



Executive Summary

Mid-Term Review of the Project “Introduction of new farming methods for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including plant and animal genetic resources, in production landscapes in selected areas of Cuba (COBIMAS)”

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Acknowledgements

The Mid-term review (MTR) team of the project "**Introduction of new farming methods for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including plant and animal genetic resources, in production landscapes in selected areas of Cuba**" (COBIMAS) - GCP /CUB/017/GFF (GEF ID: 9435) is led by Pedro Álvarez Icaza Longoria who holds a PhD in Sociology and Jurisprudence, and Ángel Alfonso Martínez, expert in rural issues and sustainable development and environment, and who holds a PhD in Geographical Sciences from the University of Havana and Postdoctoral in the Center for Research in Environmental Geography of the UNAM.

The MTR team thanks all the people who have contributed to this exercise that has been led by Enrique Moret in the Office of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Fund (FAO) in Cuba, Alfredo Socorro García and Niurka Puig Rosales of the Institute of Fundamental Research in Tropical Agriculture "Alejandro de Humboldt" of the Ministry of Industry, Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Cuba (MINAG), supported by Ina Salas Casasola in the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit (UC FAO-GEF). In addition, the MTR had the insights of non-governmental organizations, local communities, the areas of intervention of the project, research centers, staff of other United Nations agencies and international donors, representatives of the private sector and beneficiaries of the project. Their contributions were fundamental to the work of the MTR team, which deeply appreciates them.

The MTR team is interested in emphasizing and making explicit the recognition of both the FAO team and those responsible for the Cuban government through the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) and especially the team in charge of the project implementation for the valuable effort invested in the operation of the project, since its start coincided with the most critical phase of the COVID 19 SAR 2 pandemic and a period of shortage of essential fuels for mobility. That is why the MTR team has been careful to weigh these conditions in the preliminary assessment.

MTR Team

- *Pedro Álvarez Icaza International Consultant, MTR Leader*
- *Ángel Alberto Alfonso Martínez, National Consultant*



Executive Summary

- (1) This document presents the results of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the project "*Introduction of new agricultural methods for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including phylogenetic and zoogenetic resources, in productive landscapes in selected areas of Cuba*" (COBIMAS) - GCP/CUB/017/GFF"
- (2) The project aims to: "Promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in selected areas of Cuba by introducing sustainable crop production intensification, guaranteeing the conservation, adaptation and rescue of plant and animal genetic resources important for agricultural sustainability".
- (3) The period covered by the analysis goes from the start of the project in June 2019 to June 2022. This does not correspond to the planned mid-point as per the initial project duration. However, given the delays the implementation experienced, the current project end date is extended to the end of 2024. Hence the MTR cover the first 3 years of implementation.
- (4) The COBIMAS project is developed in three pilot zones, one in the east of the country, another in the center and a third in the west. These regions comprise areas with a great diversity of soils, rich biodiversity and conspicuous natural resources to be protected and located in areas where agriculture exerts strong pressures on ecosystems. In addition, within these regions there are four important legally designated protected areas: the Ciénaga de Zapata National Park, (declared a Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar Site), the Jobo Rosado Managed Resources Protection Area, and the Tunas de Zaza and Delta del Cauto Wildlife Refuges.
- (5) The COBIMAS project has 4 components: 1) Knowledge, mapping and planning of plant and animal genetic resources that are important for the future of agriculture; 2) Implementation of the "Save and Grow" approach in productive landscapes; 3) Strengthening the enabling environment for sustainable agriculture and conservation of GRFAs in Cuba; 4) Project management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
- (6) The MTR was conducted following a mixed approach that involved, an analysis of the documentation provided by the project coordination and field activities with interviews with stakeholders throughout the process.
- (7) As part of the methods used to gather information, visits were made to Havana to conduct interviews with stakeholders, managers and officials of the Cuban agencies participating in the project and of the donor and executing agencies and for coordination actions of the field visits



that would later be carried out in the provinces of Granma, Sancti Spiritus and the sites of Río Cauto and Ciénaga de Zapata where the MTR team held meetings and further interviews were conducted and questionnaires were applied to the main actors and stakeholders in the territory of the intervention. A total of 47 interviews were carried out. For the analysis of the information, data triangulation was used combining several methods and sources (interviews, meetings, field observations), to avoid biases in the findings and results of the evaluation.

- (8) This MTR has suffered from the same problems that the operation of the different components of the project and correspond to the current complex Cuban reality. The prevailing economic situation on the island means that the local market for goods and services is extremely depressed and it is necessary to resort to the international market, which also has considerable limitations for Cuba. This is manifested in an acute energy crisis that considerably restricts travel between Havana and the regions considered in the project and even in daily mobility to go to the offices to manage matters related to the progress of the project. This situation is derived from the intensification of the US economic blockade against Cuba.
- (9) The findings, conclusions and recommendations should be considered in the implementation of the second part of the project, with the understanding that this review is an excellent opportunity to make the pertinent adjustments to reach a successful implementation of the project, that is important for Cuba, for the beneficiaries, for the institutions, for FAO and for the GEF.
- (10) The MTR team used a mixed methodology, consisting of analyzing documents and direct observations in the field, to collect direct information in the territories. The first stage involved a thorough review of documents and evidence provided by the project coordination and FAO. For the latter, in addition to the visit and observation in the territory, work was carried out through interviews with officials, researchers and technicians as well as beneficiaries.

Main Findings

Relevance

- (11) **Finding 1.** The project is relevant; the methodological approach and results are aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, with the FAO Country Programme Framework 2021 – 2024 and framed in the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area and with the GEF-6 Strategic Objectives related to Biodiversity Strategies BD-3 and BD-4.



The project is pertinent, timely and necessary to face the present and future problems for a sustainable and sovereign food in Cuba in the coming years based on the implementation of the "Save and Grow" policy.

- (12) **Finding 2. The project was developed with the active participation of MINAG staff and beneficiaries.** The proposed actions and results respond to their priorities and needs. The evidence obtained during the document review and the observations in the field, together with the opinions collected in the interviews and with the dialogue with the beneficiaries, allowed to confirm that, from the beginning, there is commitment to the objectives and goals of the project.

Effectiveness

- (13) **Finding 3. Component 1: Knowledge, mapping and planning of plant and animal genetic resources that are important for the future of agriculture.** Outcome 1: Plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture are better known in Cuba. The estimated average component progress is **62%**, so the MTR team assigns an overall progress rating of **Satisfactory**. Five of the midterm goals have been met or exceeded. The rest have the level of progress expected at this stage.
- (14) The main results of this component are, the following: the training of **researchers and technicians who have been trained in practice to evaluate the agro biodiversity and facilitate its conservation**, as well as the implementation of the sustainable intensification of agricultural production (ISPA) approach that reaches **112%** progress (900 compared to 800 people) in particular the goal in relation to the **incorporation of women** was exceeded by 50% (**30% in relation to the goal of 20%**); **the habilitation and equipping of knowledge management centers (4)** which reached **100%**, that is the expected level for the final goal; the conclusion of the diagnosis of the species of interest and the draft of the 12 operational normative procedures foreseen (one for each of the genetic resources to be worked) with their evaluation scales; the strengthening of research entities that reach a **87%**; **the 12 genetic resources managed and conserved whose progress reaches 71%**.
- (15) **Finding 4. Component 2: Implementation of the "save and grow" approach in productive landscapes.** Outcome 2.1 Increased adoption of production systems that integrate biodiversity conservation through the creation of connectivity corridors, which bring together agricultural and natural ecosystems. The average overall progress of the estimated component is about **74%**, so the MTR team assigns an overall progress rating of **Satisfactory**. Eight of the goals for the medium term have been achieved or exceeded, 4 show an advance of 51% to 81% above the expected level for this stage and 5 of the goals have the expected level of progress for this stage. **Agrobiodiversity and innovation fairs with the participation of women**



- (30%) do not report any progress to date.** Although the average progress is high, the creation of connectivity corridors, which bring together agricultural and natural ecosystems, has not been carried out, so although a result is obtained around the adoption of integrated production systems, the establishment of these corridors is not reached yet and the coordination has not been made with the National Center for Protected Areas for compliance.
- (16) While this has been achieved with a significant effort to establish the limits for genetic resources, it cannot be said that this only reduce the level of risk that they had as a baseline at the beginning of the project. Training and inputs are still required for the spread of these to the expected levels. Many of the inputs have only recently been obtained, and others are yet to arrive in the country.
- (17) It is important to consider in this component, the 30 thousand hectares that must be managed under improved practices, or ISPA approach. Although some similar practices to traditional agroecology have been introduced, not all are conceived under the ISPA approach. These must now be introduced with the agricultural machinery acquired and with the training that producers must receive.
- (18) Some producers have carried out on their own some actions for the management and conservation of soils, however there is no training component in the project that introduces this aspect which is considered necessary for the agricultural productivity of the species under management and training on pest management and the use of bioproducts, like efficient microorganisms. The component has not considered the inputs medicines for the treatment of diseases in the goats under the project's management.
- (19) **Finding 5. Component 3: Strengthening the enabling environment for sustainable agriculture and conservation of the genetic Resources for food and agriculture in Cuba.** The estimated average progress of the component is close to **100%** so the MTR team assigned an overall progress rating of **Satisfactory**. The **revision of the regulatory framework that resulted in two enacted laws** stands out. The goal for the midterm was exceeded by **145%**, reaching and exceeding the final goal set in 74 documents with 91 documents reviewed. This means that the final goal was exceeded by **22%** and the progress to **100%** of the rest of the products of the component both for the medium term and for the end of the project.
- (20) **Finding 6. Component 4. Project management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).** Result 4.1. Project implemented, lessons learned and good practices documented and disseminated. This component is responsible for generating the enabling conditions for the implementation of the project. It presents a progress of **48%**, which exceeds the level of 8% expected for the medium term.



- (21) Therefore, the MTR team assigns an **overall progress rating of Satisfactory**. However, it should be noted that the progress of this component is below the level of progress in meeting goals in some products such as: the website, 30%; the project bulletins, 40%; and the technical documents for the dissemination of good practices, 50%.

Efficiency

- (22) **Finding 7.** To face the COVID 19 SAR2 pandemic and the crisis associated with energy shortage for mobility, the COBIMAS Project created an adaptive implementation where researchers and technicians as well as beneficiaries participated with actions, such as the distribution of breeding stock among the products with the support of governmental enterprises and the search for local inputs to enable corrals. This contributed decisively to the advancement of the project and to achieving some of the goals that would otherwise have been impossible to achieve.
- (23) **Finding 8.** The MTR team found that because of the lag in activities due to the problems facing Cuba, including the energy crisis, financial resources have not been able to flow at the pace demanded by the COBIMAS project. These problems has delayed the achievement of some goals and the delivery of some of the products within the expected deadlines. This is particularly evident with the funds from the GEF, which although they have already been delivered to FAO, have not been utilized by the project for the various reasons, including the lack of verification.
- (24) **Finding 9.** The coordinators at the province level, have articulated a system that guarantees fluid communication with key actors. Systematic communication has contributed to the transparency and confidence of the actors involved, which has made it possible to address the problems related to delays in the delivery of inputs. However, this has not been the case in all cases in which remoteness and difficult access have hindered this systematicity.

Sustainability

- (25) **Finding 10.** The COBIMAS project contributed to the review and adaptation of the regulatory framework for food and agriculture, which resulted in the Law 148/2022 "Law on Food Sovereignty and Food and Nutritional Security", approved by the National Assembly of People's Power. The impact of this action will be at long-term because it is strategic for an issue as agricultural and livestock food production.



- (26) **Finding 11.** There are some barriers that can compromise the long-term sustainability of the project. As internal barriers, the lack of exchange between the differentiated regions and provinces stands out, which results in diverse mosaics and landscapes in the intervention areas. Regarding external barriers, the MTR team identified: the insular effects of the SAR COVID 19 pandemic; coordination and synergies with other initiatives in Cuba; difficulties in the supply of inputs, materials and equipment and, finally, an evident shortage of fuel that restricts mobility.
- (27) The MTR identified complex administrative processes that have caused delays in infrastructure construction processes, partly due to the slowness of imports, but this has also contributed to the structural blockade suffered by Cuba.
- (28) **Finding 12.** In addition to the risks considered by the COBIMAS project, this MTR identified a series of risks such as: **financial** due to the delay in imports due to causes derived from COVID 19 and the consequences of the US blockade; **socio-political**, whether the energy crisis persists or worsens; **institutional and governance**, if coordination between central government entities and teams in the territory does not ensure better supervision and monitoring of the nearest project; **environmental**, if there is no adequate management of wild species that threaten biodiversity and the objectives of COBIMAS.

Factors affecting performance

- (29) **Finding 13.** The coordination and administration of the project, despite the difficulties posed by the restriction of mobility, has been effective and efficient. It has always had the support of the national, provincial and municipal administration of the Cuban ministries participating in the project, as well as FAO, which as an implementing agency has fulfilled its functions and responsibilities in coordination, administration, technical and administrative support, despite the difficulties that arise in relation to the complex administrative processes of FAO, that are considered by most of the interviewed actors as a bottleneck for implementation.
- (30) **Finding 14.** **The project has a clear design of the communication strategy** developed in conjunction with the Technical Committee of the Project; however, there is a need to accelerate its implementation with the producers to achieve a better identification with the project and its objectives.
- (31) **Finding 15.** **The MTR team was able to confirm the capacity for self-adjustment during the progress of the project**, since some results that were not originally considered were defined, which provided greater support to achieve the project activities. However, some of these adjustments are not adequately reflected in the various progress report documents of the project and are not evidenced, so an effort should be made to make them visible.



- (32) **Finding 16.** The **level of progress reported exceeds that expected for the medium term**, despite inevitable delays in key components in the achievement of goals and products. However, there is a discrepancy in the total financial period of the GEF with respect to the total for the year resulting from the amount by components with resources reported from that source.

Cross-cutting issues

- (33) **Finding 17. The project promotes the active participation of women**, despite the cultural constraints in the area. The MTR team confirms that the project has been successful and this is perceived by researchers and technicians, as well as producers and beneficiaries, as well as the results mentioned in the different project reports.
- (34) **Finding 18.** The project requires an adjustment to improve the incorporation of young people in the actions of the COBIMAS Project. For this, it is necessary to consider a roadmap in the different activities that allow a progressive insertion of this group. There is not specific target in the project that established a percentage of inclusion of this population, however, there is an area of opportunity in this project.

Environmental and social safeguards

- (35) **Finding 19.** The design of the project included an analysis of environmental, social, political and institutional risks related to its implementation, and a risk management plan with mitigation measures. The M&E System monitors compliance with FAO's environmental and social safeguards as part of the implementation of the risk management plan.
- (36) According to FAO's Environmental and Social Management Guidelines, the proposed project is classified within the **moderate risk category**.



Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

- (37) **Conclusion 1. Relevance.** The project is aligned with the strategic and operational priorities of the GEF and FAO, and aligned with the framework of mandatory policies and legislation (in particular component 1 and 2 of the COBIMAS project) and updated by the government of Cuba that give great relevance to the "Save and Grow" policy. For the first time, FAO is implementing an environment project in Cuba with GEF resources for the protection of biodiversity in productive environments as well as the reduction of land loss, the recovery of ecosystems, the promotion of clean and biodiverse economies.
- (38) **Conclusion 2. Effectiveness.** The MTR team observes that the implementation of the project in the second phase, in general, requires adjustments in order to achieve both the goals in general and those that present the greatest lag, which are largely belonging to the expected results of components 1, 2 and 4 due to the prevailing post-pandemic conditions.
- (39) **Conclusion 3. Effectiveness.** Component 1 presents a significant delay in the scope of its outputs and results, and in budget execution, due, among other things, to the difficulties in the importation of inputs and in the verification of execution expenses that at the same time has prevented an effective budget flow with respect to the schedule, in addition to the fact that its start was slowed down by the effects of the COVID SAR 2 pandemic.
- (40) **Conclusion 4. Efficiency.** The implementation of the project is based on a series of multi-stakeholder local governance arrangements, involving stakeholders and facilitating the implementation of project actions. Although it is a success, it is essential to maintain adequate communication to ensure effective execution in addition to contributing to improve efficiency and reduce costs, as well as to avoid duplication with other initiatives underway in the project areas.
- (41) **Conclusion 5. Sustainability.** The diversification of actions and the search for supply chains, agro-industrial production and marketing, certification of products at origin and economic incentives for producers who manage and conserve these phytogenetic and animal genetic resources, will ensure the sustainability of the impact at its completion and in the longer term.
- (42) **Conclusion 6. Factors affecting progress.** The accompaniment and support exercised by non-governmental, professional and technical entities that are clearly recognized by the project in its implementation are key to an effective performance of the project by all the actors involved.



- (43) **Conclusion 7. Factors affecting performance.** The people who work in the territory, the researchers and technicians as well as the population benefited adapt to the complex situations they face and there is a lot of responsibility and desire for the project to be executed successfully, to achieve the benefits that have been proposed, due to the importance it has for the country in terms of food sovereignty and the protection of biodiversity.
- (44) **Conclusion 8. Factors affecting progress** There is limited use of human capital in training activities since the project does not adequately include local science and technological innovation systems that have highly qualified personnel and that could replace foreign technicians who have not been able to reach because of mobility difficulties. This is evidenced with greater emphasis in the most remote areas of the project.
- (45) **Conclusion 9. Cross-cutting issues (Gender).** In order to strengthen the gender approach, adjustments are required to incorporate more precise indicators such as the number and percentage of women researchers, technicians, project leaders and collaborators in institutions participating in the project M&E system's. Strengthening the gender approach and indicators is seen as an area of opportunity for the second phase of the COBIMAS project.
- (46) **Conclusion 10. Cross-cutting issues (young people).** COBIMAS does not have a roadmap to promote a good integration of young people into the project. There are no indicators or targets defined in the project that indicate a percentage of inclusion of this population.
- (47) **Conclusion 11. Environmental and Social Safeguards.** Given that the project focuses on the reintroduction of endemic species of flora and fauna to the chosen sites and for the type of activities with low environmental and social impact and in tune with protected areas, it is noted that the COBIMAS project explicitly promotes close coordination between environmental and agricultural authorities at all levels of decision.

Recommendations

For FAO as the implementing agency of the GEF

- (48) **Recommendation 1. Relevance.** In order to achieve an effective insertion in the public policies implemented by the Cuban government in which the COBIMAS project has participated and in coherence with its laws and adjusted regulations, it is imperative to find effective mechanisms so that, with the support of FAO, MINAG develops operational strategies so that the beneficiaries concretize in their practices the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity.



- (49) **Recommendation 2. Relevance.** For the second phase of the COBIMAS project, it is recommended to show very valuable results linked to climate change adaptation mechanisms derived from the sustainable agricultural practices introduced by the project and that are not well communicated and that for the moment are part of the hidden results that were identified in the MTR. To this end, it is suggested that the results framework be revised and updated.
- (50) **Recommendation 3. Efficiency.** It is suggested to analyze the possibility of an extension without additional cost and submit it to the approval of the Steering Committee of the project. The proposed extension contemplates an extension of the deadline for the second phase from 12 to 18 months to facilitate an effective implementation of the planned activities and results and thus overcome the gaps that occurred in the first phase of the project.

The extension will allow to increase knowledge in the management of biodiversity-friendly practices, as well as the import of inputs or adaptation with Cuban technologies, and the dissemination of their results. Likewise, the extension will allow the effective operation of components 1, 2 and 4 that have exercised little more than a third of the programmed budget and therefore, have not reached the expected goals and outputs.

- (51) **Recommendation 4. Sustainability.** The relocation of the mini industry from Jobo Rosado to Tunas de Zaza is recommended to take advantage of the dairy potential of the region. This decision does not imply an increase in funds but tends to greater effectiveness and efficiency in the use of project resources.

For Project stakeholders

- (52) **Recommendation 5.** The MTR team proposes that it is possible to make better use of human capital considering that the training actions can be replicated with the manuals generated by the project supported by local science and technological innovation systems, CITMA regional research centers and others, with seminars, workshops, infograms and direct training to the beneficiaries, among other options.

These training actions are suggested to be carried out with the support of information and communication technologies in order to overcome the difficulties imposed by fuel shortages.

- (53) **Recommendation 6.** It is important to pay attention to the demands of the beneficiaries on aspects that can offer greater sustainability to the planned results, thus ensuring the commitment and permanence of the producers in their areas at the end of the project.



For the team responsible for the execution of the project

- (54) **Recommendation 7.** A novel reporting and monitoring mechanism is required, supported by the project's M&E system, applied directly by the responsible technicians in each region with the contribution of evidence of compliance: such as, for example, photos, videos, meeting minutes to solve the practical inability to move from Havana and using the digital technologies available in Cuba. This is due to the difficulties of moving the core team and the uncertain prospects for change.
- (55) **Recommendation 8.** It is recommended to work on the registration and declaration of farms under sustainable land management, an aspect that contributes to one of the objectives of the GEF which is land degradation and which is in the line of action of the FAO of "Save to Grow".
- (56) **Recommendation 9. Cross-cutting issues: gender.** Proactive actions are required for greater incorporation of the gender approach with more precise indicators such as the number and percentage (%) of women involved in all components of COBIMAS separately that allow better measurement of achievements, and that give visibility to the achievements of the project in terms of gender issues.
- (57) **Recommendation 10. Cross-cutting issues: young people.** The COBIMAS Project must create a roadmap for a better incorporation of young Cubans into the project with indicators and goals that set and measure a number and percentage of inclusion of this population whose participation is crucial for the sustainability of the project.



Table A. MTR ratings and achievements summary table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments ¹
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	The project is relevant because its objective, its results and products, as well as its activities, promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the sustainable production of agriculture to ensure the food of Cubans in the long term.
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	S	The approach and results of the project are aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, with the FAO Country Programmatic Framework 2021 – 2024 and contributes to the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area and with the GEF-6 Strategic Objectives related to Biodiversity Strategies BD-3 and BD-4.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	S	COBIMAS contributes to the fulfillment of the “State Plan for Confronting Climate Change of the Republic of Cuba” (Task Life), as it identifies, manages and conserves phyto and zoogenetic resources present in Cuban biodiversity, with resilience potential so that agricultural activity can adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions		There is a synergy in the territory between this project and other initiatives, including the European cooperation system and other funds.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	The project has a global progress of products at mid-term of: Component 1 of 56%; Component 2, 74%, Component 3, 100%; component 4 of 48%.
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	S	The expected products for the MT have not been fully achieved; However, there are hidden results related to the benefits of the project as measures for adaptation and mitigation against climate change in agriculture.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes ² and project objectives	S	The progress of the project is satisfactory. The greatest delay occurs in component 1, which involves actions in the territory for reasons outside the sphere of responsibility of the executing entity.
- Outcome 1	S	Phyto and zoogenetic resources will be better known in Cuba towards the end of the project.

¹ Include reference to the relevant sections in the report.

² Assessment and ratings by individual outcomes may be undertaken if there is added value.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments ¹
- Outcome 2	S	The adoption of production systems that integrate biodiversity conservation will be a reality, it is underway.
- Outcome 3	S	Close technical cooperation and regulatory coherence support the integration of the conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity in public policies;
- Outcome 4	S	The Project is in the implementation phase: It remains to extract the lessons learned so far and document and disseminate good practices for replication to other areas.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	S	The project is underway and although it has made more than satisfactory progress in some of its components, it has encountered difficulties derived from COVID 19 and the energy crisis, which has forced the postponement of actions in the territory.
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	Not rated at MTR	
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	S	The level of efficiency is satisfactory as expected at midpoint.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Risks are identified and appropriately managed.
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	The financial risks in the flow of resources are surmountable in the second stage once the procedures are completed.
D1.2. Sociopolitical risks	MU	Socio-political risks may arise if the energy crisis continues
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Institutional and governance risks are considered manageable.
D1.4. Environmental risks	ML	Environmental risks can arise due to inadequate management of the species under management.
D2. Catalysis and replication	MS	There are risks due to the delay in the systematization and extraction of lessons learned and dissemination and dissemination of good practices.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness ³	S	The design contemplates results consistent with the established objective and has allowed the expected products to be achieved at a satisfactory level. The

³ This refers to factors affecting the project's ability to start as expected, such as the presence of sufficient capacity among executing partners at project launch.



GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments ¹
		<p>components are clear and coherent but do not contemplate relationships between them, which gives rise to products between components that overlap or are redundant, which would be saved if they had been organized sequentially by stages. Inconsistencies were found in the indicators and in the way the activities carried out were assigned to the results and products of the results framework and in the PIRs of subsequent years.</p> <p>There are hidden results such as the benefits of the project in agriculture that make it resilient due to the measures for adaptation and mitigation against climate change that COBIMAS actions promote.</p>
E2. Quality of project implementation	S	The implementation has faced some challenges that it has been able to overcome with relative success as the products show it, however there are some delays in actions that should present a higher level of progress in the medium term.
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	HS	The FAO, the agency in charge of its implementation, fulfills its role and responsibilities.
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	HS	The FAO, the agency in charge of its supervision, fulfills its role and responsibilities.
E3. Quality of project execution	S	The execution has exceeded what was expected for the mid-term. The actors and beneficiaries, to varying degrees, are committed to the project depending on the region and the degree of communication and accessibility.
E3.1 Project execution and management (PMU and executing partner performance, administration, staffing, etc.)	S	The participation of the UGP and the partners has shown a high level of commitment to achieve the results and products
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	Financial management and co-financing have generally been fluid. However, some delays were detected in the flow of GEF resources derived from delays in project verification reports.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	The high level of commitment of the Cuban government at the national, provincial and municipal levels, as well as that of the officials who work in the territory, is evident. Likewise, the beneficiaries have gradually taken ownership of the project, an aspect that can be improved in more remote areas.



GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments ¹
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	Communication is systematic and fluid although it is not homogeneous in all areas of intervention. It operates successfully as a containment mechanism against delays in the delivery of inputs. The measures to manage the COVID epidemic and the energy crisis have affected this system to some extent. Knowledge products for the dissemination and dissemination of good practices still need to be concluded.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	S	The monitoring and evaluation system has operated throughout the entire implementation process and is a component of the project and therefore has assigned resources. This has made it possible to identify delays and propose measures to correct or accelerate them. However, the energy crisis and other situations beyond the control of the implementing agency and the partners have prevented greater proximity to the territory.
E7.1 M&E design	HS	The M&E system was designed with support from FAO and has various supporting guides and guidelines and documents generated throughout the process to identify obstacles and problems. This MTR is part of this system.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	S	The M&E implementation plan was established by PRODOC and includes a series of reports whose purpose is the timely detection of threats and problems and their correction. However, monitoring and evaluation have presented difficulties due to fuel shortages, which has resulted in monitoring not being as close as would be desirable and some inconsistencies in the organization of the information.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	S	Most factors that affect performance are successfully managed by stakeholders who have a high level of commitment to achieving project goals.
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	An increase is reported in terms of the scope of the goals for incorporating women. However, these achievements were not evident in all products; it would be advisable to facilitate transparency in this area. The way the results matrix is constructed makes it difficult to see.
F2. Human rights issues	MS	The project has a mechanism for managing complaints. However, in the field visits it was heard that sometimes the beneficiaries' suggestions are not



GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments ¹
		attended to, although some of them cannot be managed by the project because they are topics that are not supported by any component, such as the case of infrastructure and water management requests.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project contains actions that in themselves are environmental safeguards. However, the project does not contain explicitly defined measures for the control and management of plant and animal pests. Social safeguards are considered in the project through the complaint's mechanism.
Overall project rating		<p>The general assessment of the project is the result of the analysis through the main MTR criteria. Objectively, there are problems to solve, remedies to apply and corrective measures that are appropriate to carry out for the next phase.</p>
		S