

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10184
Project Name:	LDN Target-Setting and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in Western Andes and Coastal areas
Countr(ies):	Ecuador
Implementing Agency:	FAO

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

LDN Target-Setting and Restoration of Degraded Landscapes in Western Andes and Coastal areas

Country

Ecuador

GEF ID

10184

Implementing Agency

FAO

Executing Entity

CONDESAN (Operating Partner)

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

8/31/2026

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2026 , 4th PIR

Objective

Prevent, reduce and reverse land degradation processes (SDG 2, 13, 15) to promote the sustainable development of rural communities, ensuring the provision of key ecosystem services and food sovereignty, within the framework of national efforts to achieve the LDN in Ecuador (2.4.1; 13.2.1; 15.3.1).

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Satisfactory

Overall risk

Moderate Risk

Project Financing

4,835,750.00

Cumulative Disbursement

4,279,150.91

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

6/3/2021

Agency Approval

2/2/2021

Implementation Start 9/21/2021	First Disbursement 12/31/2021
Expected MTR 8/11/2024	Actual MTR 4/30/2025
Expected Completion 12/31/2027	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

During FY2026, the LDN Project Ecuador consolidated the implementation of a more integrated approach to avoid, reduce and reverse land degradation processes through demonstrative actions in the intervention sites. Knowledge generation efforts have been sustained in collaboration with research teams of nine universities that currently are part of the National Land Degradation Observatory (ONDT). Ecosystem health data was collected in the paramos of Bolivar, the experiment of dry forest restoration under irrigation in Santa Elena was revisited, as well as the experiment of minimum tillage systems in Imbabura. Opportunities to expand the ONDT network were explored, with progress made in organizing a new territorial node focused on monitoring ecosystem dynamics in Andean montane forests.

Along these efforts to strengthen the institutional basis for monitoring land degradation and sustainable land management (SLM) practices, a number of integrated land use planning tools continued to be developed at the national and subnational levels, including the LDN National Action Plan, a plan for landscape restoration for the Imbabura province, and guidelines for sustainable cattle management to be implemented by the local government in Salinas, Bolivar.

Additionally, most of the work to implement SLM practices in the intervention sites concluded in FY2026. The main actions included: 1) maintenance and monitoring of cattle exclusion areas in the communities of the highlands of Salinas and in the San Marcos Community, Santa Elena, 2) implementation of farm-level agroforestry and agroecological practices concluded in Cotacachi, Urcuqui, Imbabura, and San Simón, Bolivar, 3) second cycle of biological pest control with entomophagous insects in maize systems in Santa Elena concluded. As the project moves to its closure phase, more emphasis has been given to the linkages between local producers and market actors that have the potential to sustain the adoption and maintenance of SLM practices in the long term. These include a local coffee shop chain that sells herbal infusions using plants from agrobiodiverse farms, and an exporter of high value Panama hats that outsources fiber from sustainably managed landscapes.

Overall, the project has built thrust networks with local and national stakeholders to demonstrate the integrative approach needed to address the root causes and impacts of land degradation. A balance between governance and land use planning tools, knowledge generation and market integration has been instrumental to achieve a transition between interest in the LDN approach and participation in the development of the framework needed to work towards its goals at different scales.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

During FY2026, the main challenges addressed by the LDN Project Ecuador continued to be the persistence of important knowledge gaps related the causes and effects of land degradation, the fragmentation of governance approaches among sectors and scales to address these issues, and the lack of incentives to promote widespread adoption and maintenance of SLM practices. The research network that forms the National Land Degradation Observatory (ONDT) addresses a disconnect among people working in cognate fields and issues related to land degradation, and beyond the formal mechanisms of peer review and scientific publication. This mechanism tries also to improve the formulation and implementation of transdisciplinary research needed to inform policy making and decisions related to land use planning and sustainable land management.

The formulation and implementation of land-related public policy instruments still follows sectoral niches and lack adequate mechanisms for communication and coordination between different levels of governance. In FY2026, the LDN Project is working in partnership with local governments to develop tools that foster better coordination between conservation and productive goals. For example, the landscape restoration plan for the Imbabura province will include a coordination mechanism between the environment and agricultural departments to set and monitor common goals in their programs.

Finally, indigenous communities and local producers lack adequate support and incentives to maintain SLM practices. The project has consolidated a diverse portfolio of application cases where technical assistance and critical inputs for SLM practices, capacity building, and linkages to market opportunities converge. This is the case of indigenous women producing medicinal herbs for high value niche markets in urban areas, and a women's association in Santa Elena which processes toquilla fiber for Panama hat fabrication.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Profile	Stakeholder name	Type of partnership	Progress, results & Challenges on Stakeholder's Engagement
Government Institutions	Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE)	Main focal point of the Project. Continuous communication and validation of the progress in implementation.	In the second semester of 2025, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Energy were combined in a single institution. This generated substantial changes in the technical team of the newly formed Ministry of Environment and Energy (MAE by its Spanish acronym). A few delays occurred as the project re-established operational mechanisms for follow-up and coordination.
Government Institutions	Ministry of Agriculture and Cattle Management (MAG)	Main technical and political partner	Communication, coordination and follow-up procedures by the technical team in the Ministry continued normally in this FY.
IGOs	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Implementing Agency	Follow-up and technical support from FAO has continued normally during this FY. Delays in the disbursement of funds caused an operational pause in July 2025.
Government Institutions	Decentralized Autonomous Government (DAG) of Imbabura	Partner	A collaborative process with this DAG started in the first semester of 2025 to update the Landscape Restoration Plan for the Province. This policy tool builds upon the macro-zoning developed the previous FY.

Government Institutions	DAG of Bolivar	Partner	Collaborative work with this DAG continued, as part of the technical support for the development of the management plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use Area Paramos de Bolivar. Also, SLM practices were implemented collaboratively to support diversification of agroforestry systems in the San Simon Parish.
Government Institutions	DAG of Santa Elena	Partner	Work with Santa Elena DAG included the development of guidelines to sustain environmental conflicts reports, and monitoring natural capital in the local system of Conservation and Sustainable Use Areas. In September 2025, the agroecological innovation center administered by the DAG was inaugurated, which includes a tree nursery for dry forest species and a laboratory for entomophagous insects.
Government Institutions	DAG of Chimborazo	Partner	The Chimborazo DAG suffered important internal political instability in the second semester of 2025. This caused delays in the implementation of agreed upon activities to improve the production capacity of the tree nursery used by the DAG in restoration initiatives. Work resumed in the first semester of 2026, with the new technical team inside the DAG.
Government Institutions	Tungurahua Fund for Paramo Conservation and Fight Against Poverty (FPTLP)	Partner	Work with the FPTLP concluded the previous FY with the development of guidelines to update paramo conservation plans.
Government Institutions	Association of Municipalities of Southwestern Tungurahua (FSO)	Partner	This FY the paramo conservation plan for the municipalities of Mocha, Quero, Tisaleo, and Cevallos was concluded.
NGOs	Ecuadorian Fund Populorum Progressio (FEPP)	Partner	In alliance with FEPP, implementation of sustainable cattle management practices in the Simiatug parish concluded this FY.
NGOs	Foundation of Local Organizations of Salinas (FUNORSAL)	Partner	A diagnostic of the linkages between ecosystem care, health and nutrition practices was developed in collaboration with FUNORSAL and the de Waal Foundation. A set of locally prioritized micro projects received seed funding from de Waal, as part of the strengthening of local capacities.
Government Institutions	DAG of Salinas, Bolivar	Partner	Collaboration with this partner intensified in this FY as work to develop Guidelines for Sustainable Agriculture for this Parish started. This tool will complement the SLM practices implemented in this area, and it is expected that will guide future initiatives that focus in improving the sustainability to the milk and cheese value chain in Salinas.
NGOs	Sustainable Landscapes Foundation (PASOS)	Partner	In this FY, an agreement with PASOS started, to implement activities to strengthen the Province System of Areas of Conservation and Sustainable Land Use. These included developing guidelines for monitoring and conflict report, implementation of demonstrative farms to illustrate the SLM approach, and supporting land tenure regularization in areas with high conservation value forests.

NGOs	Management Committee – Mojanda Cambugán Conservation and Sustainable Use Area (ACUS)	Partner	In the Mojanda Cambugan ACUS, work focused on the implementation of forest conservation and sustainable cattle management practices in a set of farms within the area. Additionally, an interchange with students of the local agroecological baccalaureate was implemented to visit successful experiences in the Andean Choco region. These activities were planned in coordination with the Management Committee of the ACUS.
NGOs	FUCAE Foundation	Partner	FUCAE is the local implementing partner of the SLM practices described above that support mitigation of land degradation in the Mojanda Cambugán ACUS.
Private Sector entities	Nunalabs	Partner	An alliance was originally developed with this private sector actor to generate an agreement to supply medicinal herbs from chakras in Cotacachi. However, the volumes required and timing could not be met at this early stage of the network of local providers, and no further progress was made with this actor.
Private Sector entities	Cafe Galleti	Partner	This actor has been active in the joint implementation of activities to strengthen capacities of a local network of indigenous women that will provide drier medicinal herbs to be used in infusions sold by this business in Quito.
Private Sector entities	K. Dorzfaun	Partner	Progress was made in collaboration with this actor to implement improved accounting and quality control processes to sustain the application of SLM practices in the toquilla fiber production areas.
Private Sector entities	Agricultural Production Cooperative of Salinas (PRODUCCOOP)	Partner	A co-development and co-investment process started with PRODUCCOOP to install a technical assistance center in Salinas, to support the adoption of sustainable cattle management practices in this area. The center will also provide sustainable mechanization services, aimed at minimizing impacts on soil structure and improving pasture productivity.
Others	Research groups at: Superior Polytechnic School of Chimborazo (ESPOCH), Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo (UNACH), Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL), Universidad Técnica del Norte (UTN), Universidad Central del Ecuador (UCE), Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE), Universidad Lince Eloy Alfaro de Manabi (ULEAM)	Partners	Two new research teams joined the National Observatory of Land Degradation (ONDT): ULEAM from Manabi and UPSE from Santa Elena. Joint activities include monitoring of regeneration of dry forest, and of local climate conditions. In this FY, data collection campaigns were implemented in degraded paramo areas in the highlands of Bolivar, minimum tillage systems in Imbabura, and dry forest restoration under irrigation in Santa Elena.
Others	National Polytechnic University (EPN)	Partner	A collaboration process started with EPN to create a new node for the ONDT to monitor restoration and regeneration of tropical montane Andean forest. Collaborative work is underway to install a new monitoring site in the Andean Choco region, in northwestern Pichincha Province.

Others	Indigenous Women's Organization of Cotacachi (CCMU)	Partner	The second phase of the implementation of SLM practices in Chakras of the CCMY concluded. Subsequently, a network of 10 women from CCMU was started to provide medicinal herbs from their chakras to the Galletti enterprise, that sells infusions in Quito.
Others	Communities of the highlands of Salinas and Simiatug, Bolivar: Pachancho, Yurak Usha, Natawa, Yakubiana, Verdepamba, Pimbalo	Partner	The implementation of a fence to exclude cattle grazing from paramo areas is almost complete by the end of this FY. This initiative was implemented in close collaboration with the local cabildos, with the support of community members in the installation of the fence.

D. Gender Equality

Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period.
a. Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources	Yes	In YF2026 the project consolidated strategies that promote equal access to opportunities and benefits arising from the implementation SLM practices in the intervention sites, for men, women and young adults. The following mechanism illustrate this approach: - Strengthen capacities of rural women to participate effectively in the implementation and monitoring of SLM practices. In Santa Elena, the Artisanal Center led by local women is implementing improved accounting standards and a local commission to monitor the quality of sustainably managed toquilla fiber. In Cotacachi, a network of 10 women participated in training to organically produce medicinal herbs. In Salinas de Bolivar, approximately 25% of the farms where SLM practices have been implemented are actively led by women. - Complementary actions have been implemented that focus on specific challenges that rural women face in improving their livelihoods. For example, in Salinas, an alliance with deWaal Foundation allowed a better characterization of linkages between good nutrition practices, ecosystem function care, and family health among women in the communities in the paramo. Also, through the podcast series #NoDañesLaTierra, the key leadership roles of rural women in the three intervention sites have been communicated to a wider audience.
b. Improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	The implementation of the capacity building strategy of the project has been instrumental in the empowerment of women in different aspects of the adoption of an SLM approach. This is illustrated by: - Participation of women in capacity building activities that support the implementation of SLM practices has been substantial. From a total of 415 participations in capacitation events, 193 corresponded to women and 222 to men. - Likewise, from a total of 59 participations in events aimed at improving the linkages of local producers to markets that value SLM practices, 44 corresponded to women, and 15

		to men. - In the context of participation in the National Land Degradation Observatory, an imbalance is still observed. This mirrors structural challenges that women still face in Ecuador related to representation in STEM careers. From a total of 98 participations, 23 corresponded to women, and 75 to men.
c. generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	Yes	Women's effective participation in the collaborative arrangements with actors from the private sector has been key to promote a better distribution of socio-economic benefits. In Santa Elena, the long term leadership of the Barcelona Artisanal Center has allowed a more equitable perspective in relation to how the benefits of toquilla fiber processing are distributed within local families. Likewise, working with indigenous women in Cotacachi, and campesino women in the Vida Verde Association in Urcuquí is an important entry point to secure a more equitable distribution of the income of the SLM practices they are implementing in their Andean chakras and farms.
Any other good practices on gender	No	

E. Knowledge Management

Knowledge management and Learning (KML): Does the project have a KML strategy?	Yes
If YES, what is the implementation progress? In your answer, please describe how the project is fostering knowledge	During this period, the development of the Knowledge Management Strategy continues, based on the proposed products. Currently, progress has been made in planning the systematization of the project, the participatory impact assessment of MST practices and value chains, as well as inputs at the national level: an infographic with degradation maps linking variables such as poverty; and inputs at the subnational level such as the Sustainable Livestock Guidelines for the Salinas parish in Bolívar, the Executive Summary of the Sustainable Production Strategy for the province of Bolivar, and the Study of areas of hydrological importance in Bolivar. In the development of these products, the project works jointly and participatively with the actors in the territory in the collection of data, feedback and validation of these inputs, considering that part of these correspond to local planning and management tools.

ge sharing and learning among stakeholders at national and sub-national level.	
If NO, how does the project identify, collect and document good practices ?	
Please list good practices , including key-technical and/or institutional innovations, from the project thus far.	In addition to the technical and institutional innovations presented in the previous report, the following were recorded during this period: - Implementation of sustainable management practices such as orchards that include a circular agroecological cultivation design, which helps optimize space, facilitates irrigation, and allows for soil moisture retention. - Design of a management system within the milk and cheese value chain in the Salinas parish - Bolívar, which integrates the development of an incentive for the application of sustainable management practices in livestock production, a service center that provides technical assistance on Sustainable Management Practices (SMP) to agricultural producers with an emphasis on sustainable production, and a sales point where the work carried out in the area is showcased and products with SMP are offered. This entire process was coordinated jointly with local stakeholders linked to the value chain. - The development of Guidelines for sustainable livestock farming began within the framework of the Sustainable Livestock Ordinance for the Salinas parish in Bolívar, which will provide the basis for what it means to develop livestock farming practices in high Andean ecosystems considering environmental and social sustainability criteria.
Communication strategy: Does the project have a communication strategy?	Yes

Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this fiscal year.	The following are some of the key activities developed as part of the Communication Strategy: - Development of three podcasts as a territorial engagement strategy within the #NoDañesLaTierra (Don't Harm the Earth) Campaign, with the participation of key stakeholders in sustainable production at the project's three intervention sites. These podcasts covered the following topics: - Salinas de Guaranda – Bolívar – Central Highlands: Main challenges in raising awareness about the responsible consumption of healthy foods produced using sustainable land management practices, the conservation of natural ecosystems, and the restoration of ecosystem services to prevent, reduce, and reverse land degradation in Bolívar. - Barcelona Commune – Santa Elena – Coast: Importance of sustainable land management practices to strengthen local leadership processes, with an emphasis on the Handicraft Center that processes toquilla straw fiber, a key process for the women of the commune. - Cotacachi – Imbabura – Northern Highlands: Challenges and progress in the role of rural women in territorial leadership processes and sustainable land management. - Design, layout, and distribution of a digital magazine that chronicles the main milestones of the NDT project in 2025, supported and disseminated through the project's various implementing partners. In the last period, the Communications department has covered different project activities to promote it through the project's and Condesan's digital channels. The publications can be reviewed at this link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K11GeUwB4jnqgSq4zcFSG790Da0wdKiO/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=108408616092853663657&rtpof=true&sd=true
Human-interest story: Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's livelihoods while contributing to	Within the framework of podcast development in the project's three intervention sites—Coast, Central Highlands, and Northern Highlands—we were able to learn about the life stories of beneficiaries and key stakeholders involved in the MST (Massive Land Use) actions implemented by the project. These individuals played a crucial role in the project's conception and implementation, within a broader context of governance and territorial dynamics. This podcast testifies to how these actions have contributed to a shift in perspectives on traditional production and quality of life, as well as the challenges being faced for its implementation and sustainability. It is important to mention the role of gender in the project's development and the significant challenges women have faced in spaces of participation and power, which have traditionally been dominated by men. The stories presented can be viewed at the following links: 1) Bolívar Podcast: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ItygesiNFw a. Marina Hervás: Producer from the San Simón parish, Guaranda. b. Father Antonio Polo: Community Manager of the Salinas Parish. c. Ángel Bayas: Livestock Producer of the Salinas Parish. d. Tatiana Dávila: Technician for the Bolívar Prefecture. 2) Santa Elena Podcast: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxNb29_MlCA a. Catalina Bacilio: President of the Barcelona Artisan Center, Barcelona Commune.

achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits.	b. Juan Prudente: Leader of the Barcelona Commune. c. Gabriel Finkelsztein: Manager of the Dorfzaun Company. d. Bertha Carpio: Director of the Environment for the Santa Elena Prefecture. 3) Imbabura Podcast: To be published in the second half of 2026. a. Emérita Quinatoa: Guarango Producer and Leader of the Vida Verde Cooperative in Urcuquí. b. Rosita Cachiguango: Agroecological producer with the Central Committee of Women of UNORCAC in Cotacachi. c. Enna Escobar: Executive Director of the Galleti company. d. Dora Cuamacas: Head of the Natural Heritage Unit of the Imbabura Prefecture.
Please provide links to related website, social media account	During this period, the following progress has been made: - Update of the Land Degradation Observatory website: https://ondt-ec.org/ - The Communications Department's publications have covered the project's various activities for promotion through the project's and Condesan's digital channels. These publications can be accessed at this link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K11GeUwB4jnqgSq4zcFSG790Da0wdKiO/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=108408616092853663657&rtpof=true&sd=true
Please provide a list of publications, leaflets,	All information generated was published through available digital channels: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15xL1R0dymum4uQj011RSiroaiDLdQsIg?usp=drive_link

video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web, if any.	
Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details.	Giovanny Cevallos fabricio.cevallos@condesan.org

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	During the Midterm Evaluation, the need arose to extend the project's timeframe in order to properly complete the implementation of on-the-ground actions, promoting closure and sustainability activities, as well as the development of knowledge management products, including the systematization of the project. Therefore, a timeframe extension strategy

	was developed, including a budget amendment for an additional year beyond the initial project design period.
Implementation Schedule	'- The national strike led by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador (CONAIE) in September and October 2025 affected normal operations, especially in the Northern Andean province of Imbabura. - The rainy season Between January and March 2026 was stronger than usual, especially in the Coast of Ecuador. Road access was lost to the intervention sites in the communities of San Marcos and Matapalo, in - Santa Elena, delaying the implementation of monitoring and capacity building strategies. - Differences in the visions regarding the scope of the LDN National Action Plan and the methodology to structure it, led to a mutual agreement to end the consultancy process in October 2025. The identification of a new consulting team to develop the LDN National Action Plan took longer than expected. The new team was identified in May 2026 and will initiate operations in June 2026. - The development of the San Marcos and Dos Mangas management plans was delayed, and the consultancy team at CODESPA decided to rescind the contract by mutual agreement in June 2026. Work will resume in the second semester of 2026.
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	No new risks were identified during this period; however, the risk identified in the previous period related to public insecurity at the national level remains.
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Northern Highlands	-0.196167	-77.998333	3,655,635

Location Description:

Areas corresponding to forests, páramos and agricultural lands that extend from the southern limit of the Cotacachi Cayapas Ecological Reserve (RECC) in Imbabura towards the province of Pichincha;

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Central Highlands	-1.818667	-78.521667	3,654,870

Location Description:

It covers the páramos and the agricultural mosaic, the area surrounding the Chimborazo Faunal Production Reserve (RPFC) and the slopes of the Carihuairazo volcano in the provinces of Tungurahua, Chimborazo and Bolívar

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Coast	-2.268333	-80.341667	7,062,138

Location Description:

It includes forests (dry and humid) and the agricultural mosaic along the Chongón Colonche coastal range in the provinces of Manabí and Santa Elena.

Activity Description:

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	GEFID10184_2026PIR_FAO_Ecuador