

Implementation Plan of Recommendations

Project Title and Reference No.: Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico GEF ID 4883

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	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)	WHAT WILL BE DONE?	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	REPOSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY
1. Consider a direct alignment between institutional indicators and project indicators so key partners see the relevance and direct benefits of engaging with the project as thoroughly as possible. Given the involvement of multiple actors in project implementation, it can easily be perceived as another institution's project, but if there are direct linkages to performance and other indicators, the interest	Yes	Since this evaluation report was written UNEP has already made great strides to implement an institutional system for programmatic project coherence under PCPs. The first step for any new project is to assess its alignment with PCP in a mapping exercise that is validated by CAG and includes the project's contribution to UNEP's PoW indicators. Following that, project design has to continue along these lines during its development and implementation, aligning its own indicators not only to GEF's core indicators but also to UNEP's PoW. Hence it can be said that the recommendation to 'consider a direct alignment between project and	Immediate	All UNEP TM for new projects.

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and participation could be enhanced.		institutional indicators' has already been met.		
2. Define a long-term strategy to maintain and expand the data and monitoring system. The project developed important information and tools that continue to provide relevant support to local communities as well as PA managers and staff. Stakeholders at all levels would benefit from more taxonomic studies to guide and inform environmental planning, conservation and sustainable use.	Partially	This is a recommendation for project partners. UNEP does not have the wherewithal to implement this, but it can engage and follow up with GoM authorities and the executing partners to assess if data and monitoring systems for Biodiversity are still being implemented in the country as a consequence of the project.	Second half of 2024	National partners in cooperation with TM and national officer
3. Replicate and scale-up the pilot projects. For example, there is interest in replicating workshops on ecosystem services planning and management: "designing and establishing a	Partially	This is a recommendation for project partners. UNEP on its own does not have the means to do replications, but it can certainly follow up with GoM authorities to assess if replication of lessons, tools and methodologies are being implemented and if and what the GoM and competent authorities as	Second half of 2024	National partners in cooperation with TM and national officer

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campaign for them to be disseminated, carrying out awareness actions through didactic and informative material related to the maintenance of ecosystem services and that can be delivered to the ejido, municipal authorities, indigenous governors, with NGOs and agencies of the environmental sector, to ensure continuity of this process.”		well as the executing partners including WWF are doing in this regard.		
4. GEF and UN Environment need to ensure that the financial accounting and reporting systems of collaborating international agencies are compatible. This issue should be appraised at the design stage and a mitigation strategy devised. The differing budget lines, formats and	NO	It is unnecessary but also impossible to create a perfect alignment between the accounting systems of different agencies. Each agency may have their own internal lines and formats, but this is up to them. But this does not mean that they can't be compatible. Furthermore, the executing agency is obliged to report expenditures in UNEP's budget lines and formats as agreed in the PCA and assessed	N/A	N/A

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accounting criteria used by the UNEP and WWF systems generated additional workload demands, led to delays and lowered project efficiency as documented in this report.		during the inception of the project. Finally, the necessary coaching for reporting in the online management tool is performed consequently as well.		

The following is a summary of lessons learned from some of the project’s experiences and based upon explicit findings of the review. They briefly describe the context from which the lessons are derived, and the potential for wider application:

Lesson Learned #1:	A project aligned with national policies and priorities requires continuous monitoring of this relationship to facilitate solving problems that arise during implementation and solving the needs of interested parties. This allows precise adaptive measures to be taken, especially in times of government changes and associated personnel turn-over and budget cuts, or in times of a pandemic. (Relevance)
Context/comment:	We concur. All projects struggle with the continuous changes of scenario including the rotation of authorities which are sometimes associated to strong variation in political will to support policies. This project applied adaptive management throughout its implementation and managed to navigate difficult circumstances including turn-over in staff and authorities, significant budget cuts in the environment sector of Mexico and a global pandemic.
Lesson Learned #2:	The use of participatory work methodologies made it possible to design a capacity development strategy that addressed the main needs, problems, and solutions for target groups. Periodic training of CONANP’s team allows them to develop and maintain skills that enable them to better monitor PA

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	and generate long-term sustainable conservation practices. Maintaining basic information such as the identification and monitoring of indicator species is extremely important for the management of PA, considering that their main objective is the environmental care of the site.
Context/comment:	We concur. Fortunately, CONANP works with a system of regional chapters that specialize in their respective areas and as such the project worked closely with the Chihuahua CONANP office fostering local capacities and monitoring.
Lesson Learned #3:	M&E and knowledge management systems, including the use of online applications to store and exchange project documentation, made it possible to generate a bank of project documentation, stored online in the PTS website. This is useful to ensure sustainability of the implemented actions or promoting their replication. The website stores technical documents, packages of technical recommendations, field manuals, a bank of good practices videos, infographics and training methodologies, among others. In particular, Geographic Information Systems are an effective tool for monitoring and planning a variety of themes: Adding basic information to the geographic information systems allows stakeholders to visualize the ecological connectivity of the region. The development of cartographic information that connects the spatial with the ecological and social, demonstrates the great capacity of the region for the development of various activities.
Context/comment:	<p>We concur. The project produced a large number of tools and materials in addition to the biodiversity assessments, science base and GIS system. It was ensured that all this remains accessible after the project ended ensuring the institutional maintenance of the website: https://www.tarahumarasustentable.mx/</p> <p>It provides open access to all relevant information from the project, including outputs, an interactive map and a vast repository of tools and publications generated by the project as well as useful links and contacts for service to users. This important tool ensures sustainability of results and impact for stakeholders and the public in general and brings together aspects that had not been addressed in a comprehensive and associated manner before, such as the scientific base for sustainable field productivity, ecosystem services and biodiversity monitoring/conservation, local environmental governance and practical application in field trials and projects that can be applied by communities and producers as well as a wide range of practitioners.</p>
Lesson Learned #4:	Engaging bachelor's, master's and doctoral students is a cost-effective option for continuous monitoring of species, development of alternative practices and impact.

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Context/comment:	We concur. The project was effective to make the link with different academic specializations in conjunction with practical applications in the field as well as governance aspects for communities.
Lesson Learned #5:	In the implementation of the pilot projects: Take care of the relationship with the people of the communities (producers, ejidatarias, community members). Respect the forms of organization and participation of the ejidos. Respect the ways of working of those who participate. Recognize and value the knowledge of the participants. Generate people's interest in the results of the project. Consider external factors such as insecurity, climate and working conditions in the communities for planning. Find ways to adapt to extreme situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapt the instruments and inputs to the materials available in the region. Learning by doing, carrying out demonstrative work.
Context/comment:	We concur. At the onset of the project it was stated that above the immediate outcomes, it was desired that the project could contribute to breaking the patronizing patterns of government assistance and welfare to overcome the consequences of recurring drought and frost in populations of the Sierra Tarahumara remote areas, and to foster resilience and self-reliance. The dialogue and respect addressed above was an important and necessary way to create trust and ownership with the project beneficiaries, oftentimes in their native languages and following their own customs.
Lesson Learned #6:	<p>In the implementation of the pilot projects:</p> <p>In ecosystem services: promote the interest of local actors (technicians, NGOs, students) about the situation of ecosystem services, the relationship and importance that exists between ES and their economic activities. As well as addressing the lack of knowledge about ecosystem services by the inhabitants of the communities in the Tarahumara region, which has resulted in a lack of interest in the care and sustainable use of resources. Have a good starting approach and respective follow-up. Raise awareness initially about the problems in the plots in terms of loss and degradation of soil.</p> <p>In sustainable production: Explore innovative techniques such as the Keyline in rainfed agriculture, to promote the conservation of soil and water resources. promote the production and consumption of fishery products. Monitoring of the plots to measure the effectiveness of the techniques.</p> <p>In conservation practices: Document review to deepen knowledge of species of interest.</p> <p>In forest management: Monitor the survival of reforestation plants, to carry out the replacement of the plant that does not survive. Carry out exchanges of experiences in situ for better forest management practices.</p>

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Context/comment:	Agree. All these lessons constitute good practice and KM that UNEP will try to foster and that partners on the ground have taken up already, hopefully to find continuation with the existing tools with adequate outreach and the website as stated earlier.
Lesson Learned #7:	The permanent presence of the project's technical staff in Chihuahua allowed constant support for project beneficiaries, achieving their empowerment and commitment. The formalization of the commitment of landowners to create more than 70 ADVC, enhanced the project's impact (contributions in capacity development) and ensured beneficiaries' ownership and commitment to maintain BD and ES conservation practices post-project. (Participation and commitment of interested parties)
Context/comment:	Indeed, the project had a good presence starting with a clever choice of identity (logo) beyond institutions and speaking the language of the people. This is a good practice that will be continued by UNEP and partners in future projects. The fostering of local environmental governance was a key element in delivering results and sustainability for resilience and self-reliance.
Lesson Learned #8:	Promote the integration of the members of the project's technical team in other institutional spaces and new initiatives, as this will greatly contribute to the sustainability of the results achieved, as well as the strengthening of institutional technical teams. (Sustainability)
Context/comment:	Yes, when the project ends implementation and funds are no longer available, being proactive in networking and placing the capacities that were created goes a long way in fostering sustainability. UNEP's model has always been to strengthen capacities in the country rather than for the organization itself.