PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10855
Project Name:	Conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives (CWR) and edible wild species (EWS), under an institutional framework and the development of rural community initiatives in Ecuador
Countr(ies):	Ecuador
Implementing Agency:	FAO

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name
Conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives (CWR) and edible wild species (EWS), under an institutional framework and the development of rural community initiatives in Ecuador

Country
Ecuador

GEF ID	Implementing Agency
10855	FAO

Executing Entity
Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition (MAATE); National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP)

Trust Fund	Project Type
GET	MSP

PIR Submission	Fiscal Year , PIR Number
9/10/2025	FY 2025 , 1st PIR

Objective
To strengthen institutional systems for the implementation and enforcement of measures for the registration, in situ conservation and sustainable use of CWR and EWS in Ecuador, as a complementary scope for the incorporation of CWR and EWS in local, national and global strategies for the conservation of agrobiodiversity and its contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of the rural population.

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress	Development Objective
Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory

Overall risk
Moderate Risk

Project Financing	Cumulative Disbursement
945,250.00	291,975.28

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval 1/7/2023	Agency Approval 12/8/2022
Implementation Start 5/14/2024	First Disbursement 7/31/2024
Expected MTR	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 7/14/2027	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

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

During the first year of implementation, the project successfully laid the technical, institutional, and operational foundations to advance toward achieving its goals in the conservation and sustainable use of Edible Wild Species (EWS) and Crop Wild Relatives (CWR). A methodological guide was developed for the identification of species and conservation areas, incorporating gender and intercultural approaches, as well as international guidelines. Additionally, a culturally appropriate communication strategy and a knowledge management plan were developed and validated, and a national exchange of experiences with gender-balanced participation was carried out.
Progress was also made in generating key inputs, such as the collection of baseline data using the TAPE methodology, which incorporated territorial, community-based, and SIPAM approaches. This contributed to defining strategic priorities and reference indicators on diversity, inclusion, knowledge co-creation, and governance. Other advances included collection of data for species inventories in the pilot areas, the definition of institutional responsibilities for the development of the geographic information system, and the registration of participating families in local enterprises. At the institutional level, the baseline capacity assessment tool was applied, which will serve to monitor the strengthening of the national regulatory framework.
As part of the implementation strategy, key partnerships were formalized through the signing of agreements with technical actors: INABIO, responsible for developing the geographic information system and monitoring plans; the Amazon Regional University IKIAM and the Technical University of the North (UTN), in charge of conducting inventories and assessing the conservation status of priority species. Furthermore, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) agreements were signed with all participating communities, ensuring compliance with principles of governance and participation.
Taken together, the progress achieved allows for the projection of sustained technical implementation from the second year onward, supported by refined planning, validated methodologies, and active coordination with national and local partners. The project maintains a progressive approach, with preparatory actions that enable the achievement of concrete results in the upcoming phases.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

During the first year, the implementation of the project faced several operational and institutional coordination challenges. The effective start of technical activities was affected by delays in administrative processes and the formalization of agreements with partner institutions, which in turn delayed the execution of key deliverables such as species inventories, technical dossiers for conservation areas, and the geographic information system. These delays also impacted the development of the secondary regulation and the national

strategic plan, as both instruments depend on inputs generated from data collection and socio-cultural, productive, and agri-food analyses related to the conservation status of species.

In addition, limitations in the Ministry of the Environment's installed capacity to host the information system were identified, which required rethinking its development and relocation to INABIO.

Another challenge was the harmonization of technical criteria among the institutions that are part of the Project Steering Committee, which contributed to delays in finalizing the methodology and in carrying out institutional training activities. Likewise, the need for prior inputs—such as inventories or legal diagnostics—has affected the fulfillment of intermediate targets for several outputs.

Although these factors led to rescheduling, the scope of technical planning was maintained through consensus-based decisions by the National Steering Committee. The measures adopted will help recover the implementation pace and ensure the technical coherence of results in the medium term.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Profile	Stakeholder name	Type of partnership	Progress, results & Challenges on Stakeholder's Engagement
Government Institutions	Ministerio de Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica, MAATE	Member of Steering Committee - Executing Partner	They have participated in the Technical Management, Steering, and Procurement Committees, validating operational plans, budgets, and key project processes. At the territorial level, there is active participation from the teams of protected areas located within the project's area of intervention. However, coordination with the technical units at the central level has been limited. Constant institutional changes and response times have caused delays in implementation. Strengthening dialogue with the new authorities is planned to ensure greater continuity and smoother coordination
Government Institutions	Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería, MAG	Strategic partner	So far, an effective coordination channel has not been established, and attempts to engage with the Directorate of Agricultural Resources Management have gone unanswered. There are plans to reactivate dialogue with the new MAG authorities to strengthen their participation in the upcoming training and technical assistance phases at the chakra level.
Government Institutions	Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agropecuarias, INIAP	Member of Steering Committee - Executing Partner	Its relationship with the project is agile and well-coordinated, actively participating in the technical, steering, and procurement committees, where it validates budgets and key processes. At the central level and from the Amazonian station, INIAP co-leads the species inventory and contributes to the development of operational plans, the methodological toolkit, and other technical actions. INIAP's technical participation has been constant and essential
Government Institutions	Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad, INABIO	Implementing partner	The relationship with INABIO has been significantly strengthened, evolving from an advisory role to that of a key implementing partner. Its technical team will lead the development of community monitoring protocols and the project's geographic information system, thereby expanding its technical and strategic involvement.
Government Institutions	Servicio Nacional de Derechos Intelectuales, SENADI	Implementing partner	We have initiated their involvement in the project. The institution has committed the participation of technicians from the Ancestral Knowledge Unit to support capacity-building activities related to the protection of traditional knowledge. In addition, they will provide technical assistance to the project to ensure that the rights of participating communities are respected in accordance with national regulations.
Others	Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Provincial de Napo	Strategic partner	A focal point has been designated from its commercialization area to support the project's activities, especially those related to Component 2. Although interaction during this first year has been limited, the dialogue has been fluid, and there is a strong willingness to strengthen coordination as activities progress.
Others	Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Provincial Imbabura	Strategic partner	A focal point was designated from the Subdirectorate of Entrepreneurship and Innovation to coordinate actions under Component 2. Although interaction during this first year has been limited, the process has required persistence from the project team due to less fluid communication compared to other stakeholders.
Others	Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado Cantonal de Cotacachi	Strategic partner	A focal point was designated from the Economic Development and Tourism area for coordination with the project. During this first year, close coordination has been maintained, with active and proactive participation in territorial actions such as community workshops and exchange visits.
Others	Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados	Strategic	The most fluid relationship has been established with the Archidona GAD, which designated a focal point from the Directorate of Tourism and Cooperation. Although joint actions have been limited during this first year, there has been clear interest and proactivity in collaborating with the project's objectives. In the cases of Tena and Carlos Julio Arosemena, focal

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 overal natural resources	Yes	-The project has a gender plan that provides a cross-cutting framework for its implementation across all components. Within this framework, gender criteria have been incorporated into project components related to access and use of natural resources, such as the methodological guide for in situ conservation areas and the species inventory.
b. Improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	-A target of 40% female participation was set for workshops, inventory validation activities, and experience exchange events. This target is being accomplished in all workshops so far. -Under Component 3, mechanisms have been designed to ensure women's voices are included in project monitoring and evaluation. -During workshops we have created spaces for children that accompany mother's so they can play while women participate in the activities
c. generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	No	Mechanisms have been stablished for the reinforcement of value chains (principally managed by women) but they will not be implemented until year 2 of the project. These act as incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of CWR and EWS and are expected to support improved local livelihoods and incomes. As per the ProDoc, five mechanisms are planned (three for women and two for men). While direct economic impact will not be measured during implementation, social and economic benefits are expected, in line with the enabling nature of GEF G1 projects.
Any other good practices on gender	Yes	- A gender specialist has been incorporated into the project team, with a dedicated budget (USD 29,643.50) and a goal to train at least 80% of the technical team on gender mainstreaming. - A Gender Action Plan was updated in 2025, including indicators aligned with GEF policies. - A methodological document for gender-based management and planning was developed, along with a prevention policy for sexual abuse and exploitation. - A training plan on gender equality and environmental and social safeguards was designed, including modules on gender, safeguards, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

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 sharing and learning among stakeholders at national and sub-national level.	So far, the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management Plan, recently validated by strategic partners, has advanced in the area of knowledge capture and generation, with participatory studies on the status of Crop Wild Relatives (CWR), Edible Wild Species (EWS), and the role of women, as well as interviews and testimonials that document traditional knowledge. In the area of knowledge transfer and learning, an initial exchange session between communities and institutions has been held, along with two participatory workshops, strengthening the technical-community dialogue. These actions mark the beginning of the learning and knowledge exchange process among actors at the subnational and national levels, which will be expanded through a series of training workshops, practical sessions using the Farmer Field School (FFS) methodology, fairs, and webinars planned for the next phases of the project. Regarding continuous learning, logbooks have already been implemented to record progress and challenges in technical reports. Reflection and systematization spaces will be developed as project implementation progresses. With regard to knowledge organization and dissemination, fairs, communication campaigns, and webinars will begin in the first quarter of the project's second year, with logistical coordination already underway. One of the main challenges has been maintaining active and sustained participation across all territories, which requires adapting to different local rhythms and contexts.
If NO, how does the project identify, collect and document good practices?	N/A
Please list good practices, including key-technical and/or institutional innovations, from the project thus far.	The project has begun to consolidate several good practices that contribute to strengthening knowledge management and community participation. Among them, a notable example is the field support provided by a territorial technician who serves as a Kichwa language interpreter and is also a member of the community. This practice has facilitated intercultural dialogue, a full understanding of the project's processes, and local ownership of the actions. From a knowledge management perspective, the project also highlights practices such as the return of information to the communities and the participatory evaluation of sessions and workshops together with community members. These actions enable the collective validation of content and strengthen real-time feedback. In addition, the technical team has adapted schedules and methodologies to fit the availability of the communities, fostering effective participation and ownership of the process. In terms of institutional innovation, the project has developed a knowledge management model with an intercultural and territorial approach, integrating ancestral and scientific knowledge from the design to the implementation phases. Likewise, the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has ensured respect for collective rights and the protection of traditional knowledge, in accordance with national regulations.
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 project's communication strategy recently came into effect following its validation by the project's strategic partners, so the progress made so far corresponds to an initial phase of implementation. On the internal front, fluid communication has been established between the executing team (IICA), the implementing agency (FAO), and the national leaders (INIAP and MAATE), although certain challenges have arisen with MAATE due to its institutional dynamics. The defined communication channels have functioned adequately, and coordination spaces have been developed as planned. Regarding external communication, content has been shared on social media, two radio interviews have been conducted with the project coordinator, and a communication campaign is being prepared for launch in July 2025. This campaign will include the broadcasting of messages on local radio stations, distribution of printed materials (brochures and posters), and a public event such as a fair or exhibition. In parallel, the first technical webinar is being organized, led by the project coordination team. Additionally, the project's presence in the field has been strengthened through the distribution of institutional clothing to the field team. Among the challenges identified are the time and resources required to implement larger-scale actions, as well as the need to adapt messages for diverse audiences—issues that will be progressively addressed during the campaign's implementation.
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 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.	So far, the project is in its initial implementation phase, and therefore no specific records of human interest stories reflecting improvements in livelihoods or concrete socio-economic co-benefits have been generated yet.
Please provide links to related website, social media account	Web sites and social media realted to the project: •Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/iicaecuador

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	1/ Two budget revisions were carried out, which did not alter the total amount of financing or the allocation per project component. These internal reallocations allowed for optimization of technical and administrative implementation, in response to emerging needs. The first revision increased the category for national consultants to incorporate key technical profiles, through reductions in contracts, training, and procurement.; 2/The second revision strengthened strategic lines such as ex situ collection (INIAP), the geographic module (INABIO), and the development of land use plans, by reallocating unspent balances from procurement and travel to contracts and training.
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	Product 1.1.2 on the inventory protocol and conservation status is being implemented through a technical cooperation agreement with the universities UTN and IKIAM; Products 1.2.2 and 1.2.3, related to the digital monitoring protocol and the geographic and statistical information system, will be implemented through a technical cooperation agreement with INABIO.
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	During the first year, the project made minor adjustments to the schedule to address technical and operational challenges, without affecting the quality or scope of the results. These changes have allowed for time optimization and ensured effective implementation. As follows: 1. Inventory of EWS and CWR (Product 1.1.2): Start rescheduled for the second half of Year 1 due to technical validations and interinstitutional coordination. Duration adjusted from 15 to 8 months.; 2. Secondary Regulation (Product 1.2.1): Postponed to the first half of Year 2, to run in parallel with the development of rights, after identifying the need for baseline inputs; Geographic Information System (Product 1.2.3): Rescheduled for Year 2 due to delays in defining the hosting arrangement. Duration adjusted from 9 to 6 months; Institutional Training (Product 1.3.3): Rescheduled for Year 2 due to methodological and budgetary adjustments. Duration reduced from 20 to 12 months; Sustainable Use Guide (Product 2.1.2): Moved to Year 3, due to technical requirements for defining priority species and territories.
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	

Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	The FAO gender equality safeguard, which was not included in the original project design, has been incorporated to strengthen the gender approach across all project activities. This adjustment does not affect the scope or the budget.
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	A new co-financier has been incorporated into the project: the National Institute of Biodiversity (INABIO), which will contribute an estimated in-kind amount of USD 20,000.
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
SIPAM Chakra Andina - Cotacachi, Imbabura	0.2996	-78.2648	

Location Description:

Communities within the SIPAM area in Cotacachi;

Activity Description:

conservation and sustainable use activities, capacity building, and value chain strengthening

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
serva Ecológica Cotacachi Cayapas, Imbabura	0.3000	-78.3000	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

In situ conservation activities, wild species inventories, and monitoring

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
SIPAM Chakra Amazonica - Archidona, Napo	-0.9113	-77.8147	

Location Description:

Communities within the SIPAM area in Napo;

Activity Description:

conservation and sustainable use activities, capacity building, and value chain strengthening

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
SIPAM Chakra Amazonica - Tena, Napo	-0.9939	-77.8122	

Location Description:

Communities within the SIPAM area in Napo

Activity Description:

; conservation and sustainable use activities, capacity building, and value chain strengthening

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
SIPAM Chakra Amazonica -Carlos Julio Arosemena Tola, Napo	-1.0583	-77.6331	

Location Description:

Communities within the SIPAM area in Napo;

Activity Description:

conservation and sustainable use activities, capacity building, and value chain strengthening

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Parque Nacional Sumaco - Napo Galeras, Napo	-1.500	-77.6500	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

In situ conservation activities, wild species inventories, and monitoring

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Reserva Biológica Colonso Chalupas, Napo	-1.0250	-77.7100	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

In situ conservation activities, wild species inventories, and monitoring

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Parque Nacional Llanganates, Napo	-1.0985	-78.2176	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

In situ conservation activities, wild species inventories, and monitoring

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	GEFID10855_2025PIR_FAO_Ecuador