TERMINAL EVALUATION

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name	
Strengthening Capacities for the Sound Management of Pesticides Including POPs	
Country	
Uruguay	
GEF ID	Implementing Agency
5144	FAO
Executing Entity	
Government	
Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	MSP
Objective	

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval	Agency Approval
3/9/2015	6/2/2015
Implementation Start	First Disbursement
1/4/2016	1/6/2016
Expected MTR	MTR Submission
	2/28/2025
Actual MTR	Expected Completion
6/1/2018	12/31/2023
Actual Completion	Actual TE
12/31/2023	12/30/2022
TE Submission	Final Disbursement
2/28/2025	

C. Disbursements

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
2052061	1869665.39

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main Terminal Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The project and its results maintain their relevance with respect to current national priorities. It focused on the sustainable development of the agricultural sector, the promotion of sustainable production and consumption, and the prevention of risks to human health. In addition, the project aligned with existing research initiatives and some agrochemical companies and producers. It also maintains its relevance to FAO Strategic Objective 2 and the regional and country programme priorities of FAO Uruguay, as well as to the chemicals focal area strategies of the GEF-5 cycle. Therefore, the rating for this criterion is satisfactory.

Effectiveness

The strengthening of the management plan for empty pesticide containers was achieved within the framework of Component 1. This contributed to the reduction of risks to human health and the environment. Progress was also made in the elimination of 297.1 t of obsolete pesticides and their containers, as well as the creation of two inventories of obsolete pesticides and the preparation and authorization of the Obsolete Stocks Management Plan (OSMP). Among the milestones highlighted in Phase 2 of the evaluation is the signing of an agreement between FAO and the civil society organization, Campo Limpio, for the provision of an obsolete pesticide stocks elimination service. This initiated OSMP execution as one of the essential requirements for elimination. A co-benefit is the promotion of capacity development for the elimination of hazardous waste in the country. This agreement meant another important step towards risk reduction since it gives producers the option to eliminate obsolete pesticide stocks within the national territory. To date, progress in the environmentally sound disposal of obsolete pesticides in Uruguay has reached approximately 18 percent.

Within the framework of Component 2, regulations were developed that cover five stages in the life cycle of pesticides. These are under a review process by the competent authorities. Among these regulations is the legal proposal for the pesticide registration system which, in turn, includes a proposal for an environmental risk assessment (ERA). This was considered one of the main elements that would strengthen the registration of

pesticides in Uruguay. The development of these proposals included the participation of different actors, including the private sector. In fact, this is valued as positive due to the responsibility that this sector has in their compliance. However, challenges remain in the approval and implementation of the proposals, such as ensuring full acceptance by some entities like the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries. In fact, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries is the primary executing partner of the project and has the power to define and implement the pesticide registration system for agricultural use in the country, without prejudice to the fact that the Ministry of Environment is responsible for managing chemical substances. During Phase 2 of the evaluation, the project reported preliminary progress with updates based on the improvement proposals in the National Registry of Pesticides.

Within the framework of Component 3, the project was able to identify and validate effective integrated pest management (IPM) strategies and tested the effectiveness of biobeds to reduce the risk of pesticide residues. It also validated two alternatives such as fipronil, which are effective replacements for pesticides. However,

actions to promote and quantify their adoption have faced limitations. The strategy to raise awareness about pesticide risks also showed areas for improvement.
Under Component 4, the project contributed to strengthening the analytical and personnel capacities of laboratories in the environment and agriculture sector by allowing the execution of a workplan that led to the certification of laboratories in multiwaste analysis and an increase in the number of active ingredients that can be analysed. There was also an improvement in monitoring equipment and knowledge. In addition, two scheduled evaluations of priority basins were carried out. The second evaluation, executed in the San Salvador River (FAO, 2022), showed that the analytical monitoring capacities have been strengthened based on a more comprehensive approach and the capturing of lessons learned. Another co-benefit was the increased visibility of the analytical work carried out by the Ministry of Environment as part of project implementation. Limited progress was made in improving interinstitutional coordination for a harmonized approach to pesticide monitoring and in strengthening the complaints mechanism and the response to events linked to pesticide use. The second evaluation also highlighted the project's collaboration with government actors, which facilitated the collection and transfer of samples (Phase 2).
Based on this, it is considered that progress has been made towards reducing the risk to human health and the environment thanks to progress in implementing the OSMP – mainly in the elimination of obsolete pesticides. Second, strengthening capacities for local pollution management and environmental monitoring played a role. The pending agenda includes updating and strengthening the regulatory framework. Therefore, the overall rating for the effectiveness criterion is moderately satisfactory.

Efficiency

The project execution schedule has been extended by more than two years in response to the institutional and administrative challenges faced by the project, and those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these challenges, there were significant delays in carrying out the scheduled activities. According to the information provided, this extension has increased administrative and supervisory costs by 15 percent. According to Phase 2 of the evaluation, as of March 2023, close to 99 percent of the GEF contribution (USD 1 868 154) had been executed. This represents an increase in budget execution of 0.08 percent compared to the figure reported in Phase 1 of the evaluation. However, some factors remain that continue to limit the execution of the outputs, which are associated with a lack of definition by the authorities or delays in processes and approvals, mainly under Components 1 and 2. Therefore, the overall rating for the efficiency criterion is moderately unsatisfactory.

Progress towards impact

The project made progress in reducing the risk to human and environmental health derived mainly from advances in pesticide elimination. This was in addition to the progress in packaging management identified in Phase 1 of the assessment. Despite not fully achieving its objective in terms of risk reduction, the processes to achieve it were initiated. It is also expected that the goal will be reached after project closure.
Greater progress in risk reduction will depend largely on compliance with the workplan and follow-up to the elimination proposal. Therefore, the follow-up and monitoring processes and mechanisms must be supervised to guarantee the prevention and mitigation of risk in local transportation and handling, which is not included in the current OSMP – especially without an approved ERA. In view of the progress achieved, the rating for this criterion is moderately satisfactory.

Sustainability

Some benefits derived from the project will remain even after its end (for example, the development of monitoring capacities, the strengthening of the management of empty pesticide containers and the dissemination of alternatives to toxic pesticides). In addition, the active participation of academia and the private sector, as well as the materialization of different sources of co-financing during the project's life are positive aspects for the future scope of the expected impacts. To this end, FAO's continued advocacy will be essential considering the need for a multisectoral approach that is open to the private sector and academia. In addition to these benefits, the elimination of obsolete pesticide stocks generates benefits. It is considered that this benefit will continue once the project is completed since it is a legal mandate of the private sector and key conditions have been enabled for the implementation of the OSMP. These include the definition of processes, agreements, the promotion of management capacity and the elimination of identified stock. The main

challenges are the need to improve the regulatory framework, which highlights the importance of ERA for the definition and monitoring of safeguards, as well as the updating of the pesticide registration system. Considering these assumptions, the rating for the sustainability criterion is moderately likely.

Factors affecting performance

The project addresses priority problems, and its design is considered a catalyst to achieve a comprehensive approach to pesticide management in the country through the incorporation of health, production and environmental visions. However, a more elaborate strategy was necessary from project formulation to reconcile these visions and achieve a common vision of the project among its partners. The lack of this shared vision was reflected in different areas of project execution.

For example, the Ministry of Environment was active in the project. This, however, has not been free of administrative complications and led to the approval of the OSMP taking almost two years. The Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries actively participated in the project, but only in activities that were aligned with its pesticide management approach. For its part, the participation of the health sector has been contemplated since project formulation. However, due to changes in the project strategy, the Ministry of Public Health was only invited to participate during the execution phase. In addition, the project received strong support from academia and research centres through the signing of the LOA for the development of methodologies linked to the IPM and environmental monitoring.

FAO, for its part, supported the conceptualization and development of the project, which is an important priority for the Uruguayan Government. However, the quality of implementation was affected by several factors related to the design and technical supervision, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. The execution was carried out in a difficult situation, which involved the implementation of adaptive measures that alleviated some

problems. Others, however, led to modifications in the project strategy. It is considered that the project's direct execution modality is the correct method for these types of projects, where it is crucial to reconcile the different approaches in a neutral setting provided by FAO. However, the multisectoral approach strategy must be strengthened based on lessons learned from this project. Therefore, project implementation is considered moderately unsatisfactory and the execution moderately satisfactory

In addition, and according to the information reported by the project, the co-financing commitment was fully met and even exceeded with a total reported contribution of USD 10 057 900. All that remains is to formalize the official report of the final co-financing provided by the partners. Therefore, the rating for this criterion is satisfactory.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan includes most of the elements and requirements necessary to fulfil its function, and its objectives were almost entirely met. However, it was noted that some indicators were not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). This made the project difficult to monitor. Furthermore, it was necessary to develop methodologies from the beginning of the project to measure

some of its results and strengthen the monitoring and reporting of its progress. Thus, the rating for this criterion is moderately unsatisfactory.

Commitment of partners and stakeholders

The project implemented successful mechanisms for the involvement of the private sector, including the integration of representatives in the working group for the development and proposal of regulations. The exception was the updating of the registration system, which did not consider a participatory process for its development. The project worked with nine family farms managed by producers, even though the main involvement of this group of actors was in outreach activities. The rating for this criterion is satisfactory.

Knowledge management, communications and public awareness

The project has generated important knowledge on the IPM practices for crops of interest in Uruguay and alternatives to dangerous pesticides. This is in addition to scientific publications and dissemination materials. However, training and awareness raising actions on the knowledge generated were not always the result of an analysis based on the needs of the target audience. Furthermore, the project did not robustly measure the effect of these actions, which would have allowed for greater knowledge about the dissemination of the

information provided. Also, the lack of consensus on the approach that the project should promote to reduce the use of pesticides affected the communications strategy. Therefore,
the rating for this criterion is moderately unsatisfactory.

Gender

Despite not having been established as mandatory in the formulation phase, the project carried out some actions to incorporate the gender perspective. The main efforts were made in response to a recommendation in the mid-term review (MTR). However, from this point onwards, indicators were not included for monitoring in the results framework, nor was a specialist hired to support the design work of gender mainstreaming and its implementation. Despite these difficulties, the project achieved a significant female participation rate. This was mainly in the activities of planning, dissemination and the strengthening of analytical capacities. This involved opportunities for improvement in other activities, such as the selection of demonstration properties, where the participation of women was not promoted and the work of female producers was not recognized. The rating for gender is moderately satisfactory.

Environmental and social safeguards

The authorized disposal plan for obsolete pesticide stocks does not include an ERA linked to such stock, as indicated in the environmental management toolkits for obsolete pesticides (FAO, 2009a; 2009b; 2011a; 2011b). The plan does not provide instructions on how the inventory should be managed on-site and transported to the temporary collection centres. It only mentions that the holders must be responsible for the delivery of their inventory to these temporary centres. According to the surveys carried out, 88 percent of pesticide stocks were not registered as obsolete. However, 28.4 percent of these had damaged packaging and 20.9 percent had been opened. In addition, 1.3 percent is recorded with losses and 0.05 percent is dispersed, which implies repackaging on site. In addition, the condition of packaging 10 percent of stocks is unknown. This situation becomes more complex when considering that strengthening capacities for the management of obsolete pesticides in the government and private sectors was not prioritized. This would have increased staff knowledge about the work of eliminating obsolete pesticides. The rating for this criterion is moderately unsatisfactory.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The project started the process to integrate productive, environmental and health approaches that strengthen the management of pesticides based on their life cycle. This had not been addressed in the country and is considered a priority. More projects, actions and political will are required to fully achieve its objective since this process is still in its early stages.

Conclusion 2. The objective, strategy and results of the project remain consistent with national priorities and the initiatives of producers of phytosanitary products and other companies. They are also aligned with the strategies of FAO and the GEF.

Conclusion 3. The project strengthened the management of empty pesticide containers, as well as identified effective IPM strategies and alternatives to hazardous pesticides. It also significantly strengthened capacities for pesticide monitoring, among other achievements.

Conclusion 4. The bases for the integrated and effective management of pesticides must be strengthened to significantly reduce the risks to human health and the environment that they represent. This includes compliance with the workplan and monitoring of the elimination proposal,
as well as the effective strengthening of the regulatory framework.

Conclusion 5. The risk posed by empty pesticide containers has been reduced and progress has been made towards reducing the environmental and human health risk posed by obsolete pesticide stocks – even though the risk remains until progress is made towards their elimination.

In addition, the active participation of academia and the private sector, as well as the materialization of different sources of government and private co-financing during the project's life cycle, are positive aspects for sustainability and the future scope of the expected impacts.

Conclusion 6. The OSMP should be strengthened by including an ERA of the sites where obsolete pesticide stocks are located in order to support environmental and social safeguard actions. It will also require a possible update to include the most recent pesticide inventory figures.

Conclusion 7. The project reported the materialization of co-financing that is greater than the amount committed at the beginning of the project. Formalizing the official report of the provided final co-financing is all that is necessary. However, in the future, there are financial risks linked to government budget cuts.
Conclusion 8. Project execution was extended for more than two years, mainly due to the intrinsic difficulties of executing a project with a multisector approach. The COVID-19 pandemic also generated some budget restrictions, which affected its efficient implementation.
Conclusion 9. The inherent complexity of the project's multisectoral approach – which seeks to integrate productive, environmental and health approaches to pesticide management – and the need for a more elaborate strategy to achieve a common project vision and closer technical supervision generated limitations in project implementation.
Conclusion 10. The project generated tools and complied with the progress reports required for monitoring. However, some indicators were not SMART. This made results-based monitoring difficult. Also, the development of methodologies to measure some of the project results fell short, and the project progress report (PPR) shows areas for improvement.
Conclusion 11. The project formed working groups at the beginning of execution to agree on the details of the project activities. Some of these groups remained in operation until the tasks were completed and others were dissolved once the actions had been planned. Thus, the stakeholder engagement mechanisms implemented by the project were mostly successful.
Conclusion 12. Considering the voluntary nature of incorporating the gender approach in the project and that the recommendation to incorporate it was made after the MTR, the project showed significant participation of women in the training and dissemination activities carried out. However, in activities linked to IPM promotion, the role of rural producers was not made visible or strengthened – nor were rural teachers trained on the risks of pesticides, as planned in the project document.
Conclusion 13. The lack of specific and updated gender statistics during project document preparation, particularly on the representation of women in public decisions, limited opportunities for the analysis of the core drivers of gender inequality. The project could have had an impact on these. As a result, this weakened the proposed gender mainstreaming approach in the project design phase.

Recommendations For the project

Recommendation 1. For the Ministry of Environment and Campo Limpio: update the OSMP to include the evaluation of environmental risk linked to obsolete pesticide stocks. Include specific safeguards to prevent accidents during the handling of obsolete pesticides and their containers at their place of origin and during transportation to the temporary collection centres. Also update pesticide inventory data.
Recommendation 2. For FAO Uruguay: in order to ensure the sustainability of the project results and achieve the expected impacts, follow up on the proposed regulations to ensure their approval. This should include promoting the agreement with the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries to continue improving the country's pesticide registration system based on the project proposal, as well as ensure compliance with the workplan and monitor the elimination plan.
Recommendation 3. For FAO Uruguay and the co-financing partners: formalize the report of the final co-financing from the co-financing partners by delivering a signed letter about the final amount provided and the items covered by the co-financing. This step should form part of a broader discussion on the role that co-financing partners will have in ensuring the sustainability and expected impact of the project.
For future projects
Recommendation 4. For FAO technical units, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit and government partners: when the project's objective and strategy involve combining the visions of the productive sector with the environmental and health sectors, it is suggested to ensure, with the support of national regulations, that the project partners that represent these sectors are effectively involved in the project design, that a common vision is achieved and that an equal level of responsibility is ensured with the same weight in decision-making. As part of this process, the FAO direct execution modality should be considered.

Recommendation 5. For FAO technical units, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit and government partners: in projects with a comprehensive scope that includes topics covered in the GEF chemicals focal area, strengthen the analysis of the legal framework and governance in the country or region where the activities will be implemented in order to mitigate the risks involved due to the lack or limitations of such a framework for the execution of certain tasks (for example, the remediation of contaminated sites).
Recommendation 6. For FAO (Chief Technical Officer, Funding Liaison Officer, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit): strengthen and remind project implementers regarding the importance of the start-up workshop to review the M&E plan and identify the information needs to be generated,
especially the methodologies and indicators to be used, in order to allow them to accurately evaluate the progress towards the expected outputs and outcomes. In addition, strengthen the review process of semi-annual and annual Programme Implementation Reports (PIRs) to ensure
that they objectively reflect the results, changes and progress towards the expected impacts.
Recommendation 7. For FAO and the co-executing partners: for the preparation of the initial gender analysis, which will support the strategy and workplan of new projects, project design participants are encouraged to make use of existing studies or carry out their own specific quantitative and qualitative studies (primary data). This will allow for the collection of solid evidence for an effective analysis and work strategy.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

Finding 32. The mechanisms implemented by the project for private sector involvement in thedevelopment of regulations were mostly successful.

One of the strengths of the project in relation to the involvement of the private sector was the convening and integration of working groups as a methodology for the development of proposals to improve regulations for the different stages of the life cycle of pesticides. This is linked to their use or application, storage and transportation. As for the elimination stage, this was addressed through the OSMP by hiring a consultancy to support Campo Limpio.
The strategy based on the creation of working groups supported the development of higher quality outputs. This took advantage of the knowledge and experiences of the parties involved in these processes, as well as promoted their ownership of the resulting outputs. In this framework, significant involvement of the private sector was achieved with the participation of the different business chambers linked to the production, manufacturing, import and marketing of pesticides.21 These actors contributed to the development of the outputs with different levels of participation, which also strengthened their capabilities. In addition, these activities were carried out in coordination with trade
associations,22 along with technical units from various ministries23 and the University of the Republic,24 among others.
Both the representatives of the business chambers and Campo Limpio expressed their satisfaction with the processes and results of these activities. They did, however, point out that the disagreements between the ministries, particularly between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, generated delays and uncomfortable situations that should have been avoided through the definition of strategic agreements as a basis for starting the work.
However, the proposal linked to the improvement of regulations in the import phase of pesticides, in particular to improving the pesticide registration system, was carried out through a consultancy without further participation of the actors associated with these procedures. Indeed, during the development of this consultancy, no consultation activities were carried out with private sector associations or other actors linked to the pesticide registration process. Although the consultant held meetings to present results during its missions to the country organized within the framework of the project, the evidence is consistent with the perception of the interviewees that consultation mechanisms were not
implemented before, during or after these meetings that were solely aimed at providing information. In this regard, there is a consensus that there was no space for the exchange of opinions to incorporate the knowledge, experience and points of view of actors linked to the registration, manufacture, import and

marketing of pesticides, or that it was difficult to dispose of them because the meetings brought together a diversity of actors, some of them with opposing opinions. This has prevented a constructive dialogue.
The absence of effective participation mechanisms for the realization of this key output of the project hindered the possibilities of ownership of the process and its resulting proposals. As a result, affinity was not generated with an important number of these proposals, particularly with respect to the possibility of integrating new ministries in the management of the registration system and the ERA. In addition, several interviewees
pointed out a certain degree of ignorance of the current system in the country as a deficiency. However, they also recognized its applicability with respect to a set of useful proposals, which the business chambers are already beginning to consider with the help of the General Directorate of Agricultural Services. Also, they highlighted that, despite its deficits, this process raised awareness about the need to update the pesticide registration system in some of its aspects.
Also, it should be noted that the involvement of academic institutions in the project led to the establishment or strengthening of cooperative relations with universities abroad (including Uppsala University and Wageningen University) and in the development of undergraduate and postgraduate theses related to the work topics addressed.
Finding 33. The direct involvement of producers in the project included work on nine family farms. In addition, through outreach activities, a larger number of producers were reached.
Regarding the participation of producers as the beneficiary public of the project, they were involved through different activities. Among this, the experimental activities for the validation of alternatives to pesticide use had the highest level of direct participation. In this context, selected families offered their properties and actively participated in carrying out pilot projects within the framework of Component 3. A total of nine family properties were involved in these activities. The families were selected through intermediary organizations (producer societies or cooperatives, or institutions linked to the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, in particular the General Directorate of Farms), with knowledge of the profiles of the productive establishments in the areas of intervention, generally prioritizing their interest in good environmental management practices to ensure their commitment to the project. According to the interviews, these parties received relevant information to understand and participate in the work process and its results. Although this process involved a limited number of families on pilot properties, demonstration days were held within the framework of these practices with the participation of a broader audience of producers in the area, where the participants discussed their experience together with exhibitions by the PCU and technical staff associated with the project. Also, the producers participated in the project through talks and dissemination sessions on various topics linked to the main axes of the project and the collection of empty pesticide containers.
Finding 34. Although the project involved a varied set of civil society actors, the absence of a mechanism for monitoring participation led to the weak involvement of some important actors on issues related to pesticides.
As noted, the strategy of involvement through working groups took precedence in the implementation of proposals to improve regulations for the different stages of the life cycle of pesticides. However, the participation of groups associated with other components was not sustained over time.When the project considered that their participation had completed its cycle, the work methodology was changed, and its members were not invited again under the new dynamic. Given the closure of certain groups, some actors declined to continue their participation. However, faced with this situation, the project did not implement mechanisms to understand the reasons, possible conflicts or causes of disinterest that could have caused the distancing to eventually attract these actors back. This led to the weak participation of important actors, particularly linked to civil society, including: i) the National Workers' Assembly of Uruguay, identified in the project documentas an actor with the capacity to support the training of rural workers in the practices of use and the management of pesticides; and ii) the environmental civil society organizations
identified in the project document through the Action Network on Pesticides and their Alternatives for Latin America and the Network of Environmental Organizations, as actors with the capacity to make specific contributions to the role of civil society in the proper use
and management of pesticides.

In the case of the National Workers' Assembly of Uruguay, the participation of two of its representatives is recorded. This was limited to a first meeting on Component 1, after which the institution did not participate again in the project through groups or other forms of involvement. Although requested by the Evaluation Team, it was not possible to interview representatives of the organization.
Regarding civil society environmental organizations, the Action Network on Pesticides and their Alternatives for Latin America participated. Its representatives attended two meetings within the framework of Component 2 and one meeting in the framework of Component 3. They subsequently stopped participating due to differences with the work approach, such as the lack of an approach to highly hazardous pesticides, among other aspects. In this scenario, no actions were taken by the project to determine the reasons for the withdrawal.
Finally, it should be noted that Vida Silvestre, another environmental civil society organization, did not participate in the working groups. However, representatives of the organization were invited to the results presentation sessions, and one of its members was invited to participate due to their training and technical knowledge in relation to Component 4. Although participation was not sustained, it was possible to verify that a
relationship had been developed that enabled, for example, the establishment of synergies. This also considers that members of this organization – now representing other projects – recently contacted the project to coordinate joint activities in one of their lines of work.
It should be noted that all of those involved in the groups, with or without continuous participation, continued to receive communications about the project either through information bulletins produced in collaboration with the FAO Communicator, or through invitations to participate in results presentation days.
Finding 35. The University of the Republic and the laboratories of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries were involved in the environmental monitoring actions as planned, but there were no participatory mechanisms to effectively integrate the Departmental Government of Canelones – nor was the Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU, by its Spanish acronym) invited to participate.
In relation to the execution of Component 4 activities linked to environmental monitoring and response to pesticide risks, coordination activities were carried out with the Government of Canelones through the Rural Development Agency and the Environmental Management Directorate. The project implemented direct communication mechanisms. Through the Laguna del Cisne Basin Commission,26 it also involved these actors in activities to present results. However, they were not involved in the activities through effective participation mechanisms. Consequently, part of their vision and interests were not considered in the monitoring of the basin, particularly in relation to the construction of a broader monitoring perspective that included socioterritorial aspects. However, these actors consider that the project activities were useful in terms of generating a baseline from scientific evidence on the presence of pesticides to subsequently monitor their evolution in an area where the production systems are in a transition process.
In addition, the design of the coordination mechanism for environmental monitoring required, according to the project document, the establishment of an interinstitutional agreement that included (in addition to the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, the National Directorate of Quality and Environmental Assessment, the University of the Republic, and the departmental authorities) the Technological Laboratory of Uruguay. However, this laboratory was not included through an agreement or other forms of cooperation in the monitoring process. It should be noted that, according to public information available on its website, the institution provides environmental analysis and
monitoring services and that one of its strategic lines is the analysis of environmental matrices with the objective of supporting the industry in environmental protection through compliance with environmental regulations (LATU, 2018). One of the indirect clients of this laboratory is the Ministry of Environment, which has contracted LATU to analyse samples. The LATU sends them to the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries to carry out the analysis.

C. Gender Equality

Finding 39. The project document and the MTR report indicated specific actions related to the gender approach. However, goals related to these measures were neither defined nor included in the results matrix.
In the design stage of the project, the gender approach was not considered as a cross-cutting approach to the different stages of its life cycle. This is because it was not a mandatory aspect indicated by the GEF-5 cycle. However, the project document considers this approach in relation to achieving social sustainability of the results, as well as in terms of the communications strategy. However, no goals for compliance were included in the project results matrix.
Based on the MTR, and as an initiative of FAO's technical counterparts at headquarters, proposals were made for the inclusion of this approach. The MTR identified the possibility of working in at least three lines: (i) training in the use and application of pesticides, and the impact on health and specific precautions for women; (ii) the incorporation of this information in the communications strategy; and (iii) focusing the work on pesticide labelling regulations and precautions for use by women. Although the MTR proposed modifications to the results matrix, these did not include the incorporation of goals for the proposed activities, nor were they added to the lines of work that were already proposed in the project document.
The MTR report indicates that the project already included the gender variable in the record of attendance at the training sessions, and recommended that, if new forms were developed, the possibility of including new variables should be coordinated with FAO to learn more about the role of women, specifically in terms of the application of pesticides. It should be noted that data collected through the gender variable in the attendance record at the training sessions were not systematically analysed for use as an input by the project.
Finding 40. The voluntary nature of the gender approach, combined with the lack of definition of work goals, rendered invisible the importance and need to have specialized human resources that would contribute to the fulfilment of gender results.
The absence of goals related to the gender approach hindered the visualization of the importance of having a gender specialist, even after the MTR recommendations.
In addition, not having this specialist limited the possibilities of forming a suitable counterpart for the monitoring and review of the only output for which the terms of reference included the incorporation of the gender approach. This output is the Analysis on Perceptions Regarding the Use of Pesticides in Three Agricultural Areas of the Country: Barriers and Opportunities for the GCP/URU/031/GFF Project. The work description indicated the need to include the gender approach in dimensions associated with differences in tasks, access to social, financial, human and productive capital, and roles within rural families, as well as in the selection of specific gender variables and measurable
and contextualized indicators. These activities, which would have contributed to a gender analysis from primary sources in relation to the use of pesticides and the perception of associated risks, were not included in the final report beyond a basic description of the integration by sex of the institutions surveyed in the mapping.
Based on the MTR recommendations, the PCU requested the assistance of the Gender Advisory Department from the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries for support in the design and implementation of activities through a gender approach. As a result of this collaboration, the PCU had a work proposal based on this approach in August 2019. However, most of the proposed activities were not implemented. This was partly due to the advanced stage of project execution, the aforementioned lack of specialized personnel dedicated exclusively to these activities, the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and government changes.
Regarding the gender and generational component in relation to the communications and visibility strategy of the project, it should be noted that the possibilities of carrying out the activities proposed in the project document were limited due to the lack of specialized communications personnel. Although the hiring of a consultant in this matter was evaluated, the project did not reach the necessary agreements between the parties involved to carry out this process.
Despite the difficulties faced, the project managed to attract significant participation of women during execution. This highlights the planning and dissemination activities, as well as the strengthening of analytical capacities.

Despite the challenges identified in the evaluation, it is possible to point out some very positive achievements by the project in terms of female participation. Since it began its activities, a significant percentage of participants in the training and dissemination activities carried out within the framework of Components 1, 2 and 3 were women. Considering the training and dissemination activities in which gender-disaggregated information was collected (36 activities out of a total of 46 were recorded in the monitoring form), 37 percent of those who participated were women (718 people). In Component 3, which has the largest record of activities disaggregated by sex (30 activities), this percentage reaches 35 percent of the participants (636 women), while in Component 1 (with 5 activities disaggregated by sex), the participation of women exceeded that of men, reaching 58 percent of attendees (69 women). Component 2 records a single activity in which female participation reached 42 percent of the total (13 women). Given the aggregation of data in the monitoring form, it is not possible to discern how many of the total participants were women. This considers the indication in the project document regarding the vulnerability of women involved in activities before and after the harvest of horticultural products.

Even more notable is the percentage of female participants in the activities of Component 4 to strengthen analytical capacities. Both in the case of the laboratory of the General Directorate of Agricultural Services of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and the National Directorate of Quality and Environmental Assessment of the Ministry of Environment, there was a high level of female participation in the workforce, even at leadership levels. In the case of the laboratory of the General Directorate of Agricultural Services, all the personnel affected by the project were women, between 24 and 58 years of age (eight people, including two leadership positions and one manager). While, in the case of the laboratory of the National Directorate of Quality and Environmental Assessment, more than half of the team affected by the project were women (four people out of seven, including one leadership position and one manager). Indirectly, this can be considered an achievement in supporting women to assume leadership roles and actively participate in decision-making.

Regarding the degree of participation and representation of women in the planning processes of project activities, it is worth highlighting the composition of the working groups that were formed in each component to define some lines of work. In general, however, participation by sex was not equal. It can therefore be considered that the representation of women was high. In total, among the most active members (evaluated at the discretion of the PCU and considering the continuity of links with the project), the participation of women reached 44 percent, highlighting their participation in Component 1 where it reached 60 percent. Considering the segment of those who participated in a less active way, the average participation of women in the four components reached 43 percent (Table 3).

Table 3. Distribution of members of the working groups by component, according to sex

Component	More active members			Less active members			Total members		
	Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (n)	**Women (%)**	Men (%)	Total (n)	**Women (%)**	Men (%)	Total (n)
1	**60%**	40%	5	**22%**	78%	9	**36%**	64%	14
2	**47%**	53%	19	**46%**	54%	46	**46%**	54%	65
3	**38%**	63%	16	**41%**	59%	44	**40%**	60%	60
4	**40%**	60%	15	**53%**	47%	19	**47%**	53%	34
Total	**44%**	56%	55	**43%**	57%	118	**43%**	57%	173

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data provided by the PCU.

Finding 42. Other important project activities lacked inclusion of the gender approach, even when this was noted in the project document. Regarding a generational approach and the rights of children and adolescents, there was a lack of emphasis on carrying out activities with children and adolescents from 12 years of age regarding restrictions related to child labour and pesticides.

The choice of demonstration farms for the validation of the IPM strategies and other alternatives to the use of pesticides did not include the gender approach. In this regard, the management of the selected farms was

mostly in the hands of a male producer, and only in exceptional cases was there female leadership. Beyond the numerical aspects, there were also no guidelines to give visibility and recognition to the work of the production companies when it came to mixed establishments. Also, the testimonial videos made to disseminate these techniques incorporate a very low participation of female producers. Of ten testimonial videos – each featuring the appearance of two people – only two feature a female producer. A third shows a female technician who directs an institute hired by the project. Although she led one of the bioinput studies, her role is not mentioned during the video. This approach represents a lost opportunity to highlight the valuable contribution of women to production from the field to academia.
Another weak line of work is identified in the lack of inclusion of rural schoolteachers in awareness raising activities about the risks and negative effects of pesticides. In this area, work was only done in two technical schools, reaching a total of 54 students. Teacher participation was limited to a supporting role, however, in that teachers were not considered a target audience.
Finally, it is necessary to point out that the schools worked with children and adolescents from the age of 12 (approximately 70 percent of this segment is made up of students between 12 and 15 years old), without emphasis on the restrictions related to child labour with pesticides. In the training sessions, there was no mention of aspects linked to child labour, nor is it recorded in the guidelines for preventing accidents with pesticides.
Finding 43. Weaknesses are identified at the level of the work approach proposed in the project document because of limited analysis of the representation of women in public decisions.
Regarding the project activities to support women to assume leadership roles and promote their active participation in decision-making, it should be noted that, in terms of gender at the institutional level, the project document is based on the partial knowledge available at the moment of its preparation. The document points out that, since Uruguay has incorporated the gender dimension in the public sector, women are equally represented and present in public decisions. However, recent studies prepared for the design of the National Gender Plan in agricultural policies (FAO and Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2021) deepen this analysis and identify that, despite the equal and even majority representation of women in institutional agriculture, mechanisms of segregation and asymmetries persist. In this regard, the lack of a broad analysis limited the opportunities in terms of the analysis of the core aspects of gender inequality on which the project could have had an impact.
The rating for gender is moderately satisfactory

D. Knowledge Management

Finding 36. The project has generated important knowledge about the IPM practices for crops of interest in Uruguay and alternatives to dangerous pesticides. However, the contribution of this knowledge to capacity development is still unclear.
The project has generated important knowledge on the IPM practices for crops of interest in Uruguay and alternatives to dangerous pesticides, which have been studied and validated. To support the training and dissemination of this knowledge, the project has produced ten testimonial videos and two tutorials. The contribution that this knowledge has made to the generation of capacities on the IPM and alternatives to pesticides at the producer level is still not clear. As a result, the training and communication actions present areas for improvement. Their effect has not been measured.
Finding 37. The project did not have a communications strategy or an expert to support this task, so the communication and visibility of the project have been limited.
The absence of a person responsible for communications and therefore a communications strategy limited the possibilities to disseminate the generated outputs. For example, there is no evidence of the dissemination of the testimonial videos and tutorials, nor statistics on the number of visits to the sites where they were published.
The cause of these limitations was the difficulty in agreeing on a project communications strategy that would reconcile the visions of the three ministries involved. Therefore, the hiring of a communications consultant to support the project was not authorized. Instead, the ministries agreed that they would use their own

communications structures to disseminate information about the project. FAO also carried out dissemination actions through newsletters published on its website and press releases. According to interviews, the project has had limited visibility.
Technical and scientific papers were published on the results (Basso, Chiaravalle and Maignet, 2020; Kaspary, García, Cabrera, García and García, 2021; Kaspary, García, Jorajuría and Cabrera, 2020; Tesitore, Rodríguez-Bolaña, Goyenola et al., 2020). In addition, an undergraduate thesis (Scanu, 2020) and a master's thesis (Reynoso, 2017) were published on these thematic areas, and presentations were given at conferences with their respective publications for dissemination at the academic level (Scanu et al., 2018; Hernández et al., 2017; Reynoso et al., 2017; Peirano et al., 2016). The project document also points out the need to prepare a technical document that systematizes the lessons learned during the development of these studies, of which there is still no evidence.
Additionally, the project generated the Guide to the Prevention of Incidents and Accidents in the Handling of Pesticides in Extensive Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry (FAO, 2019), which was published and disseminated in the training events held. Although it was expected that the General Directorate of Farms could disseminate this material among producers, this possibility was left under evaluation due to differences in relation to aspects that the guide communicates in an illustrated way and that were not addressed during the design process.
Other developed communications products include farm equipment calibration guides, a manual on biobed use, a guide to the identification of natural enemies for horticulture, and dissemination videos on the good agricultural practices conference. These materials constitute a contribution to the activities carried out by the General Directorate of Farms in terms of dissemination and communication with producers and will continue to be used within that framework.
The issue of communication and visibility of the project has been addressed in different sessions of the project steering committee without resulting in concrete actions. At the project steering committee meeting on 14 May 2020, the importance of disseminating the results achieved by the project was discussed. Here, it was agreed to generate a communications strategy. In response, the project developed a base document to align visions among communications staff from the three ministries and identified available funds to support its implementation. However, despite the efforts made to date, there is still no agreement regarding the implementation of a communications strategy for the results of the project.
Finding 38. The awareness raising actions developed by the project could have been better focused in terms of topics and target audience. As a result, their effectiveness is still unclear.
The project document specifically contemplates the development of a communications strategy to increase awareness of the effects of pesticides on human health and the environment, as well as support the dissemination of good practices. This awareness raising strategy was aimed at students from rural schools, producer associations and the general public. However, the project did not generate this strategy and ended up carrying out communications activities without much order or structure, which did not allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the awareness raising process. For example, the activities carried out by the project included: formal training courses aimed at technicians on the application of pesticides; an academic seminar; workshops on good agricultural practices; the dissemination of results from a consultancy on pesticide registration; and talks on pollination in legumes and the safe use of pesticides, among other topics.
As mentioned, the assessment of the level of awareness raising carried out by the project shows the need to strengthen its methodology in order to consider the results as valid.
The rating for knowledge management, communications and awareness raising is moderately unsatisfactory.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 10 Persistent organic pollutants to air reduced

Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Expected at PIF)	Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Achieved at MTR)	Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Achieved at TE)
	160.00		37.34

Indicator 10.1 Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control emissions of POPs to air (Use this sub-indicator in addition to Core Indicator 10 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 10.2 Number of emission control technologies/practices implemented (Use this sub-indicator in addition to Core Indicator 10 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

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($)
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind				389500
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment	Other				3254400
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries	In-kind				1592000
Civil Society Organization	Campo Limpio	In-kind				4720000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Public Health	In-kind				102000
Total Co-financing				**0.00**	**0.00**	**10,057,900.00**

Comments

Ministry of Environment = In-kind and cash

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
			Medium/Moderate

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	GEFID5144_Trackling Tool_TER_FAO_Uruguay
Document Category	Title
M and E Document	GEFID5144_TER_FAO_Uruguay_in Spanish
Document Category	Title
M and E Document	GEFID5144_TER_FAO_Uruguay_English