

## TERMINAL EVALUATION

Project ID:	9445
Project Name:	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas
Countr(ies):	Mexico
Implementing Agency:	CI

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## I. Overview

### A. Description

Project name

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas

Country

Mexico

GEF ID

9445

Implementing Agency

CI

Executing Entity

National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)  
and Conservation International Mexico, A.C. CI Mexico

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

Strengthening the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the national system of protected areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico.

### B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

1/10/2018

Agency Approval

12/20/2017

Implementation Start

2/15/2018

First Disbursement

2/15/2018

Expected MTR

8/1/2020

MTR Submission

7/3/2025

Actual MTR

7/26/2021

Expected Completion

4/30/2025

Actual Completion

4/23/2025

Actual TE

3/31/2025

TE Submission

7/3/2025

Final Disbursement

6/30/2024

### C. Disbursements

Project Financing  
7,869,200.00

Cumulative Disbursement  
4,816,447.50

## II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

### A. Main Terminal Evaluation Findings

#### Assessment of Project Results

The overall rating of assessment of achievement of project results is **Highly Satisfactory**, summarized from the assessment of the performance of project outputs and outcomes. Outcomes were rated in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as shown below:

1. *Outputs*: Achievement of outputs is rated **Highly Satisfactory**. The project had a total of 7 outputs: three (3) for Component 1, two (2) for Component 2 and two (2) for Component 3. Under Component 1, two (Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) had their indicator targets expected while Output 1.3.1 was achieved at 100%. For the two outputs under Component 2, the indicator target for Output 2.1.1 was exceeded while Output 2.2.1 had its indicator targets achieved at 100%. The two outputs under Component 3 were achieved (Output 3.1.2) and exceeded (Output 3.1.1).
2. *Outcomes*: Achievement of outcomes is rated **Highly Satisfactory** for all outcomes (Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1). This is based on the ratings of four dimensions: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The overall outcome rating for the project is **Highly Satisfactory**. An overview of the assessment of the outcomes against the four dimensions: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Sustainability is provided below:
  - a. *Effectiveness*: The effectiveness of outcome 1.1 is rated as Highly Satisfactory (100% average outcome achievement); Outcome 1.2 is rated Highly Satisfactory (100% average outcome achievement); Outcome 1.3 is rated Satisfactory (90% average outcome achievement); Outcome 2.1 was rated as Highly Satisfactory (107% average outcome achievement); Outcome 2.2 was rated Highly Satisfactory (197% average outcome achievement) while Outcome 3.1 was rated as Highly Satisfactory (138% average outcome achievement).
  - b. *Efficiency* is rated **Highly Satisfactory** for all project outcomes. The ratings were based on an assessment of how funds were managed and tracked and value for money.
  - c. *Relevance* is rated **Highly Satisfactory** for all the project outcomes because of their alignment with national priorities of Mexico, relevant international legislative frameworks, and the GEF-7 programming directions.
  - d. *Sustainability*: Outcomes 1.2 and 3.1 could face financial risks that could impede sustainability. The project would require additional financial resources for the management of the additional areas classified as protected areas (Outcome 1.2 – Moderately Likely). Similarly, changes in funding priorities of public and private financiers could disrupt the sustained flow of investments from public and private sources secured under Outcome 3.1 (Moderately Likely). From an institutional risk to sustainability stance, inadequate institutional capacity may make it hard for the project benefits of sustainable landscape management practices to be sustained beyond the project's life (Outcome 1.1 – Moderately Likely). Climate change represents an environmental risk which may hamper the sustainability of the project outcomes. Changes in temperature and precipitation could negatively impact the existing and new areas brought under protected management (Outcome 1.2 - Moderately Likely), the sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and tourism production (Outcome 2.1 - Moderately Likely) and the income earned by producer organizations (Outcome 2.2 – Moderately Likely). The overall Sustainability rating is Likely.

## Progress to Impact

Progress to Impact is rated **Satisfactory**.

At the time of this terminal evaluation (TE), all project activities have been implemented, most of them exceeded or achieved. The protected areas (PAs) have benefitted from more effective management practices and producer organisations have been introduced to more sustainable production practices, market-driven opportunities and an increase in income. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores for the various PAs have increased significantly among other achieved results, the impact of the project therefore is already obvious.

### Assessment of Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Systems

The overall M&E system is rated **Satisfactory**. The summary is provided below:

a. *M&E Design*: The rating for M&E design is **Highly Satisfactory**.

The project from the onset had a monitoring and evaluation plan in place, with clear objectives and indicators. Project monitoring and evaluation has been conducted in accordance with Conservation International and GEF procedures and guidelines as expected. The M&E plan detailed all indicators, means of verification, and clearly defined the monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders. It also allocated an adequate budget for M&E activities. In collaboration with the Executing Agency (EA), project stakeholders were responsible for ensuring that key monitoring and evaluation tasks were carried out in a timely and effective manner. These included:

- the project inception workshop and report;
- quarterly progress reporting, annual progress and implementation reporting (PIR); and
- documentation of lessons learned, and support for and cooperation with the independent external evaluation exercises.

The project Executing Agency is also responsible for ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating key monitoring and evaluation activities, such as the independent evaluation exercises and frequent progress reporting.

b. *M&E Implementation* is rated **Satisfactory**.

The M & E plan was sufficiently budgeted, and the funding has been provided throughout the different stages of project implementation to ensure planned M & E activities are carried out as required and in a timely manner. A Midterm Evaluation conducted in 2021 and the ongoing Terminal Evaluation (TE) were also included in this budget. Periodic financial and technical reports have been produced as required throughout the project lifespan. Data on the progress and performance of the different output indicators has been collected and reported in the quarterly and annual reports produced between 2018 2024.

There were some delays at the start of the project, though things fell in place and implementation was on track making M & E activities to go on as planned. The EA has ensured the alignment of produced reports to relevant guidelines and assigned delivery timelines for all planned reports. There has been no evidence of any major problems in the management of the project, as the various stakeholders have worked in close collaboration and partnership to ensure that PIRs are elaborated annually to monitor progress made from implementation, while ensuring that lessons learned are properly documented and shared as expected. The coronavirus pandemic - COVID-19 which posed a risk in the early years of implementation ended and activities went as planned.

### Assessment of Implementation and Execution

The overall quality of implementation/execution is rated **Satisfactory**.

*Quality of Implementation*: The quality of implementation rating is **Highly Satisfactory**.

Although the project experienced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team successfully brought activities back on track once conditions improved. This recovery is evident in the fact that most outputs were either achieved or exceeded.

The implementation of the project was well managed by the EA. As part of its technical and financial oversight role, Conservation International (CI) Mexico supported the project implementation by providing technical and financial guidance while ensuring compliance with GEF guidelines, safeguards requirements, and all technical and financial commitments.

*Quality of execution:* The quality of execution rating is **Satisfactory**.

The Project Steering Committee played the role of overall assurance, backstopping, and oversight role in the project, so far ensuring that all progress reports are produced in a timely manner.

### **Assessment of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)**

The overall rating of the design and implementation of ESS is **Satisfactory**.

At the time of project design, a screening on safeguards was conducted for the Sustainable Landscapes project and an ESS Compliance workplan produced following prescribed guidelines. This screening pointed to three safeguards that could be triggered during project implementation: gender mainstreaming; stakeholder engagement; and accountability and grievance mechanisms. As per the evaluators, the ESS screening was done in an appropriate manner. The ESS safeguards that were triggered, implemented, monitored and indicators tracked and reported are described below:

*a. Gender* is rated **Satisfactory**. Gender mainstreaming was of great importance from the time of project design and all through implementation. As per the ProDoc, to ensure that the project met CI-GEF's "Gender Mainstreaming Policy #8", the Executing Agency prepared a Gender Mainstreaming Plan. As part of this plan, the project executing agency had committed to ensuring inclusivity as a fundamental part of the project. This policy aimed at an equal representation of men and women within the project's activities to the highest extent possible. While gender was an essential element of this policy, the project also sought inclusion across expertise for all project components to ensure that the targets generated are feasible across a global setting and are not biased in any way.

At the time of this TE, the project has seen a significant participation of men and women in project activities which can be attributed to the level of achievements of the project. The project ensured gender mainstreaming and women's involvement during project implementation.

*b. Stakeholder Engagement* is rated **Satisfactory**. To ensure that the project meets CI-GEF Project Agency's "Stakeholders' Engagement Policy #9", a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was developed by the Executing Agency during the design phase. The SEP was elaborated and included different categories of actors and their various roles and responsibilities within the confines of the project (state actors, development partners, private sector, academia, NGOs, as well as local government and cities). Overall, the following stakeholders participated in the project:

- Government Ministries
- Development agencies
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Communities / local populations / ejidos
- Municipal government & delegates
- State government
- Federal government
- Committees or government civil society bodies
- Assemblies or community boards
- Ejido councils
- Peasant organizations or social enterprises and
- Private Sector Leaders
- Companies
- Media

*c. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM)* is rated **Highly Satisfactory**. The project's EA developed an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism at the design phase of the project, which was disseminated among the different stakeholders. All respondents also stated that no grievances were received during the implementation of the project.

## Other assessments

### Materialization of co-financing

The project was co-financed by Conservation International, CONANP, CI - Starbucks Foundation, COOPERATIVA AMBIO S.C. de R.L., COSTA SALVAJE, FONDO DE CONSERVACION EL TRIUNFO (FONCET), SEMAEDESO OXACA, SECRETARÍA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE, ENERGÍAS Y DESARROLLO SUSTENTABLE, Ministry of Agriculture (SADER formally SAGARPA), SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Fondo Oaxaqueño, Sociedad de historia Natural Niparaja AC, SEMAHN CHIAPAS, SECRETARIA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE E HISTORIA NATURAL, La Frailescana, Master Chef, INTERCAFE, SmartFish AC, Comité Oaxaqueño de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuícola A.C. (Cosia), SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Delegación Chiapas), CONAFOR Chiapas, UCIRI, SEMAEDESO, SEMAEDESO, CI - USAID SLV, Sociedad cooperativa de producción pesquera de bienes y servicios los agosteros de Topon, Café Capitán, CI – Mastercard, El Carrizal, and ECOM.

### Knowledge management

A Knowledge Management Plan was developed and disseminated among all project stakeholders at inception to ensure proper reporting and documentation of lessons learned, as well as challenges encountered. Component 2 created awareness on the importance of sustainable biodiversity conservation in Oaxaca and Chiapas and Mexico as a whole. Success stories, best practices and lessons learned are published on blogs, websites, social media and other digital platforms.

### Lessons Learnt

- 1. Adaptive management.** At the time of inception of the project, COVID-19 had not started and was therefore not identified as a risk of the project implementation. However, it became an actual risk that caused delays and/or slowed down project implementation. To mitigate this unforeseen hindrance, adjustments were made to the project activities to accommodate the travel and physical meeting restrictions imposed by governments due to the pandemic. Project staff switched to remote and hybrid mode of work as well as virtual meetings to help them implement the planned activities, such as stakeholder consultations. Health measures were put in place to ensure the safety of the project staff and other partners involved in the implementation. However, even though the project already put in place adaptive measures, COVID-19 slowed down during implementation. Putting in place adaptive management strategies will also help a project of this nature to better mitigate unexpected events that bring delays to its implementation.
- 2. The project fostered inclusiveness by involving the private sector, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, youth and women.** Among the stakeholder groups, there are private sector organizations who had committed to co-financing the project, such as the ADO Foundation, ALSEA and DANONE, although their co-financing did not materialize. Efforts were made to ensure the participation of women, indigenous peoples, people of Afro-descendant origin and youth in project activities, in the selection of stakeholders throughout the project implementation, taking into consideration their needs and interests as a minority or vulnerable group and putting measures in place to monitor and enhance their participation. The gender analysis developed at the inception phase of the project and the stakeholder engagement plan enabled this to happen.
- 3. Continuous close collaboration amongst the project stakeholders, creates a sense of ownership and encourages a strong participation in project activities.** The Sustainable Landscapes project did well in bringing diverse stakeholders from all levels of government all through the project, starting from the design phase through implementation. Stakeholder consultations facilitated the selection of project stakeholders who showed a strong sense of engagement, which may have positively impacted progress in achieving expected outcomes.

## Recommendations

FINDING/CHALLENGE		RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Sustainability</b>		
1.	Sustainable long-term partnerships established within the framework of the project	For the successful achievement of project results and future interventions of this nature, long-term partnerships established during project implementation will need to be maintained even after the project ends.  <b>Responsibility:</b> CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP and other stakeholders <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects
2.	Better preparation for risks, especially security and political challenges, was identified as critical for future projects.	The project experienced delays due to political disruptions. For future initiative, it will be worthwhile to have contingency planning for potential social and political disruptions. In this way, the project will be better able to deal with these once they arise.  <b>Responsibility:</b> CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP and other stakeholders <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects
3.	Causes of land degradation continuously need to be monitored across the landscapes, to ensure projects of this nature are beneficial and sustainable.	This project has created awareness on the causes of land degradation and the importance of biodiversity conservation and landscape management. For these benefits to have a long-lasting impact, they will need to continue monitoring the factors impacting landscapes.  <b>Responsibility:</b> CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP <b>Timeline:</b> Future projects
<b>Knowledge management</b>		
4.	It is required that knowledge products continue being disseminated to encourage wider audience.	Continuous awareness-raising and education is imperative, through reports, social media and project partner websites, to widen the audience and create impact.  <b>Responsibility:</b> CI-GEF <b>Timeline:</b> By the end of project activities

### Terminal Evaluation summary Rating

The table below summarizes the project ratings. The rating scale is provided in Annex C.

Area	Terminal Evaluation Rating
<b>Assessment of project results:</b> the extent to which project objectives were achieved	<p><b>Overall rating of project results: Highly Satisfactory</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outputs: <i>Highly Satisfactory</i></li> <li>2. Outcomes: <i>Highly Satisfactory</i>. The breakdown is provided below:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Effectiveness: Highly Satisfactory</i></li> <li>b. <i>Relevance: Highly Satisfactory</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Area	Terminal Evaluation Rating
	<p>c. <i>Efficiency: Highly Satisfactory</i></p> <p>d. <i>Sustainability: Likely</i></p>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Likely</b>
<b>Progress to Impact</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) system</b>	<p><b>Overall rating of the quality of M&amp;E systems: Satisfactory</b></p> <p>a. <i>M&amp;E design: Highly Satisfactory</i></p> <p>b. <i>M&amp;E implementation: Satisfactory</i></p>
<b>Assessment of Implementation and Execution</b>	<p><b>Overall rating of Implementation and Execution: Satisfactory</b></p> <p>a. <i>Quality of Implementation: Highly Satisfactory</i></p> <p>b. <i>Quality of Execution: Satisfactory</i></p>
<b>Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)</b>	<p><b>Overall rating of (ESS): Satisfactory</b></p> <p>a. <i>Gender: Satisfactory</i></p> <p>b. <i>Stakeholder Engagement: Satisfactory</i></p> <p>c. <i>Accountability and Grievance Mechanism: Highly Satisfactory</i></p>

## B. Stakeholder Engagement

Progress to impact for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas project is rated **Satisfactory**.

As per the project document (ProDoc), the project intended addressing three key environmental problems affecting the target landscapes, which include:

- loss of habitat and fragmentation, as a result of the conversion of forests for agricultural purposes and constant clearing of forests for subsistence activities, wood for building materials, road construction, mining among others, which poses a threat to wildlife.
- Overexploitation of wildlife, caused by illegal wildlife trade and poaching for the subsistence of surrounding communities near the priority landscapes and
- Climate change

. At the time of this terminal evaluation, all project outputs had been achieved or exceeded. Progress reports elaborated for the project, including Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and quarterly progress reports indicate significant progress in terms of achieving expected results. Conservation and monitoring plans have been developed and monitoring brigades are being implemented in the intervention sites. Similarly, the management scores of the target protected areas have been improved and gender mainstreaming activities including trainings, and the elaboration of relevant documents for the effective mainstreaming of gender have been carried out successfully.

The project conducted activities that helped to improve sustainable practices related to landscape management and thereby enhanced the livelihoods of local communities by increasing their net income. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores of the target protected areas in the three landscapes have increased from 49 to 63.2 out of 100.

Training sessions were organized as part of project activities on gender and safeguards and at the state level on monitoring. The project also carried out sensitization and awareness-raising activities on social media such as a biodiversity pride campaign with the aim of bringing to light the sustainable practices developed and the importance of the conservation of species.

It was revealed that the long-term impact of the project included: strengthened natural area protections and the empowerment of local communities, as well as addressing unforeseen administrative and environmental risks.<sup>[1]</sup> A respondent cited the training of local actors and community-based conservation efforts, and ecological or biodiversity conservation, creation of protected areas such as Tacaná Volcano and La Frailecana, development of territorial planning instruments in Oaxaca and Chiapas, and training initiatives for local governance ('Guardians of Planning')<sup>[2]</sup>. Other impacts included increased knowledge among producers and the adoption of sustainable practices<sup>[3]</sup>. Additionally, the project exceeded hectare-related targets and engaged more producers than initially planned. Another respondent stated that the project's long-term impacts include strengthened environmental governance, increased community capacity, and formalised land management plans<sup>[4]</sup>. Finally, Certification of Voluntary Conservation Areas (VCAs), productive reconversion, and territorial planning that emphasized sustainable land management were fundamental impacts of the project. <sup>[5]</sup>

## Unintended impacts

At the time of the terminal evaluation, there has been little or no evidence of any adverse or unintended impacts of the activities implemented under this project. It is expected that the project will bring great improvements to sustainable landscape management in the target areas and bring economic benefits to the surrounding communities.

### 1.1.1. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement is rated Satisfactory.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was developed by the Executing Agencies during the design phase of the project, with an aim to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the GEF Stakeholders Engagement Policy. The SEP was an elaborate document that included the different categories of actors – state actors, educational institutions, local communities and populations, private sector, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), peasant organizations and NGOs involved in the Sustainable Landscapes project implementation. The SEP also carried information on:

- Stakeholder's interest in the project
- Stakeholder's role and influence on the project
- How stakeholders will be consulted in project execution
- Mode of engagement and timing of stakeholders and
- Project components in which each stakeholder will be involved.

In addition to that, it was expected that the Executing Agencies will monitor and report on the following minimum stakeholder engagement indicators:

- Number of governance bodies at landscape level established and functioning;
- Number of government agencies, civil society organisations, private sector, indigenous peoples and other stakeholder groups engaged in the project implementation phase;
- Number of persons (sex disaggregated) engaged in project implementation phase; and
- Number of alliances and partnership formally established during the project implementation phase.

A total of six (6) stakeholders' groups were identified at the PPG phase<sup>[1]</sup> while there were 11 groups identified at CEO approval<sup>[2]</sup>. Stakeholder identification started at the project design or PPG phase. Conservation International worked closely with CI-Mexico and CONANP to identify stakeholders and a preliminary stakeholders' list was developed. This list was revised and updated periodically as the implementation went on, to include other groups as necessary. Stakeholder consultations and meetings helped in identifying stakeholder groups and informed the elaboration of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, while determining the method of engagement of each group such as which group gets involved in meetings or trainings. There is little evidence as to whether the number of stakeholder groups changed during implementation, given that progress reports did not discuss that. The implementation of the SEP was monitored and the indicators tracked and reported periodically to CI-GEF through quarterly and annual progress reports.

Overall, the following stakeholder groups participated in project implementation:

1. Educational institutions
2. Non-Governmental Organizations
3. Communities / local populations / ejidos
4. Municipal government
5. State government
6. Federal government
7. Committees or government civil society bodies
8. Assemblies or community boards
9. Ejido councils
10. Municipal delegates
11. Peasant organizations or social enterprises and
12. Private Sector Leaders

The evaluators had a hard time assessing the progress made relating to stakeholder engagement as information on the progress achieved towards the indicators of the stakeholder engagement plan was not provided in the PIRs.

### 1.1.2. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism

The project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) is rated Highly Satisfactory.

An accountability and grievance mechanism was developed during the project inception phase to enable the EAs monitor and report on the progress of AGM indicators. The Executing Agencies monitored and reported the following minimum accountability and grievance indicators during the implementation phase:

- Grievance mechanism instituted, legally recognized within the internal structure of CONANP and governance body, with facilities and a budget to function
- Number of complaints reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism
- Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved
- Number of conflicts resolved
- Number of dissemination materials and events to expose the existence of this AGM.

At the PPG phase of the project, stakeholders were presented an AGM document, as part of the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) which outlined the criteria for eligibility of grievances, the types of grievances that can be reported, the project staff or institution responsible for handling such cases and methods of resolution. This was also presented to participants during the inception workshop of August 2021. The AGM was an important document during and throughout project implementation. All grievances or complaints were sent through the Executing Agencies. The Executing Agencies monitored and reported on the following minimum AGM indicators:

- Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism
- Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved
- Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated / disseminated to stakeholders

**Table 1: Assessment of the performance of accountability and grievance mechanism indicators**

Minimum safeguards indicator	Project target	End of project status	Rating
Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism	0	0	<b>Achieved</b>
Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and	100%	0	<b>Achieved</b>

Minimum safeguards indicator	Project target	End of project status	Rating
Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved			
Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated/disseminated to stakeholders		The AGM was communicated/disseminated throughout project implementation as part of external communication via email, presentation slides and on the project website.	<b>Achieved</b>

During the implementation phase of the project, it was noted that calling the mechanism as the AGM had some cultural sensitivity issue and because of this, the mechanism was not widely used by stakeholders. This led to CI-GEF in consultation with CI-Mexico, to change the name of the mechanism to a Spanish name with an English translation as follows “Conservation International Listens to You”<sup>[3]</sup>. This rendered the mechanism more acceptable to the project stakeholders.

## C. Gender Equality

### 1.1.1. Gender

Gender is rated Satisfactory.

A gender analysis was conducted and gender considerations incorporated into the project at the time of project design and activities for mainstreaming gender planned during implementation. At the time of CEO endorsement, a Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) was developed, that provides a general overview of the status of gender issues in the different landscapes and identifies the barriers to women’s participation in biodiversity conservation activities. This GMP would also help the project align with GEF’s Gender Mainstreaming Policy. The project partners also reported on the minimum gender indicators:

- Number of men and women participating in project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, consultations);
- Number of men and women who receive benefits (e.g. employment, income-generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project;
- The number of strategies and plans (e.g. land use planning instruments and management plans) and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations;
- Number (and percentage) of communications campaigns with a gender approach and campaigns that prioritize women’s perspectives and practices on land-use management;
- Number of conferences, workshops or tools to strengthen capacities among project beneficiaries that contain a component/session on gender;
- Number of actions that deliver equality and equity in the outcomes of the project;
- Percentage of women stakeholders participating in governance mechanisms for ILM and indigenous peoples, afro-descendants and other vulnerable groups

The participation of women in project activities have been tracked during M & E and this information has been reported in the quarterly and annual progress reports. The project is expected to report progress made towards gender mainstreaming on a quarterly basis (Quarterly report) and an annual basis (PIR). The project took some measures to encourage the participation of women, such as:

- The selection of participants of the governance bodies of each priority landscape and capacity building activities ensured that both men and women within the communities were included.

As per the ProDoc, a baseline assessment on gender was conducted based on consultations and existing literature to understand the challenges women face within the three different landscapes that affect their ability to participate in biodiversity conservation and landscape management roles. The gender analysis also indicated the inequalities resulting from the historic and cultural roles established for men and women within the project landscapes and the effect on women’s participation in conservation activities and related decision-making. However, data on progress was not discussed or expressed in a sex-disaggregated manner, which made it hard to monitor women’s participation and compare to expected results. Project outcomes were not design in a sex-disaggregated manner, with only one outcome indicator being gender-sensitive. The monitoring plan for gender had gender indicators but most of them did not have targets<sup>[1]</sup>. The gender indicators captured in the project implementation report are discussed below:

**Outcome 2.2:** Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (POs) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach

Indicator 2.2: Increase in income of PO members (disaggregated by gender).

The participation of both men and women during meetings, trainings, workshops and other engagement events during project implementation was considered, to ensure both women and men enjoy the benefits of the project. However, in reporting progress (PIRs and quarterly reports)<sup>[2]</sup>, this participation was not captured in numbers or percentages for most outcomes, nor expressed in a gender- or sex-disaggregated manner. PIRs reported a general participation of women, for example in the transformation of fishery products and during the “Gathering of Indigenous, Afro-Mexican and Rural Women Leaders” event held in August 2024 where 17 women participated. Similarly, during the inception phase of the project, participation of both men and women in planning workshops was not reported disaggregated by gender and vulnerable group<sup>[3]</sup>. This made it hard to understand or assess the level of success of gender mainstreaming within the project.

<sup>[1]</sup> ProDoc

<sup>[2]</sup> PIR FY2024

<sup>[3]</sup> ProDoc

## D. Knowledge Management

At the time of CEO endorsement, a communication plan had been developed including a Knowledge Management Plan, both disseminated by the Project Management Unit to all project partners. This plan was to ensure that project activities are well documented and for sharing any lessons learned and success stories. The plan clearly outlined and discussed knowledge management outputs, and a budget assigned to each output. The project produced knowledge products during its awareness-raising campaign circulated through social media and other publication outlets, as one of its activities under Component 2 (Output 2.1.1), which informed communities and Mexico at large on the importance of adopted sustainable practices and biodiversity conservation and showcasing examples of best practices put in place by the project. Information disseminated during this campaign reached over 900,000 people across the different media outlets. The project also developed quarterly and annual reports which served as knowledge-sharing tools to circulate lessons learned and best practices. Data was collected on the income increase for producers realized through the project and this was systematized and documented. Success stories, best practices and lessons learned are published on blogs, email communications, project partners’ websites and/or social media, as well as in the final progress report produced.

## III. Core Indicators

### Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	738084.03	590169.03	773784.03

### Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	102403	35700	138103

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
Biosphere Reserve Tacaná Volcano	306853	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		39,282.00	0.00	39,282.00
Guixoxa (Santo Domingo Petapa)	555745235	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		0.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
Istmo-Cerro de las Flores I (Santa María Guienagati)	555745258	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		0.00	29,700.00	29,700.00
Natural Resource Protection Area La Frailescana	108088	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		63,121.00	0.00	63,121.00

### Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
	635681.03	554469.03	635681.03

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Área de Protección de Recursos Naturales La Frailescana	108088	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		116,735.37	116,735.37	116,735.37	49.00	60.00	60.00
Reserva de la Biosfera El Triunfo	61407	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		119,177.29	119,177.29	119,177.29	49.00	76.00	76.00
Reserva de la Biosfera La Encrucijada	20064	Protected area with sustainable use of		144,868.15	144,868.15	144,868.15	49.00	64.00	64.00

		natural resources							
Reserva de la Biosfera La Sepultura	166969	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		167,309.86	167,309.86	167,309.86	49.00	66.00	66.00
Reserva de la Biosfera Volcán Tacaná	903020	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		6,378.36	6,378.36	6,378.36	49.00	66.00	66.00
Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica Huizapa - Sescapa	107651	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		19,944.00	0.00	19,944.00	49.00	60.00	60.00
Zona Sujeta a Conservación Ecológica Pico de Loro-Paxtal	107833	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources		61,268.00	0.00	61,268.00	49.00	60.00	60.00

#### Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	2622900	2186	4415411

#### Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	2,618,250.00	846.00	4,409,065.00

#### Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	0.00	1,340.00	1,340.00

#### Type/Name of Third Party Certification

#### Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	4,650.00	0.00	5,006.00

#### Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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#### Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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#### Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title
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#### Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
<b>Female</b>			775	1,464
<b>Male</b>			2,305	2,841
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,080</b>	<b>4,305</b>

### IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)	Materialized at TE(\$)
Recipient Country Government	National Commission of Protected Natural Areas	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	9,700,000.00	3,032,986.00	4,033,008.67
Recipient Country Government	Secretariat for Agriculture LR Development F and F	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	26,800,000.00		61,707,572.19
Recipient Country Government	SAGARPA SECRETARIA DE AGRICULTURA, GANADERA,	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	434,931.00	165,997.00	64,047.62
Recipient Country Government	SEMAEDES OAXACA, SECRETARÍA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE,	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2,430,971.00	2,393,529.00	3,938,478.33

GEF Agency	Conservation International	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00	995,603.00	995,602.70
Private Sector	ADO Foundation/ Fundación ADO	In-kind		1,114,845.00		
Private Sector	ALSEA	In-kind		500,000.00		
Private Sector	DANONE	In-kind		703,515.00		
Civil Society Organization	AMBIO Cooperative/ Cooperativa AMBIO S.C. DE R.L.	In-kind		413,119.00	38,849.00	38,849.43
Civil Society Organization	Wildcoast/ Costa Salvaje	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	729,405.00	114,286.00	264,075.86
Civil Society Organization	FONDO DE CONSERVACIÓN EL TRIUNFO A.C.	In-kind	Investment mobilized	2,247,191.00	456,639.00	456,639.00
Civil Society Organization	PRONATURA SUR A.C.	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	600,000.00		
Beneficiaries		In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	68,900.00	13,113.00	
Other		In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	714,089.00		
Civil Society Organization	COSTA SALVAJE	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			217,011.71
Private Sector	Master Chef	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		4,855.00	4,854.73
Private Sector	La Frailescana	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		89,641.00	89,641.00
Private Sector	WILDCOAST	In-kind			124,891.00	
Civil Society Organization	Sociedad de historia Natural Niparaja AC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		5,314.00	5,314.29

Private Sector	SmartFish	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		19,350.00	142,000.20
Recipient Country Government	Comité Oaxaqueño de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuicola A.C.	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		20,808.00	41,008.60
Recipient Country Government	CONAFOR	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		2,026,900.00	2,026,900.00
Private Sector	Fondo Oaxaqueño	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		27,641.00	27,641.40
Private Sector	INTERCAFE	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		428.00	428.20
Recipient Country Government	SEMARNAT - Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Delegación Chiapas)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		12,556.00	49,248.05
Recipient Country Government	SEMARNAT	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		25,419.00	40,843.20
Private Sector	UCIRI	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			28,080.60
Recipient Country Government	SEMAEDES0	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			26,724.70
Recipient Country Government	SEMAEDES0	Grant	Investment mobilized			238,286.30
Recipient Country Government	CI - USAID SLV	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			1,687,759.99
Private Sector	Sociedad cooperativa de producción pesquera de bienes y servicios los agosteros de Topon	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			25,025.43
Private Sector	Café Capitán	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			141,110.00
Private Sector	CI - Mastercard	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			95,384.22

Private Sector	El Carrizal	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			5,849.59
Private Sector	ECOM	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures			181,758.00
<b>Total Co-financing</b>				<b>47,456,966.00</b>	<b>2,357,803.00</b>	<b>4,763,362.77</b>

#### Comments

The Sustainable Landscapes project was co-financed by fourteen (14) co-financiers, covering the salaries of some of the project staff as well as office supplies and other project-related costs. Financial reporting during project implementation was taken very seriously, with quarterly financial reports being produced and submitted to the CI-GEF. At CEO endorsement, the total amount of co-financing committed was USD 47,459,966 while at TE, the amount of financing materialized was USD 76,573,144, representing a co-financing materialization rate of 161.3%.

## V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

### Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
		Low	Low

#### Measures to address identified risks and impacts

### 1.1.1.1. Sustainability

#### 1. Financial risk

At the time of this evaluation, project documents and other relevant documents reviewed indicated that there were budget deficits that impacted project implementation which may have delayed project implementation. However, there is little evidence as to whether this poses a financial risk to the sustainability of project interventions. Financial reports produced so far, indicate that the funds have been used in a sustainable manner capable of taking the project to the end without any major shortage of funds. The involvement and engagement of government institutions as project stakeholders showed country ownership throughout the project's implementation, however the midterm review highlighted country ownership as a minor challenge, due to the ProDoc not being made available to all project stakeholders. At the time of the TE, there was not much evidence as to this being a hinderance to financial sustainability. Under Outcome 1.3, a budget deficit within the project made it difficult to establish a governance body in Oaxaca (Output 1.3.1, Activity 1). While the project supported the expansion of protected areas (Outcome 1.2), additional resources may be required for the management of the new areas classified as protected areas except the government assumes full responsibility to ensure the management of such sites after the life of the project. Similarly, there has been an increased access to investments (Outcome 3.1) from public and private sources under the project and changes in funding priorities of the public and private financiers could jeopardise the sustained flow of investments. The evaluation did not identify financial risk to sustainability for the other outcomes.

**Table 1: Analysis of the sustainability of the project outcomes**

Project Outcome	Financial risk rating
<i>Outcome 1.1: Integrated management of three priority landscapes for biodiversity conservation is substantially strengthened through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.</i>	Likely
<i>Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.</i>	Moderately Likely
<i>Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.</i>	Likely
<i>Outcome 2.1: The area of sustainable agricultural, fishery, aquaculture, forestry and tourism production is substantially increased through best practices and a market-driven value chain approach for biodiversity conservation</i>	Likely
<i>Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach</i>	Likely
<i>Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased</i>	Moderately Likely

## 2. Socio-political risk

At the start of the project, to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and the consequent travel restrictions imposed globally, an adaptive measure was applied. Though Covid-19 was highlighted as a risk factor during the implementation of project activities, PIRs did not indicate any major impact of the pandemic on project activities apart of delays. To mitigate this risk, project staff switched to remote or hybrid mode of performing project-related tasks and activities, meetings and other engagements with project stakeholders. In-person meetings were done virtually.

Another socio-political risk was political elections at the federal and state levels and change in government within Mexico. However, as the Government of Mexico is a signatory to the Convention on Biodiversity, the nation is committed to conserving its biodiversity and consequently, a change of government is unlikely going to affect any of the project outcomes. The socio-political risk to the sustainability of all the project outcomes is rated Likely.

## 3. Institutional risk

Throughout the project's implementation, there was an active participation of both state and non-state actors such as NGOs, and the private sector. It is believed that this active engagement and collaboration will continue throughout the project's execution and even beyond the life of the project. Despite delays highlighted, it is expected that the benefits of the project will continue to be felt even after its lifespan. There is however the risk that inadequate institutional capacity may make it hard for the project benefits of sustainable landscape management practices to be sustained once the project ends (Outcome 1.1).

## 4. Environmental risks

Climate change represents a key environmental risk that may jeopardise the sustainability of some of the project outcomes. Changes in climatic parameters such as temperature and rainfall could negatively affect the existing and new areas brought under protection (**Outcome 1.2**), the sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and tourism production (**Outcome 2.1**) and the income earned by producer organizations (**Outcome 2.2**). It could have been beneficial if the sustainable practices promoted within the framework of the project could be those with potentials of strengthening the resilience of the beneficiaries to climate change.

A summary of the sustainability rating on the project outcomes is presented in the **Table 2**.

**Table 2: Overview of sustainability rating**

Project outcomes	Sustainability dimensions				Overall sustainability rating
	Financial risk	Socio-political risk	Institutional risk	Environmental risk	
<i>Outcome 1.1: Integrated management of three priority landscapes for biodiversity conservation is substantially strengthened through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.</i>	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity</i>	Moderately Likely	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.</i>	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 2.1: The area of sustainable agricultural, fishery, aquaculture, forestry and tourism production is substantially increased through best practices and a market-driven value chain approach for biodiversity conservation</i>	Likely	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations</i>	Likely	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely

<i>(PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach</i>					
<i>Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased</i>	Moderately Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
<b>Overall Sustainability rating</b>					Likely

### Overall outcome rating

The final rating for outcomes is Highly Satisfactory (Outcomes 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1), Moderately Satisfactory (Outcome 1.1 and 1.3 (and Moderately Unsatisfactory (Outcome 1.2) (See **Table 3**).

**Table 3: Assessment of overall outcome rating**

Project outcomes	Sustainability dimensions				Outcome Final rating
	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability	
<i>Outcome 1.1: Integrated management of three priority landscapes for biodiversity conservation is substantially strengthened through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory

<i>participation improved.</i>					
<i>Outcome 2.1: The area of sustainable agricultural, fishery, aquaculture, forestry and tourism production is substantially increased through best practices and a market-driven value chain approach for biodiversity conservation.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<b>Overall project outcome rating</b>					Highly Satisfactory

### 1.1.1. Quality of Implementation

*Quality of Implementation:* The quality of implementation rating is **Highly Satisfactory**.

CI-GEF played a leading role in the design of the project from the concept note phase to the CEO endorsement package. CI-GEF ensured that the GEF guidelines were followed in the project preparation process. During project implementation, CI-GEF tracked the project risks on an ongoing basis. Some of the risks highlighted at the start of project implementation have remained valid till the time of this TE. One of such risks was financial, though rated moderate during implementation has remained an unchanged risk. Another risk highlighted was Covid-19, an unforeseen risk but only at the very start of project implementation and therefore did not affect the project. The Grants

Manager ensure that the grant agreement between CI-GEF and CI Mexico was followed accordingly, and the evaluation did not identify any challenge relating to the management of the grant agreement between the two entities.

During project delivery, CI-GEF provided technical and financial oversight to the project implementation process through the review and provision of feedback to the CI Mexico team on the different reports produced by CI Mexico, notably the PIRs and financial reports. The PIR format for the current project was not found to be user-friendly as getting information on the status of achievement of the different output and outcome indicators was quite challenging.

## VI. ANNEX

### Uploaded Document

Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250522 FY25 GEF Core Indicators GEF 9445 Oaxaca Chiapas CIGEF
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250522_Mexico O&C TE 9445 cover sheet
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250403 Mexico O&C TE_9445_Management Response Matrix
Document Category M and E Document	Title 20250331 Mexico O&C_9445_TE Report_FOKABS