liliana	Treasurer	Rural Development Society Velázquez
Opio	Carolyn	Lead Technical Officer	FAO
Oyantcabal	Walter	Former Project Director and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries counterpart	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Pastore	Alfredo	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Pastorini	Verónica	Project steering committee member, General Directorate of Rural Development	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Penengo	Cecilia	Project steering committee member, National Directorate of Climate Change	Ministry of Environment
Pereyra	Juan Carlos	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Pérez	Lucía	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Piñeiro	Gervasio	Environmental team coordinator	FAGRO
Piriz	Vanessa	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Plata	Vicente	Former FAO Representative	FAO
Rianni	Federico	Cooperative Manager	El Fogón cooperative
Rivas	Abayubá	Spokesperson	Rural Development Society Basalto Ruta 31
Rodríguez	Alejandro	Producer, Eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Ron	Ana Isabel	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Beneficiary
Rydstrom	Carlos	Director, General Directorate of Rural Development	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries
Sánchez	Ana	Extension agent, Eastern Zone	Extension agent
Santa Cruz	Rafael	Manager	Rural Development Society Cerro Largo
Varela	Juan Carlos	Producer, Central Zone	Beneficiary
Varela	Inés	Producer, Central Zone	Beneficiary

Appendix 2. The GEF evaluation criteria rating table

The GEF criteria	Rating	Summary comments
A. Strategic Relevance	HS	Project design and implementation addressed national and international priorities in a coherent manner and responded to the interests and needs of the beneficiary producers.
B. Coherence	S	The project was linked to previous processes and complemented by actions that were either ongoing or began during the project. This generated enabling conditions to continue the initiatives.
C. Effectiveness	S	The project advanced in overcoming barriers, developing quality products and obtaining results that contribute to achieving the desired impact.
D. Efficiency	S	The financial resources provided by the GEF were used efficiently. The activities were executed on time, and the outputs established in the project document were obtained within the budget.
E. Sustainability	ML	The project's positive effects on the beneficiaries have a good chance of being maintained upon completion. Its scalability will be subject to anchoring the CSLM national strategy, the proposed incentives and expanding the supply of trained extension workers.
F. Implementation	S	In general, FAO met the basic functions and standards required by the GEF for the implementing agencies.
G. Execution	S	FAO and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries satisfactorily carried out the execution and management of the daily project tasks.
H. M&E	S	An M&E system was designed and implemented to meet the monitoring and accountability needs of the project. A disconnect was observed between the M&E system, with the monitoring of the effects generated by the execution of Component 2 (under the responsibility of FAGRO and INIA), and the gender strategy that considered its own indicators in addition to those in the M&E system.
H.1 Design	S	
H.2 Implementation	MS	
Overall project rating	S	In general terms, the project was relevant, coherent, efficient and effective. Its execution showed that it is possible to mitigate climate change, restore degraded land and improve livestock productivity at the same time.

Appendix 3. The GEF rating scheme

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes.

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings.
Satisfactory (S)	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved was more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Level of outcomes achieved was somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Level of outcomes achieved was substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes was achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow for an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.

During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account. Despite the achievement of results as per the revised results framework, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given where appropriate.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

Quality of implementation and of execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF agencies that have direct access to the GEF resources. Quality of execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received the GEF funds from the GEF agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale:

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** met expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** more or less met expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** was somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** was substantially lower than expected.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in the quality of **implementation** or **execution**.
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow for an assessment of the quality of **implementation** or **execution**.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability must be assessed by taking into account the risks related to the financial, sociopolitical, institutional and environmental sustainability of the project results. The evaluator may also take into account other risks that may affect this aspect. A four-level rating scale is used to assess sustainability:

Rating	Description
Likely (L)	There are little or no risks to sustainability.
Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability.
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability.
Unable to Assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

Appendix 4. Results matrix

Outcome 1.1. Policy and planning frameworks strengthened to support CSLM implementation and national communications on livestock emissions		
Outcome indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
OVI 1.1 1. Indicator 10 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool. An MRV system for emissions reductions has been established and reports verified data (the GEF Core indicator 3)	8	7
OVI 1.1.2. Indicator 9 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool. Degree of support for the reduction of GHG emissions in policy planning and the regulatory framework	6	7
Output indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
Indicator 1.1.1a. CSLM strategy document	Final CSLM strategy presented to the government and disseminated at the local and regional levels	Strategy developed, presented and disseminated
Indicator 1.1.1b. Number of institutions involved in the preparation and validation process	Ten institutions involved in the preparation and validation process	Ten institutions involved in the preparation and validation process (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Foreign Relations, INIA, Agricultural Planning Institute, National Meat Institute, Uruguayan Wool Secretariat [SUL, by its Spanish acronym], FAGRO, Natural Livestock Farming Roundtable)
Indicator 1.1.2a. Nationally appropriate mitigation actions documented and MRV system validated	Nationally appropriate mitigation actions and MRV system presented to the government	Mitigation plan carried out to replace the nationally appropriate mitigation actions and an MRV system developed
Indicator 1.1.2b. Number of institutions involved in the validation of the nationally appropriate mitigation actions	Ten institutions involved in the validation of nationally appropriate mitigation actions	To be determined Validation process not complete at the time of evaluation

Outcome 1.2. National capacities strengthened to support the implementation of CSLM		
Outcome indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
OVI 1.2.1. Number of institutions committed to supporting the implementation of CSLM	6	8
Output indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
Indicator 1.2.1. Number of officials in national institutions with greater capacities to incorporate CSLM at the institutional level	30 officials from six institutions with greater capabilities to incorporate CSLM at the institutional level	Not assessed No evaluation of the capacities developed by participants in the workshops, meetings or talks
Indicator 1.2.2. Number of extension agents with greater knowledge and capabilities related to CSLM	75 extension agents with greater knowledge and capabilities related to CSLM	61 extension agents trained
Outcome 2.1. Sustainable CSLM implemented on degraded or degrading lands		
Outcome indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
OVI 2.1.1. Indicator 5 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool and Core indicator 4 of the GEF-7 onwards. Land area under effective rangeland management practices and/or support for climate-smart agriculture	35 000 ha	32 931 ha
OVI 2.1.2. Indicator 1 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool and Core indicator 6 of the GEF-7 onwards. t CO_2 e of GHG directly and indirectly reduced or avoided	379 000 t CO_2 e	458 124 t CO2eq
• t CO_2 e reduced or avoided directly	118 950 t CO_2 e	133 716 t CO2eq
• t CO_2 e reduced or avoided directly	260 166 t CO_2 e	324 407 t CO2eq
OVI 2.1.2. Increased income of farmers on pilot farms	80% increase their income by at least 10%	54.4% increased their income by 10% or more
OVI 2.1.3. Indicator 5 of the GEF-6 monitoring tool and Core indicator 4 of the GEF-7 onwards. Area where technologies and practices with low GHG were implemented	35 000 ha	32 931 ha

Output indicators	Goal	Achieved
Indicator 2.1.1. Number of CSLM strategies implemented on farms through a co-innovation process	60 farms implement CSLM strategies and apply improved practices and technologies	CSLM strategies implemented on 60 farms
Indicator 2.1.2. Number of producers with greater knowledge and capabilities related to CSLM	120 producers and farm workers trained, including at least 30% women	144 producers received some type of training and more than 30% were women
Indicator 2.1.3. Number of farms incorporated into the monitoring system	Monitoring of 60 farms for four years	60 farms were monitored and 20 had intensive monitoring

Outcome 3.1. Results-based management project implementation and lessons learned; good practices documented and disseminated		
Outcome indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
OVI 3.1.1. M&E system ensuring the timely realization of project benefits and the implementation of adaptive results-based management	Constant monitoring of results, outputs and activities	Achieved
Output indicators	**Goal**	**Achieved**
Indicator 3.1.1. Number of information products and number of copies distributed	- CSLM practices manual for producers and rural workers - Videos documenting field days - Video documenting the environmental dimension - Video documenting CSLM practices - Narrative videos from producers	- Seven videos and seven teasers filmed with life stories from seven project families; raw material being edited - One draft manual for livestock farmers prepared - Four field reports prepared and disseminated, including information on the project's baseline, redesigned plans, actions implemented and results obtained - One technical report on the analysis of livestock pregnancy results during the 2021/22 mating season - One scripted video documenting the case of sustainable livestock farming in Uruguay prepared for the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean - Four videos on spring field days
Indicator 3.1.2. Number of meetings and workshops	Regular meetings of the coordination bodies Regular information on the project's progress and results	40 regular team meetings One evaluation of the project's progress in 2022 and a planning meeting for 2023
Indicator 3.1.3a. Number of publications	Publication of three scientific articles	Three articles published in international scientific journals

Indicator 3.1.3b. Number of conference presentations	Presentation of the project at two conferences	Presentation at four conferences (the 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference/COP25, the Southern Common Market, Innovate4Climate [on methane] and soon at the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation at headquarters)
Indicator 3.1.3c. Participation in networking events	Full participation in two networking events	- One online presentation: Opportunities for the Agricultural Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean within the Framework of the Global Methane Commitment (FAO, Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean for Climate Action on Agriculture, Global Methane Pledge, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, European Union, Green Climate Fund, among others) - One case study article for the Climate and Clean Air Coalition: Uruguay Reduces Livestock Emissions while Increasing Productivity in a Pilot Supported by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition -Participation in the Network of FAO Project Coordinators (FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean)
Indicator 3.1.4. Number of evaluations carried out	Terminal evaluation	Intermediate and final evaluation carried out

Source: The project's M&E system.

Appendix 5. Evaluation matrix

Criteria: strategic relevance			
Question 1. To what extent are the project's results aligned with the focal areas/strategies of the FAO-GEF operational programme, the country priorities and the FAO Country Programming Framework?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 1.1. Are the project design and results consistent with global priorities and commitments in livestock management, mitigation and the restoration of degraded lands?	**Judgement criteria** • Alignment of the project document and project reports with human rights instruments, declarations and agreements signed by Uruguay on climate change and land degradation **Indicators** • Presence of a justification in the project design that refers to human rights instruments, declarations and agreements signed by Uruguay • Incorporation into the project document of outputs and outcomes aligned with human rights instruments, declarations and agreements signed by Uruguay	Review of documentation	**Secondary sources** • Project document • Programme Implementation Report (PIR)/project progress report (PPR) • Human rights guide for the SDGs (DIHR, 2024)
Subquestion 1.2. Are the project design and results consistent with the GEF-6 operational and programmatic strategies?	**Judgement criteria** • Coherence of the project document and project reports with Programme 4 of the CCM strategy and Programme 2 of the GEF-6 land degradation strategy **Indicators** • Presence of a justification in the project design that refers to the GEF-6 strategies • Incorporation into the project document of outputs and outcomes aligned with the GEF-6 priorities	Review of documentation	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • GEF-6 climate change strategy • GEF-6 land degradation strategy
Subquestion 1.3. Are the execution, design and results of the project aligned with the priorities of the Uruguayan State?	**Judgement criteria** • Level of coherence of the design and execution of the project with the priorities and livestock policies for the mitigation and restoration of degraded lands of the Uruguayan State **Indicators** • Presence of a justification in the project design that refers to the priorities of the Uruguayan State and its institutions at the national, regional and local levels • Alignment of implemented actions and outputs achieved with the priorities of the Uruguayan State	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • National plans, sectoral programmes and other public policies • Other **Primary sources** • Project team

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
	• Perception of the key agents of the evaluation		• Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay team • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions
Subquestion 1.4. Is the project consistent with FAO's strategic priorities at the national, regional and global levels?	**Judgement criteria** • Degree of alignment, adequacy and contribution of the project design and implementation with FAO's strategic frameworks, policy and mandate **Indicators** • Incorporation into the project document of the project results and a description of the mechanisms designed to contribute to FAO priorities • Assessment of the actions and results of the project based on their contribution to achieving FAO priorities • Assessment by project staff and stakeholders regarding the project's progress in addressing FAO's key priorities related to CCM and sustainable livestock farming	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • FAO Strategic Framework **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay team
Subquestion 1.5. Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals? If so, are any changes necessary to make the project more relevant?	**Judgement criteria** • Level of harmony and relevance of the project design considering a possible new political, institutional and/or regulatory scenario **Indicators** • Evidence of need for changes • Perception of key evaluation agents regarding the project's ability to adapt to the conditions of the social and political context	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR/mid-term review (MTR) • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions
Subquestion 1.6. Do the project's expected results respond to the needs of the beneficiary producers?	**Judgement criteria** • Level of harmony of the project strategies with the needs of the beneficiary groups and other local actors **Indicators**	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Consulting reports

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
	• Assessment (positive or negative) of the project staff and beneficiaries regarding the relevance of activities considering the needs of the producers • Existence of a diagnosis that accounts for the priorities of the beneficiary communities Ability to adapt to eventual changes in context and/or the needs of the target group	Focus group discussions On-site observation	• Initial diagnoses • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External service providers • Beneficiaries • Extension agents Extension agent supervisors

Criteria: coherence			
Question 2. How well was the intervention harmonized with other interventions by the implementing agency and other institutions?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 2.1. To what extent were the project's activities complemented by other existing interventions in the country?	**Judgement criteria** • Relevance, opportunity and harmonization of the synergies generated **Indicators** • Quantity, quality and effects of possible alliances with other existing initiatives in the country • Scaling up of effects as a result of the relationships generated with other initiatives • Contribution of relationships with other interventions to the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the project • Evidence of agreements to take advantage of synergies, alliances and associations • Assessment by key agents of the alliances generated	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions On-site observation	**Secondary sources** • Project document • Documents that support the alliances generated • PIR/PPR • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External service providers • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Beneficiaries

Criteria: effectiveness			
Question 3. What results, either intentional or unintentional, did the project achieve, and to what extent did these contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 3.1. To what extent did project implementation contribute to mitigating climate change and restoring degraded lands through the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector, with an emphasis on family farming? What preliminary impacts can be identified as a result of the project's contribution, and to what extent can these be attributed to the project?	**Judgement criteria** • Project contribution to CCM and the restoration of degraded lands **Indicators** • Degree of effectiveness of the practices promoted in mitigating climate change in terms of t CO_2 e avoided and reduced • Level of the project's contribution to the restoration of degraded lands in terms of land area transformed by sustainable management practices • Contribution of strengthened individual, institutional and environmental capacities to the promotion of climate-smart practices in the livestock sector • Contribution of the implementation of the two programmatic components to the objective of the project • Assessment of the project's contribution by stakeholders, beneficiaries, state officials and authorities, the FAO team, partner organizations and others	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions Surveys On-site observation	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Consulting reports • Technical documents • Initial diagnoses, baseline • Product verification sources • MRV system reports **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External services • Researchers • Partner institutions • Beneficiaries • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Other
Subquestion 3.2. Component 1: to what extent do strengthened individual, institutional and environmental capacities facilitate the promotion, implementation and management of CSLM in the country?	**Judgement criteria** • Level of contribution of the capacities strengthened by the project to the promotion, implementation and management of CSLM in the country **Indicators** • Level of execution of activities, development, quality and opportunity of outputs associated with Outcomes 1.1 and 1.2	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • CSLM national strategy • Nationally appropriate mitigation actions and MRV system • Monitoring reports

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
	• Compliance with indicators of Outcomes 1.1 and 1.2 • Contribution of the public policy instruments developed to establish a CSLM model in the country • Adequacy of the public policy instruments developed to mobilize funds and create economic incentives • Capacity of the MRV system developed to generate accurate, updated and certified data on changes in GHG emissions • Capabilities developed to drive changes in the adoption of improved and climate-smart approaches • Stakeholders' assessment (positive or negative) regarding the individual, institutional and environmental capacities strengthened by the project		• Training modules and materials for extension agents and officials • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External services • Partner institutions • Others
Subquestion 3.3. Component 2: to what extent was sustainable CSLM implemented in the beneficiary groups? What multidimensional benefits can be observed?	**Judgement criteria** • Level of contribution of the project to the implementation of sustainable CSLM in the beneficiary groups **Indicators** • Level of execution of activities, development, quality and opportunity of outputs associated with Outcome 2.1 • Compliance with indicators of Outcome 2.1 of the project • State of progress and ownership by the beneficiaries of the promoted practices • Adequacy of the teaching practices and methodologies designed and implemented • Environmental, social and productive effects generated on farms and producers that apply CSLM practices • Comparison of results between the beneficiary establishments and those of the control group • Impact of CSLM practices on the pilot farms • Stakeholders' assessment (positive or negative) regarding the promoted practices and their multidimensional results	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions On-site observation	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Monitoring reports from the pilot farms • Modules and training materials for producers • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External services • Beneficiary producers

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
			• Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Partner institutions • Other

Criteria: knowledge management and communications			
Question 4. How did the project document and share its results, good practices, lessons learned and experiences?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 4.1. Did the communications products and activities contribute to the sustainability and expansion of the project's results?	**Judgement criteria** • Level of stakeholders' understanding and ownership of the key messages generated by the project • Extent to which communications have supported the effectiveness of the other two components, sustainability and expansion of the project results **Indicators** • Existence of a communications strategy • Evidence of educational campaigns, awareness-raising plans and promotional campaigns in the press and social networks • Documentation, dissemination and the exchange of experiences, lessons learned, good practices and results of the project • Stakeholders' assessment regarding the quality and effectiveness of the communication of messages and results • Quality, relevance and timeliness of the communications products and media used	Review of documentation Interviews Surveys	**Secondary sources** • Project document • Report on lessons learned and best practices • Extension materials on CSLM practices • Websites and social networks • Press releases • Communications products • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External services • Beneficiary producers • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Partner institutions • Other

Criteria: efficiency			
Question 5. To what extent was the project implemented efficiently and cost-effectively? To what extent was it able to adapt to any changes in conditions (government and/or policy changes, the COVID-19 pandemic, project team changes, etc.) to improve the efficiency of project delivery?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 5.1. Did the technical and financial management mechanisms, institutional arrangements and procedures contribute to or hinder the achievement of quality project results and objectives in a timely manner?	**Judgement criteria** • Adequacy of the mechanisms, institutional arrangements, processes and technical and operational procedures in place **Indicators** • Favourable and unfavourable elements of the Operational Partners Implementation Modality • Functionality, adequacy and efficiency of the FAO/Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries coordination mechanisms • Taking advantage of agreements, initiatives, data sources, existing synergies and complementarities with other projects and institutions • Perception of the managers and partner institutions regarding the functioning and usefulness of project management • Project team's ownership of the implemented procedures • Project team's assessment and level of ownership of the implemented procedures; possible adjustments made to implemented mechanisms and procedures	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Financial reports • Annual operating plans (AOPs) • Budgets • Letters of agreement **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Subregional Office for Mesoamerica (SLM), FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External services
Subquestion 5.2. Were the human, financial and operational resources available and were they sufficient and appropriate to implement the project strategy on time and with the expected level of quality?	**Judgement criteria** • Opportunity and sufficiency of the human and financial resources available **Indicators** • Comparison between resources, outputs/outcomes and deadlines • Relationship between the resources available (human, financial, technical and operational), the outcomes and outputs generated, and the period of implementation • Perception of managers and partner institutions regarding the availability and opportunity of financial and human resources • Degree of exclusivity of the project's human resources in relation to other institutional tasks (percentage of time dedicated to the project)	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Financial reports • AOPs • Budgets • Letters of agreement **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
			• FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • External services
Subquestion 5.3. Did the planned co-financing materialize? How did the level of co-financing materialization – lower or higher than expected – affect the results of the project?	**Judgement criteria** • Contribution of co-financing to the results and objectives of the project **Indicators** • Co-financing committed and materialized • Amount of additional resources contributed and/or leveraged by the project • Evidence of financing committed and materialized • Shortcomings and successes in the management of the project's co-financing • Existence of supporting documentation • Effects of possible deficits in co-financing	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR • Letters of agreement • Co-financing documents • GEF co-financing policy **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions

Criteria: implementation and execution			
Question 6. To what extent did FAO and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries exercise their roles and assume the responsibilities of implementing agency and co-executing entity, respectively?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 6.1. Implementation. To what extent did FAO exercise its role as implementing agency by providing supervision, guidance and support (technical, administrative and operational) during the identification, formulation, approval, initiation and execution of the project?	**Judgement criteria** • Quality and timeliness of execution and implementation **Indicators** • Level of compliance with responsibilities and performance of the executing agency • Evidence of shortcomings and strengths in the programmatic and financial administration of the project • Perception of the project managers regarding the functioning and usefulness of FAO's supervision and technical and administrative support • Evidence of satisfaction with the timeliness and quality of FAO's role	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • Logical framework (MML, by its Spanish acronym) • PIR/PPR • FAO–GEF policies and manuals **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
	• Difficulties and successes in the technical and operational support mechanisms • Evidence of capacity building actions for the management of project execution mechanisms and procedures		• FAO SLM, FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions
Subquestion 6.2. Co-execution. To what extent did the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, as co-executing agency, fulfil its functions and responsibilities during the project?	**Judgement criteria** • Quality and timeliness of co-execution functions **Indicators** • Level of compliance with responsibilities and performance of the commitments assumed as the co-executing institution • Functionality, adequacy, timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries coordination mechanisms with FAO and other partners • Perception of the project managers and other stakeholders regarding the functioning and usefulness of the management and administration of the project, as well as the governance bodies	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • MML • PIR/PPR • FAO–GEF policies and manuals **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO SLM, FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Other stakeholders

Criteria: stakeholder engagement			
Question 7. Did other actors – such as civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples or the private sector – participate in the design or execution of the project? How were the level and quality of the participation and involvement of partners, key counterparts and other stakeholders assessed?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 7.1. Did other actors – such as civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples or the private sector – participate in the design or execution of the project? How are the level and quality of participation and involvement	**Judgement criteria** • Quality and timeliness of participation by partners and other stakeholders, as well as potentially involved parties that were not involved **Indicators** • Assessment of the collaboration between FAO, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • Mid-term review • PIR/PPR • FAO–GEF guidelines • Meeting minutes of workshops • Signed agreements **Primary sources**

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
of partners, key counterparts and other stakeholders assessed?	• Number of government institutions, non-governmental organizations, companies or associations of companies, local communities, and other parties that have participated in the formulation and implementation of the project • Evidence of participation mechanisms • Design and implementation of coordination mechanisms • Assessment of key institutional agents and beneficiaries regarding participation in the different stages of the project cycle		• Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Partner institutions • Extension agents • Producers

Criteria: M&E			
Question 8. Was the M&E plan and its implementation efficient and did it contribute to the management and accountability of the project?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 8.1. Was information from the M&E system used appropriately to make timely decisions and promote learning during project implementation?	**Judgement criteria** • Quality of M&E • Usefulness and contribution of M&E to the project management and accountability **Indicators** • Existence and quality of a plan and a system for monitoring, tracking and managing project knowledge • Adequacy of M&E mechanisms for making operational, strategic and management decisions • Evidence of an M&E system and plan • Systematization of information with appropriate levels of disaggregation • Goals and indicators appropriate for the project objectives • M&E system allows for the dissemination of knowledge and access to timely and quality information • Assessment of the monitoring mechanisms and tools generated and implemented during the project • Perception of stakeholders regarding the functioning of internal accountability mechanisms	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • MML • PIR/PPR • M&E system • Publications • FAO–GEF policies and manuals **Primary sources** • Project team • Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries officials • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials

Criteria: cross-cutting perspectives			
Question 9. To what extent were gender considerations and safeguards considered in the design and implementation of the project?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 9.1. Gender. Was the effective participation of women and equitable distribution between men and women guaranteed? Was the empowerment of women encouraged during the design and execution of the project?	**Judgement criteria** • Systematic integration of the gender approach during the project cycle **Indicators** • Existence of a gender-responsive diagnosis and strategy for the project • Existence and assessment of measures to achieve gender equality in the design and implementation of the project • Measures to promote the effective participation of women in project activities • Degree of equal participation by gender in the project stages • Stakeholders' assessment of the incorporation of the gender approach • Opinion of beneficiaries regarding the incorporation of a gender approach in the design and implementation of the project	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • FAO–GEF gender equality policies • Gender strategy of the project (if any) • Records of information disaggregated by gender and age • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Producers
Subquestion 9.2. Safeguards. To what extent were environmental and social issues taken into account in the design or implementation of the project?	**Judgement criteria** • The project has taken care not to generate harmful impacts on the societies and habitats where it intervened. **Indicators** • Identification of environmental and social risks of the project • Equivalence of measures adopted with the assigned risk rating • Strategies for addressing environmental and social issues during project implementation • Actions adapted to safeguard environmental and cultural heritage • Level of participation in the design of the project in order to incorporate the social, cultural and institutional characteristics of the beneficiaries • Existence of capacities and procedures to ensure that the execution of the project does not cause harmful effects in the habitats and communities where it intervenes	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • GEF safeguards policy • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Producers • Other stakeholders

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
	• Level of adaptation of methodologies to approach the local dynamics of the territories		

Criteria: sustainability			
Question 10. How sustainable are the results achieved to date at an environmental, social, institutional and financial level? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project's achievements?			
Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
Subquestion 10.1. Is there the will and commitment of the national, regional and local institutions to continue the project initiatives and its approach once the financing ceases? Do the beneficiaries have a sense of ownership of the project results?	**Judgement criteria** • Sense of ownership and willingness of government officials and authorities at the national, departmental, municipal and local levels, as well as partner institutions and beneficiaries to continue strengthening the methodologies, knowledge and practices developed within the framework of the project **Indicators** • Evidence of will and commitment of authorities at the national, regional and local levels • Signs of transformational changes with the potential for durability • Willingness and capacity of state authorities and officials to respond • Opinion of key agents regarding the institutional will and commitment to the continuity of the project	Review of documentation Interviews	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Public policies, ordinances and laws • Exit strategy • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Producers • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Other stakeholders
Subquestion 10.2. What is the probability that the effects derived from the project will be maintained over time once the financing ends?	**Judgement criteria** • Probability of scaling up an autonomous replication of the practices, policies and capabilities promoted by the project **Indicators** • Evidence of strengthening and/or replication of the capabilities developed by peers and/or related actors • Beneficiaries incorporate the skills learned autonomously and apply the capacities generated during the project	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Monitoring reports • Exit strategy • Other **Primary sources** • Project team

Evaluation subquestions	Indicators/judgement criteria	Methods	Sources
	• Willingness of stakeholders and beneficiaries to maintain and replicate the capabilities and practices developed • Existence of institutionalized mechanisms to promote the processes managed by the project		• FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Producers • Other stakeholders
Subquestion 10.3 What are the risks that could affect the sustainability of the project's achievements and effects?	**Judgement criteria** • Existence of external and internal risks that could compromise the sustainability and assessment of its mitigation measures **Indicators** • Evidence of financial, socioeconomic, environmental, institutional and government risks • Mitigation measures designed and implemented to contribute to sustainability • Systematic identification of risks by the project team and measures to minimize them	Review of documentation Interviews Focus group discussions	**Secondary sources** • Project document • PIR/PPR • Other **Primary sources** • Project team • FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO Uruguay officials • Officials and authorities of Uruguayan State institutions • Extension agent supervisors • Extension agents • Producers • Other stakeholders

Appendix 6. Co-financing table

Name of co-financer	Type of co-financing	Co-financing committed (USD)	Co-financing reported as materialized (USD)
Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries	Cash	8 950 000	10 721 613
Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries	In-kind	2 660 000	0
INIA	In-kind	796 000	787 154
FAO	Cash	360 002	3 000
FAO	In-kind	100 000	100 000
Ministry of Environment	In-kind	178 250	178 145
FAGRO	In-kind	670 000	507 933
Climate and Clean Air Coalition	Cash	100 000	100 000
National Commission for Rural Development	In-kind	49 315	58 762
Agricultural Planning Institute	In-kind	378 000	487 172
	TOTAL (USD)	**14 241 567**	**12 943 779**

Appendix 7. Fieldwork agenda

Date	Time	Position of key actor(s)	Name of key actor
Monday, 7 August	09.00–10.00	FAO officials	Cecilia Márquez
	10.30–11.30		Soledad Bergós
	12.00–13.00		Felipe García
	14.30–15.30		Ruth Bernheim
	16.00–17.00		Valentín Balderrín
Tuesday, 8 August	09.30–10.30	FAO consultant	Carolina Balián
	11.00–12.00	Former FAO Representative	Vicente Plata
	13.30–14.30	Minister, Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries	Fernando Mattos
	15.00–16.00	Former Project Director and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries counterpart	Walter Oyhantcabal
Wednesday, 9 August	09.00–10.00	FAO Uruguay Administration Manager	Diego Bessio
	10.30–11.30	Director Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, General Directorate of Rural Development	Carlos Rydstrom
	12.00–13.00	Project steering committee member, General Directorate of Rural Development	Verónica Pastorini
	14.30–15.30	Project steering committee member, Project Management Unit	Carlos Honorio
	16.00–17.00	FAO Representative	Gonzalo Kmaid
Thursday, 10 August	09.00–10.00		
	10.30–11.30	Project steering committee member, Ministry of Environment, National Directorate of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	Ana Laura Mello
	12.05–13.00	Ex-Director, Project Management Unit	Jorge Marzaroli
	14.30–15.30	Coordinator of Component 2, FAGRO	Santiago Dogliotti
	16.00–17.00	Project steering committee member, General Directorate of Natural Resources	Diego Cáceres

Friday, 11 August	10.00 –11.30	Producers, producer organization; Central Zone extension agents	Gustavo Cazaux; Rodolfo Martínez and Alba Moreira; Wilson Delgadoy Julia Varga; Judith Insua; Mariela Martinez; Federico Riani
	14.30–15.30	Producer/extension agent, Central Zone	Miguel Arias/Carolina Gari
	16.30–17.30	Central Zone producers	Juan Carlos e Inés Varela

Date	Time	Position of key agent(s)	Name of key agent
Monday, 14 August	10.00–11.00	Eastern Zone producers	Alejandro Rodríguez/Rosa Correa
	12.00–13.00	Eastern Zone producer	Lucía Pérez
	15.00–16.00	Producer/extension agent, Eastern Zone	Juan Carlos Pereyra/Ana Sanchez
	17.30–19.00	Producers, producer organization; Eastern Zone extension agents	Camila Burgueño, Pablo Alzate, Paola Fernández, Vanessa Piriz, Carlos Sources, Amauri Aparicio,Otto Riera and Estela Amaral, Pedro Mora, Daniel Fernández
Tuesday, 15 August	10.30–12.00	Producers, producer organization; North-eastern Zone extension agents	Beatriz Hernández, Ana Isabel Ron, Iris Arellano, Diego Arismendi, Mariana Mello
	14.00–15.00	Producer/extension agent North-eastern Zone	Omar Muniz/Isabel Barros
	17.00–18.00	Producer, North-eastern Zone	Olivia Guedes
Wednesday, 16 August			
	15.00–16.00	Northern Zone producers	Flia Henderson
	10.00–12.00	Producers, producer organization; Northern Zone extension agents	María Teresa and Abayubá Rivas, Flia Castiglioni, Graciela Betizagasti, José Luis Ferreira, Flia Zorrilla Silveira, Ario Alano, Eliseo González

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