

MID-TERM REVIEW

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) into Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina

Country

Argentina

GEF ID

9583

Implementing Agency

UNDP

Executing Entity

Government

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

Generate multiple biodiversity and land degradation benefits by developing a system of policy, economic, financial and technical instruments and governance mechanisms for environmental land use planning (ELUP) to mainstream socioeconomic and environmental evaluation of ecosystem goods and services (ES&G) in decision making at different government levels and sectors.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

12/14/2018

Agency Approval

11/13/2019

Implementation Start

11/13/2019

First Disbursement

8/10/2020

Expected MTR

11/13/2022

MTR Submission

3/5/2025

Actual MTR

7/11/2023

Expected Completion

11/13/2025

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

1. At the time of the Mid-Term Review, the project is executing actions towards its four outcomes and the most representative progress in regard to these actions is that related to the generation of enabling conditions and knowledge to promote the application of ELUP through the creation of regulations, assimilation, articulation and thinking oriented to replication/complementarity. Although there are signs of progress, the post-MTR challenge is to define strategies for mainstreaming the ELUP approach, to provide tangible evidence that allows for appropriation and replicability, and mainly to close the implementation gap that remains between technical and financial progress (22.6%). In general terms, the outcomes show the following progress:
2. a) strategies and favorable federal framework to strengthen ELUP and support implementation in priority habitats and ecosystems to reduce pressure from key production sectors (target sectors: agriculture and livestock, mining, and peri-urban infrastructure), the overall performance of the outcome up to mid-term is on track to be achieved; progress has been made in two of the three component indicators.
3. b) application of ELUP instruments and procedures in the pilot provinces with target ecoregions and for productive sector land use, the overall performance of the mid-term outcome is on track to be achieved, with significant progress in five out of five indicators.
4. c) replicability framework for the adoption of ELUP in all Argentine provinces, the overall performance of the mid-term outcome is on track to be achieved, with consistent progress in three of the three indicators.
5. d) dissemination of lessons learned monitoring and evaluation performance is one out of one for the component indicator.
6. This fact, as mentioned is about conceptual assimilation, at the moment there is no evidence from the 'best bet' approach and its testing, identifying the key management point for the improvement of operational support processes to generate ELUP evidence as mentioned above.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

The Stakeholder Participation Plan established in the Prodoc mentions that the active participation of stakeholders is fundamental for ensuring implementation through a multisectoral, multidisciplinary and multilevel approach. Thus, within this plan, stakeholders are identified from the preparation of the PPG; in the planning, design and development of the project, through focus group meetings, participatory forums (PPG phase inception workshop and multiple individual and consultation meetings). The MAYDS participated in the inception workshop with the National Directorate of Planning and Environmental Land Use Planning, the National Biodiversity Directorate, environmental secretaries or agencies from the provinces of Mendoza, Jujuy and Buenos Aires, INTA and UNDP representatives, who defined the ELUP line of work. In addition, provincial workshops were held with INTA, provincial and social stakeholders to present the project in the territory and coordinate future lines of work.

Regarding the implementation phase of the project, in general terms, stakeholder participation has been carried out as follows:

- INTA collaborated with the project in carrying out trainings and strengthening in agroecology, sustainable production, native crops, biological inputs, good livestock practices, and conservation, among others. Around 3383 people participated in this process, including authorities, technicians and civil society. INTA has also worked in coordination with the Indigenous Peoples Network for Addressing Institutions.
- Implementation of spaces for dialogue and working groups for the formal mainstreaming of ELUP, in collaboration with CONADIBIO and COFEMA.
- In coordination with civil society organizations, spaces for inter-institutional dialogue have been established.
- In the province of Mendoza, a space for indigenous representation is being developed in the Provincial Land Use Planning Council, in addition to the creation of a multi-stakeholder space between municipalities.
- In the province of Buenos Aires, multi-stakeholder spaces have been generated with the Wetlands Foundation.
- The province of Jujuy is working on the articulation of synergies with Fundación Vida Silvestre (Wildlife Foundation).
- Articulation with the project 'Sustainable Pasture Ranching: A Necessary Transition and an Opportunity for Argentine Pampas Production' and participate in the working group with institutions that promote sustainable pasture ranching and in the design of an Action Plan 2022-2025.
- Project coordination with the National Biodiversity Directorate (DNBi), MAyDS 'Inclusive Conservation' Program.
- Coordination with INAI to agree on possible ways of implementation in Mendoza and Jujuy.
- Several Letters of Agreement have been signed, such as:

Letters of agreement with the Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires, Letter of agreement with OPDS (Provincial Organism for Sustainable Development) of Buenos Aires, Letter of agreement with SAYOT of Mendoza, Letter of agreement with the Ministry of Environment of Jujuy, Letters of agreement with INTA and the regional centers of each province, and Letter of agreement with the National Water Institute (INA).

1. Based on the information provided by the PMU and interviews with key stakeholders, most of the partners defined in the Prodoc have participated. However, the private sector has not been involved as of the evaluation date and remains an important niche for the ELUP approach to work on.

Additionally, the joint work of the National Government, provincial governments and institutions in the implementation of the project's objectives is evident, with the political and financial challenges described throughout this document, which has led to the execution of isolated actions by each actor.

3. The project has provided training to local stakeholders on ELUP issues, which has allowed for public participation and awareness raising.

C. Gender Equality

Regarding the empowerment of women and gender focus, at team level there is a balance of participation, training mechanisms and a Gender Action Plan that is being applied in the actions of the project, a positive element that is not only included as a project requirement or of national regulations (Mikaela Law) but that can become a recurrent organic process in the projects of Argentina.

D. Knowledge Management

The communication and information strategy according to Prodoc allows for the dissemination and exchange of experiences and lessons learned from the processes and actions implemented. It facilitates the scaling up of results through websites, information networks, forums and publications, among others. Likewise, good practices and lessons learned have been disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders to promote the implementation of similar projects in the region.

In this strategy (Prodoc) three dimensions will be articulated: a) the design and implementation of the project's dissemination policy to raise awareness of ELUP issues; b) the management of technical information related to ELUP issues and its processing to generate communication products; and c) the systematization of the project's emerging information in order to manage the knowledge produced.

Based on these elements, the communication processes took place as follows:

- Generation and dissemination of relevant, reliable and understandable information for all stakeholders as an element to strengthen and enrich decision-making. In this context, it is necessary to strengthen the generation and/or construction of territorial information and its periodic updating, the articulation of public information from various sources, accessibility, as well as promoting spaces and mechanisms for transparency with respect to project progress.
- Coordination with organizations such as COFEMA, CONADIBIO, COFEPLAN and COFELMA to act as channels for the replication of best practices, mediators in management and consensus processes at the federal level for the implementation of ELUP.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 3 Area of land and ecosystems under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	128370	59554	0

Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural lands under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
Cropland		97,868.00	59,554.00	

Indicator 3.2 Area of forest and forest land under restoration

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
	30,502.00	0.00	

Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and woodland under restoration

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (including estuaries, mangroves) under restoration

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

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)
0	613128	68785	0

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)
	240,644.00	64,647.00	

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)

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)
	372,484.00	4,138.00	

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)

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)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

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)
Female		4,665	1,380	
Male		7,000	2,009	
Total	0	11,665	3,389	0

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
Recipient Country Government	SPARN - Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources of the Governmental Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development	Other			1620230
Recipient Country Government	SPARN - Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources of the Governmental Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development	In-kind			370000
Recipient Country Government	INTA - National Agricultural Technology Institute	Other			220000
Recipient Country Government	INTA - National Agricultural Technology Institute	In-kind			32000
Recipient Country Government	Provincial Agency for the Sustainable Development of the Province of Buenos Aires, currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires	Other			100000
Recipient Country Government	Provincial Agency for the Sustainable Development of the Province of Buenos Aires, currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires	In-kind			3400
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy	Other			22000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy	In-kind			6400

Recipient Country Government	SAYOT - Secretariat of Environment and Territorial Planning of the Province of Mendoza	Other			800000
Recipient Country Government	SAYOT - Secretariat of Environment and Territorial Planning of the Province of Mendoza	In-kind			5300
Recipient Country Government	CONICET National Council for Technical and Scientific Research)	In-kind			
Recipient Country Government	INAI National Indigenous Peoples Institute	In-kind			
GEF Agency	UNDP				33333
Total Co-financing				0.00	33,333.00

Comments

The counterparts' real contributions both in kind and in cash (Table 3 and Figure 5) are equal to US\$ 3,212,663.00, corresponding to 8% of the total value committed by the partners in the project design.

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

The project document (Prodoc) presents the social and environmental screening, where overall the project was rated to be at 'Moderate Risk. In general, in the construction of the initiative and the planning of activities, the principles for safeguarding the social elements and biodiversity of the prioritized landscapes were considered.

The SESP checklist addressed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Under these approaches a total of 2 out of 5 risks were marked in the checklist, which allows the evaluator to have an insight into the environmental impacts of the project and how they will be addressed during implementation, which were ratified and critical during the field visit and which point out new

aspects of intervention such as fire management and forest fires that currently affect ELUP intervention territories.

The project design proposes environmental sustainability based on maintaining areas identified as priorities for their high biodiversity conservation value; or that are identified as vulnerable to land degradation and, in turn, the loss of ecosystem goods and services that are important for livelihoods and production sectors. The project's support in the development of instruments such as ELUPs will test sustainable land management practices, and a combination of instruments will be structured to implement restrictions in priority areas as needed. This will provide direct benefits to nine ecoregions with globally significant biodiversity, or priority areas for combating land degradation.

The same UNDP social and environmental screening procedure identifies that the greatest environmental risk that could reverse the results of the project is climate change, affecting the suitability and productivity of land uses, which would result in the potential results of the project becoming sensitive or vulnerable to the effects of this global phenomenon.

According to the background provided for the midterm review, the risk to environmental sustainability is rated Low, as the efforts implemented by the project, such as the conservation of areas of ecosystemic importance, the Environmental Land Use Plans (ELUPs), and the coordination with institutions and communities, inherently have a good possibility of scaling up to provinces or other areas of ecosystemic importance.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	Core Indicators
Document Category	Title
M and E Document	MTR Argentina (GEF 9583 / UNDP 5791)