

Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project

“Integrating the Management of Protection and
Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the
Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico”

GEF ID 4883

2014 – 2020



UNEP ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION

APRIL 2023



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(Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity
Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico)

(GEF ID 4883)

(30/04/2023)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for UNEP by Allyson Tinney Rivera.

The reviewer would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex II.

The review team would like to thank the project team and in particular the Task Manager Mr. Robert Erath for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to members of the Project Steering Committee who took time to provide comments to the draft report. The evaluator would also like to thank representatives of CONANP, CONAFOR and SEMARNAT, as well as the Government of the State of Chihuahua.

Special acknowledgement to members of the project team who provided valuable support and insight.

The review consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of a next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Allyson Tinney Rivera is a project design and evaluation specialist with extensive experience in Latin America and the Caribbean. She has worked as a consultant for several international agencies in project development in the form of PIF, Project Document and CEO Endorsement Request elaboration as well as project evaluation through Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), Mid-term Reviews (MTR) and Terminal Reviews (TR).

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language(s): English.

Review Type: Terminal Review

Brief Description: This is a Terminal Review report of a UNEP/GEF FSP project implemented between 2014 and 2020. The project's overall development goal was to improve the sustainability of protected area systems and incorporate the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use in the productivity of the landscapes of the Sierra Tarahumara. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Sustainable Forest Management; Forest management; Forest financing; Governance; Climate Change; Ecosystem Management.

Primary data collection period: December 2022-March 2023

Field mission dates: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and security concerns in the Sierra Tarahumara, the field mission was limited to a visit to Mexico City and Chihuahua, Chihuahua to interview key stakeholders, 5-13 December 2022.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BD	Biodiversity
CDI	Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples)
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CONABIO	Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (National Commission for Information and Use of Biodiversity)
CONAFOR	Comisión Nacional Forestal (National Forestry Commission)
CONAGUA	Comisión Nacional del Agua (National Water Commission)
CONANP	Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (National Commission of Natural Protected Areas)
DM&IS	Data Monitoring and Information System
EA	Expected Accomplishment
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
GE	Green Economy
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
INPI	Instituto Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas (National Institute of Indigenous Peoples)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid Term Review
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PIAI	Programa Interinstitucional de Apoyo a los Indígenas del Estado de Chihuahua (Interinstitutional Assistance Program for the Indigenous People of the State of Chihuahua)
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMC	Project Management Cost
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee (internal UNEP committee that approves new projects)
PROCOCES	Programa de Conservación para el Desarrollo Sostenible
PRODEFOR	Programa de Desarrollo Forestal (Forestry Development Programme)
PRODESNOS	Proyecto de Desarrollo Sustentable para las Comunidades Rurales e Indígenas del Noroeste Semiárido (Sustainable Development Project for Rural and Indigenous Communities in the Semiarid Northwest)
ProDoc	Project Document (must be reviewed by PRC before any project can be undertaken, with the approval of the managing division director)
PRONAFOR	Programa Nacional Forestal (National Forestry Programme)
PROVICOM	Programa de Vigilancia Comunitaria (Community Surveillance Programme)
PSA	Pago por Servicios Ambientales (Payment for Environmental Services)

PSAH	Programa para Servicios Ambientales Hidrológicos (National Programme for Hydrological Environmental Services)
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SC	Sustainable Consumption
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDESOL	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (federal Secretariat of Social Development)
SEMARNAT	Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources)
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SINAP	Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (National Protected Areas System)
SMART (indicators)	Specific; Measurable; Achievable and Attributable; Relevant and Realistic; Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted
SMO	Sierra Madre Occidental
SP	Strategic Programme
ST	Sierra Tarahumara
ST-DM&IS	Sierra Tarahumara Data Monitoring and Information System
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TR	Terminal Review
UACH	Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua
UACJ	Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez)
UMAFOR	Unidad de Manejo Forestal (Forest Management Unit)
UMA	Unidad de Manejo para la Conservación de la Vida Silvestre (Wildlife Conservation Management Unit)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Project Summary

UNEP Sub-programme:	2018-19 – Subprogram 3 – Healthy & Productive Ecosystems	UNEP Division/Branch:	Ecosystems Division
Expected Accomplishment(s):	EA(b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making	Programme of Work Output(s):	POW 2014-15 POW 2018-19
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	SDG1, SDG2, SDG3, SDG5, SDG6, SDG8, SDG13, SDG 15, SDG17		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7)	1, 3, 4 and 11 (N.B. current data combines the area for indicators 3 and 4, and 11 is not disaggregated by gender).		
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

FROM THE PROJECT'S PIR REPORT (use latest version) :

Project Title:	Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico
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Executing Agency:	Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP)
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Project partners:	World Wildlife Fund Mexico (WWF)
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Geographical Scope:	National
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Participating Countries:	Mexico
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GEF project ID:	4883	Umoja number*¹:	GFL/5060-2711-4C62
Focal Area(s):	BD	GEF OP #:	BD-1 and BD-2
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	BD1 and BD2	GEF approval date*:	3 April 2014
UNEP approval date:	13 June 2014	Date of first disbursement*:	30 July 2014
Actual start date²:	30 July 2014	Planned duration:	60 months

¹ Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer.

Intended completion date*:	June 2019	Actual or Expected completion date:	December 2020
Project Type:	FSP	GEF Allocation*:	USD 4,900,000
PPG GEF cost*:	USD 100,000	PPG co-financing*:	USD 200,000
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	USD 40,036,159	Total Cost*:	USD 45,236,159 (with PPG included)
Mid-term Review/eval. (planned date):	May 2018	Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	4th quarter 2021
Mid-term Review/eval. (actual date):	May 2018	No. of revisions*:	7
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	13 November 2020	Date of last Revision*:	9 July 2020
Disbursement as of 30 June [year]*:	USD 4,864,959.17	Date of planned financial closure*:	April 2022
Date of planned completion^{3*}:	December 2020	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021⁴:	USD 4,864,959.17
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December 2020	USD 34,796,628.27	Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 31 December [year]*:	
Leveraged financing:⁵	USD 1,385,071.77		

² Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases where a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.

³ If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.

⁴ Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Project Manager.

⁵ See above note on co-financing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico” was approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in April 2014 and countersigned by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the National Executing Agency the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for a duration of 5 years (2014-2019). UNEP provided technical guidance in its capacity as designated implementing agency. The Project is a Full-sized Project (FSP) with a total budget of \$44,936,159 USD comprised of GEF financing of \$4,900,000 USD (11%) and a mix of cash and in-kind co-financing from third parties of \$40,036,159 USD (89%). The Project was granted two no-cost extensions for a total of 20 months, shifting its Official End date to 30 April 2022 (including the administrative closure).
2. The Project Objective is “to integrate biodiversity conservation considerations into the management of protection and production areas in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico, through the development and implementation of a participatory strategy that engages communities, government and NGOs.”
3. The project is comprised of four components, the first three of which are technical in nature: 1. Scientific base and tools for decision making; 2. Environmental governance framework and policy alignment for ecosystem management; 3. Pilot-scale interventions; 4. Project monitoring and evaluation.

This Review

4. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies on Conducting Evaluations, this Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken upon technical completion of the Project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes:
 - i. to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements;
 - ii. to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF, the National Executing Agencies and the national partners.
5. In accordance with the terms of reference for the TE, the evaluation includes a review of the project context, project design quality, a stakeholders’ analysis, a reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC) of the project, and the evaluation framework.

Key findings

6. The evaluation found the project to have strategic relevance to national and global environmental objectives. **Mexico** is the fourth most biodiverse country in the world and is home to an estimated 12% of the world’s species as well as a place of origin/domestication of food of global importance. The project sought to integrate biodiversity conservation considerations into the management of protection and production areas in the Sierra Tarahumara, which is associated to global goals of the U.N. Convention for the Conservation of Biodiversity (UNCBD). The project design supported GEF 5’s Focal Area Strategies and Strategic Programs for conserving biodiversity (BD 1- Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems and BD 2 - Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors). The project was also aligned with UNEP’s Sub-

programme for Environmental Governance, a focal area of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-17 and Programme of Work (POW).

Finding 1: The Project's approach (mainstreaming biodiversity in local planning and environmental management, informed by the identification and monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services at the landscape level) was innovative and ensured good participation and appropriation from local stakeholders, especially ejidos, Indigenous Peoples (IP) and NGOs.

Finding 2: The project objectives and strategies are aligned with policies and plans of GEF, UN Environment and national public institutions.

Finding 3: Given the strategic importance of the STR to CONANP's conservation efforts, the project provides a number of relevant tools to PA management, BD monitoring and engagement of communities in the buffer zones/ areas of influence.

Finding 4: The Project was well designed with a good vertical and horizontal logic, SMART indicators and M&E plan, inclusion of stakeholders and consideration of social and environmental impacts for project beneficiaries. The indicators were presented at the output level, which were aggregated at the outcome and objective levels. Some outputs did not fully reflect the activities to generate these.

Finding 5: Major contextual events were the ongoing security issues related to narcotraffickers and illegal loggers, accompanied by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. These caused major operational challenges for the Project with respect to working in certain areas of the STR and resulted in activity delays for which a project extension was awarded.

Finding 6: Administration changes in government institutions at all levels constitute an external factor that influenced project implementation. The project adapted its management strategically by involving new authorities. National government changes resulted in variable support from national government institutions with regards to availability of personnel and cofinancing.

Finding 7: The Project achieved the vast majority of its planned outputs, both in quantity and quality. A few outputs surpassed the target value for its indicator, while a few fell short. A few outputs were achieved differently than planned because the Project activities were adapted to changes in the external context.

Finding 8: Key stakeholders at the local level and service providers were appropriately involved in the generation of outputs and this contributed to the quality and sustainability of results.

Finding 9: The Project outcomes and impact have benefitted all stakeholder groups.

Finding 10: Most assumptions included in the Project Results Framework held, particularly the willingness of local stakeholders to participate in the initiatives.

Finding 11: The financial management of the project was conducted according to the budget planning throughout the implementation period and followed financial and operational standards of UN Environment. Financial reporting was correct, timely and transparent.

Finding 12: The reporting and availability of cofinancing by partner institutions was varied, resulting in a decrease in overall cofinancing levels to 7:1 compared to the 8:1 at CEO Endorsement.

Finding 13: The Project collaborated effectively with several national and local initiatives implemented by a variety of institutions, academia and NGOs.

Finding 14. The Project had a serious delay in its implementation, caused insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Project was extended for more than one year. In practice, this ensured the satisfactory finalization of outputs and generation of outcomes. The Project extension did not affect financing and the Project was overall cost-effective.

Finding 15: Since the Project was implemented during a relatively long period of time (6 years), it had to adapt to several contextual factors, including a change in government and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Project management adapted adequately to these changes.

Finding 16. The Project is supported by a detailed Monitoring & Evaluation plan, including reporting requirements, risk monitoring and a dedicated budget. Indicators are well designed for project monitoring at the output level.

Finding 17. The Project's M&E plan was operational and informed project management and technical reporting adequately. Progress reporting was done in a timely manner, through annual Project Implementation Reviews and Quarterly Expenditure Reports.

Finding 18. The social and political basis for conservation and mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services in landscape planning and management has increased in the project area. This constitutes a strong basis for sustaining project results and progress towards impacts.

Finding 19. The continuation and replicability of many project results is dependent on continued financial resources. There are public and private institutions committed to providing continued technical support and monitoring, but ongoing funding is needed. There is insufficient consolidation of a financial strategy and corresponding mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

Finding 20. The institutional sustainability at the municipal and ejido level has been strengthened and constitutes a positive enabling environment for sustaining project results. At the state and national level, while there is expressed institutional interest to support the onward progress of impact at scale, the coordination and collaboration networks are not optimal, due in part to administrative changes in personnel and budget cuts.

Finding 21. The Project was managed professionally with high quality, committed PMU staff. Initial hiring was delayed, but eventually resolved.

Finding 22. The project governance relied on a Project Steering Committee that was limited to UNEP, CONANP and WWF staff, with occasional input from CONAFOR. The PSC met annually at first and then almost monthly after the MTR, resulting in effective decision-making for the Project.

Finding 23. UN Environment backstopping, particularly by the Task Manager, was effective and welcomed by the project team and partner agencies.

Finding 24. Stakeholder participation at the local level (municipalities) and partners in execution (NGOs, academia, service providers) was good and strengthened during project execution. Participation and cooperation with national level partners was a challenge due to changes in administration and the ensuing personnel turn-over and budget cuts. Project beneficiaries were progressively included in project implementation and their engagement increased through transparent information provision and effective benefit generation.

Finding 25. While the Project did not have a clear gender strategy, in practice, it did involve and empower women and youth. It was also pro-active in engaging the Indigenous Peoples that live and work in the STR, many of whom became strategic allies for the project.

Finding 26. The project’s communication strategy was effective as it included various media for disseminating project information in Spanish and local languages via radio, printed material and virtual tools (www.tarahumarasustentable.mx).

Conclusions

- Based on the findings from this review, the overall project performance is rated as “Satisfactory” and the project demonstrates successful impact at the landscape level (see Table 1 below). The project has demonstrated strong performance in the areas of Relevance and Effectiveness. The project would have benefited from further attention to Financial Sustainability.

Table 1: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	HS
Quality of Project Design	S
Nature of External Context	MU
Effectiveness	S (HS)*
Financial Management	S
Efficiency	S
Monitoring and Reporting	S
Sustainability	ML
Factors Affecting Performance	S
Overall Project Performance Rating	S

*The Reviewer’s Effectiveness rating of ‘Highly Satisfactory’ was validated by the Evaluation Office at the ‘Satisfactory’ level

- The Project was conceptually and strategically well designed, with a few minor weaknesses. The Project goal and strategies were highly relevant for the participating institutions at the national, state and local levels as well as for the donor execution agencies. The Project’s approach (mainstreaming biodiversity in local planning and environmental management, informed by the identification and monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services at the landscape level) was innovative and ensured good participation and appropriation from local stakeholders, especially *ejidos*, Indigenous Peoples (IP) and NGOs. Important outcomes were achieved in terms of local environmental planning, monitoring systems, pilot interventions, and the implementation of a Regional Action Plan that mainstreamed BD and ES criteria. The outcomes led to a comprehensive data and monitoring system, initial positive impact on biodiversity conservation, improved soil management and generation of environmental services. While this is still at the pilot/local level, there is an enabling environment for replication and scaling throughout the Sierra Tarahumara and beyond.
- Project execution was efficient although there were delays in hiring the PMU and in activities due to the external context. This led to a no-cost project extension, which ultimately helped to consolidate project outcomes. The Project was well managed by a highly professional project team that successfully interacted with stakeholders at all levels to achieve the expected outputs. The strong participation of local stakeholders and the high-quality technical products were key factors for the success of the Project. The Project experienced some challenges to align with and ensure optimal engagement of national level stakeholders due to turn-over of personnel and budget cuts in CONANP. Despite this, many outputs were achieved jointly and national institutions are committed to the project’s sustainability.

10. The Sustainability of the project's results is rated as "Moderately Likely." The financial sustainability and institutional sustainability are only moderately likely because of a lack of a financial strategy, economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and institutional constraints that were outside of the project's control. Monitoring and reporting was done well, although the Project was weak in monitoring social aspects. The Project benefitted many different stakeholder groups and included women, IP and youth but this was not measured or reported sufficiently.

11. Based on the findings of the Project, the reviewer draws the following specific conclusions:

Conclusion 1. The project approach (landscape-level conservation, decentralized management, sustainability mainstreaming) is a relevant innovation for various levels of government and society.

Conclusion 2. The project objectives and strategies are aligned with policies and plans of GEF, UN Environment and national public institutions.

Conclusion 3. The Project was well designed with a good vertical and horizontal logic, SMART indicators with End-of-Project Targets and M&E plan, inclusion of stakeholders and consideration of social and environmental impacts for project beneficiaries. Learning, Communication and Outreach aspects are clearly described, as well as Efficiency and Financial Planning and Budgeting.

Conclusion 4. The Project took 17 months to establish a complete PMU and be fully operational, which affected the achievement of outputs in the first half of the project. To compensate for this and the delays due to COVID restrictions at project end, the Project was extended for more than one year. In practice, this ensured the satisfactory finalization of outputs and generation of outcomes. The Project extension did not affect financing and the Project was cost-effective overall.

Conclusion 5. The Project satisfactorily generated a large number of diverse outputs, some to a higher degree than planned. Some of the outputs were generated differently as planned, which was a result of adequate adaptive management. These outputs contributed similarly to the outcomes. The collaboration with local governments and the involvement of a large number of other stakeholders (academia, service providers, beneficiaries) was a key factor for the generation of quality outputs. A well implemented communication strategy that included local languages resulted not only in the dissemination of outputs to a wide audience but also helped to increase capacities of project beneficiaries.

Conclusion 6. Since the Project was implemented during a relatively long period of time (6 years), it had to adapt to several governmental changes and contextual factors, including the COVID pandemic. The Project management adapted adequately to these changes.

Conclusion 7. The Project is supported by a detailed and well-arranged monitoring and evaluation plan, including reporting requirements, risk monitoring and a dedicated budget. Indicators are well designed for project monitoring at the output level. The Project's M&E system informed project management and technical reporting adequately. Progress reporting was done in a timely manner, through annual Project Implementation Reviews and Quarterly Expenditure Reports. Monitoring included two gender indicators but limited to % involvement, rather than number of individuals.

Conclusion 8. The Project engaged local project partner agencies and beneficiaries (municipalities, NGOs, academia, producers, land owners) in an effective manner with project activities, which was key to generating results. In the pilot projects, a diversity of good practices was generated, with the following characteristics: effective, replicable, innovative, appropriate to the educational context, comprehensive, sustainable. Although the participation of national and regional level public agencies has been continuous during

the Project and important joint activities have been implemented, their engagement has been a continuous challenge for the Project.

Recommendations

Recommendation 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 and participation could be enhanced.

Recommendation 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.

Recommendation 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 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."

Recommendation 4: GEF and UNEP 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 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.

Validation by the UNEP Evaluation Office

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the UNEP-GEF project "Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua" set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have been adjusted as a result. For example, the rating for Effectiveness has been adjusted from 'Highly satisfactory' to 'Satisfactory'. The overall project performance, however, was validated at the '**Satisfactory**' level.

I. INTRODUCTION

12. This document presents the report of the Terminal Review (TR) of the UN Environment (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) project “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico” (GEF ID 4883) that was approved by GEF in April 2014 and countersigned by UN Environment and the National Executing Agency the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for a duration of 5 years (2014-2019).
13. In line with the UN Environment Evaluation Policy⁶ and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies on Conducting Evaluations⁷, this Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken upon technical completion of the Project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes:
 - (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements;
 - (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF, the National Executing Agencies and the national partners.
14. A key aim of the TR is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. Therefore, the target audience for the results of this review are UNEP staff related to GEF projects and the evaluation office. Among project stakeholders were WWF, the participating government institutions (CONANP and CONAFOR) and municipalities in the project intervention sites. Others included project partners (Non-Governmental Organizations - NGO, research partners, service providers) and beneficiaries (producers in the intervention areas). Most recommendations to ensure the sustainability of project results and progress towards long term impacts target the responsible governmental agencies at different levels, as well as local beneficiaries. Finally, the executing agency and other partners in the implementation will benefit from the results of this review for their future initiatives.
15. The review was executed during December 2022 – April 2023, by an external review consultant, Allyson Tinney Rivera (hereafter referred to as "the reviewer"). In December, an inception report was developed, containing a thorough review of the project context and its project design quality, the review framework and a tentative review schedule⁸. During inception, initial conversations were held with the WWF Project Management Team and the UNEP Task Manager to plan for the data gathering of the review. In-person interviews for data-gathering were held from 4 to 13 December 2022 in Mexico (Mexico City and Chihuahua City), and complemented by additional (online) interviews in December and January.

⁶ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114>

⁷ https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022-05/EN_GEF_E_C62_Inf.02_GEF_Program_Evaluation_Guidelines_May23_2022.pdf

⁸ The Inception report is available at the UN Environment Evaluation Office.

II. REVIEW METHODS

16. In accordance with the TOR, a participatory approach was used, where key stakeholders at the national, state and local levels were met, when possible, during the country visit. A field visit to the pilot initiatives was not foreseen, due to safety concerns, so stakeholders from the pilot site communities travelled to Chihuahua City to share their experiences. Quantitative and qualitative methods and indicators were used. As such, quantitative Outputs were assessed against their quality and effectiveness to determine their capacity to drive and sustain changes at the Objective level. This was possible by supplementing the documents provided (reports, etc.) with personal interviews with the stakeholders.
17. Project implementation has been influenced by the overall political climate of the country, and security climate of the state, which is passing through a delicate phase. As such, access to certain stakeholder groups experienced some limitations and a frank dialogue between different perspectives was sometimes difficult.
18. The TR included seven phases comprised of various methods and tools, as follows:
 - *Inception stage.* During inception, the reviewer focused on familiarizing with the project, planning the review process and developing the exact review questions to inform the present report. This included an initial revision of the project design documents, the MTR report and Project Implementation Review (PIR). Furthermore, initial conversations were held with the PMU and executing and implementing agencies (WWF and UNEP) about the scope and logistics of the review. An inception report was presented as a result of this stage.
 - *Revision of Documents.* The reviewer undertook a thorough review of the available documentation. The PMU provided all project-related documents and the reviewer complemented this with third-party documents. The various types of documents provided information for different review criteria and questions. The documents that were consulted include the following (see Annex III for a complete list):
 - Documents posted in the UN Environment platform ANUBIS, particularly the Project Document and its Annexes, including the Logical Framework and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Project Budget and revisions, Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) and GEF Tracking Tools, Steering Committee minutes and reports, consultants' technical reports and other technical documents, Project Final report.
 - The Report of the Mid-Term Review of the project.
 - UN Environment and GEF-5 policies, strategies and programs at the time of the project's approval, including national and regional Projects
 - *Stakeholder Interviews.* The reviewer made a series of semi-structured interviews with a representative number of stakeholders. During inception, the EA delivered a list of 35 stakeholders. This list was revised and complemented in agreement with the PMU and EA and based on this, a final list was made aimed at establishing a complete list of key informants (project managers, IA, steering committee members, focal points in public agencies, local champions and beneficiaries) and a representation of all stakeholders.

An in-country visit included meetings with relevant project participants in Mexico City and Chihuahua City. Meetings were held with the Project Coordinator, the Project Director (CONANP), the Project Team (long- and short-term consultants and CONANP Technical Officers), the Direction of Indigenous People, WWF, and with the following external stakeholders: CONAFOR, Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua, and others. Furthermore, representatives from the pilot sites, where the Project developed the

field/pilot experiences for Component 3 were interviewed. The visit was organised by the Project Team and WWF and took place 4-13 December 2022.

In total, 32 people were interviewed (12 women). These consisted of (see Annex II for full list):

- UN Environment Task Manager (TM) (on-line interview).
- Project management team; (one-on-one and in group).
- UN Environment Programme Assistant based in Panama UN Env. Office (on-line interview).
- Project partners, including WWF, CONANP, CONAFOR, SEDESOL, UACH and others. Some of them were interviewed in-person individually as well as in group meetings.
- In-person interviews with individuals and group meetings with stakeholders from the Pilot Sites, including Local Authorities, Ejido and Indigenous Leaders and Groups.
- Other relevant stakeholders and/or resource persons related to Indigenous Organizations, Forestry Associations, and other productive group associations.

The evaluation interviews were based on questions drawn from the criteria that are listed in the ToRs. The reviewer streamlined the interviews by clustering questions around the fundamental issues of interest. Throughout this review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All other information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.

- *Field Observations.* Several project progress and performance indicators could have been validated through visits to the intervention areas of the Project, with direct observations and conversations with the local beneficiaries. However, due to security restrictions, the reviewer could not visit any of the project intervention sites, thus, in agreement with the IA, EA and PMU, in-person and online interviews were conducted with local stakeholders (e.g., Local Authorities, Ejido and Indigenous Leaders) to validate the general narrative of these sites.
- *Processing and Validation of Data.* Once the data was gathered from the document review, and stakeholder interviews were completed, this information was organized according to the criteria and review questions. The in-country visit was followed by a “triangulation” of findings collected from the desk review, interviews with national executing partners and the UN Task Manager, and focal points from targeted beneficiaries. The purpose was to systematize stakeholder perceptions of project performance, complement these with the reported “hard” data on output and budget delivery, and articulate a set of preliminary findings that were gradually developed into substantive findings, lessons and recommendations based on the evaluation criteria in the ToRs. Information that supported indicators was compared with the project reporting on these indicators in order to validate the reported information. In the cases where the data from certain interviews demonstrated a trend of coincidence and complementarity, this was used directly to sustain findings. In the cases where this did not coincide, information was validated through a process of corroboration (with the PMU and partner agencies) or triangulation (with additional sources of information).
- *Elaboration of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.* Based on the data compiled during the information gathering phases and its processing, the reviewer identified preliminary findings. Each finding was a partial answer to the review questions and is strictly evidence-based (data found during information gathering). On March 24, initial

findings were presented to the IA, EA and PMU. Based on the feedback received, the reviewer refined the final findings and the conclusions of the review. The conclusions sustain the rating of review criteria according to the scale mentioned in the Terms of Reference (TOR). As final elements of the review, and referring to findings and conclusions, the reviewer identified a series of lessons and recommendations. The lessons learned during the execution of the Project are good (or not-so-good) practices in the design, implementation, governance or in the context of the Project that are worth being considered in future similar projects. The recommendations are directed towards agencies of implementation and execution and refer to the immediate corrective actions, future activities or recommendable practices to increase the sustainability of the project outcomes, the probability of achieving the impact or replication in another geographical area or at an increased scale.

- *Report Development and Revision.* In line with the ToR for this review, the reviewer submitted a draft report to the UNEP task manager, who reviewed it and shared the cleared draft report with the Project Manager and Task Manager, for them to identify any factual errors or substantive omissions. Comments were shared with the reviewer for his response and a subsequent draft shared with all those who had been interviewed for any further comments and/or corrections of facts.
19. There were few limitations to the implementation of this TR. The IA, EA and PMU have been collaborative and transparent in terms of providing the reviewer with all required information in a timely manner and all stakeholders have been open to being interviewed. Nevertheless, there were three minor limitations during the process: (i) Due to delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the terminal review was scheduled 2 years after the project's closure. While this strengthened the *ex-post* perspective, it did present some challenges in terms of organizing logistics and contacting (past) staff. Fortunately, this was easily mitigated by the availability of senior members of the PMU. Ultimately, the time that had lapsed helped the reviewer to understand the degree to which Outcomes and Outputs had been consolidated, providing insight into their sustainability. (ii) The current security issues in the general area of the project intervention sites prevented site visits. This was mitigated by the PMU's ability to bring a representative number of stakeholders who were involved at different levels in each of the three technical components to Chihuahua City for in-person interviews. (iii) Mexico's federal and state administration changed during and after project implementation and therefore, several agency staff had changed. Despite the turnover of institutional partners, this was mitigated by interviewing, where possible, both previous and current staff. The reviewer believes that the limitations did not affect the reliability and usefulness of the TR, rather the cohort of stakeholders interviewed were suitably representative and the gathered information was sufficient to develop substantial findings for the TR.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

20. Mexico is the fourth most biodiverse in the world and is home to an estimated 12% of the world's species. These include an estimated 544 species of terrestrial and marine mammals (second only to Indonesia and Brazil), 804 species of reptiles, between 300,000 and 425,000 estimated species of insects and 23,522 known species of plants. The country is the richest in the world in terms of reptile species, the second in terms of mammal species and the fourth in terms of amphibians and plants. An estimated 32% of the national vertebrate fauna is endemic to the country and 52% is endemic to Mesoamerica.
21. The Sierra Tarahumara is a mountainous area of approximately 60,000 km² located in the Sierra Madre Occidental (SMO) in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. With less than 1% of old growth forest, the IUCN recognizes its temperate dryland forest ecosystems, together with the pine-oak forest of the SMO as one of the most endangered of the world. Still, the Sierra Tarahumara represents the largest forested area in Mexico. It contains the headwaters of the most ecologically and culturally important rivers in northern Mexico (Rivers Yaqui, Mayo, Fuerte, as well as the Río Conchos that drains into the Río Bravo along the Mexico – U.S. border). Water originating in the Sierra Tarahumara irrigates more than 600,000 hectares of agricultural land in the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa. Thus, the Sierra Tarahumara is key to ensuring stable water supplies that support vibrant ecological and healthy human communities downstream. The Sierra Tarahumara hosts a number of species in the categories of endangered as well as threatened, including several on the global IUCN Red List, some of which are endemic to the region. As such they have been listed under the respective risk categories in the Official Mexican Norm NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010 for environmental protection of Mexican Flora and Fauna native species.
22. Approximately 270,000 people live in the Sierra Tarahumara, the vast majority of which are in rural communities that are extremely poor and marginalized. Of these, nearly 150,000 are of indigenous origin. This remote region is composed of 17 geopolitical divisions called municipalities, 9 of which are considered amongst the most highly marginalized in the country, according to UN indicators. The subsequent layer of geopolitical organization are *ejidos*⁹ and indigenous communities. Indigenous communities now share their former territory with mestizos that were granted *ejido* lands in this vast territory.
23. According to the Project Document (ProDoc), problems in the Sierra Tarahumara relate to the unsustainable extraction of natural resources, the main source of income for its residents until the recent rise of tourism. Mining, timber extraction and cattle grazing have been the most important economic activities for at least the past century, while tourism has increased its importance since the 1980s. These activities, combined with limited and poor integration of community and land use planning into decision-making, and incipient access to dispersed funds from government sector support projects that promote alternative uses of the natural resource base, represent the most salient threats to the Sierra's biodiversity.

⁹ *Ejidos* are communal forms of land tenure created after the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the agrarian reform process that derived from it.

24. In addition to the pressure on biodiversity and habitats, the present development patterns also mean an increase in demand on ecosystem services, principally water. A growth in extractive activities and tourism has resulted in higher demand for water, competing for water use with the already stressed aquatic ecosystems. Inappropriate overall planning has already impacted water supplies. Instead of improving current water delivery and treatment systems and creating incentives for increased water efficiency, government agencies (municipal and state governments and water authorities) tend to simply extract more water from streams or springs until these are depleted and then move on to the next source.
25. The country has, nonetheless, made significant advances to protect its biological diversity through the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) and other policy and regulatory instruments. The setting of a conceptual, institutional and regulatory framework to address this is at the core of the formulation and implementation of the current Project “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico”.
26. The project is aligned with the GEF’s efforts to support countries to meet their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It is consistent with GEF-5 Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Objective BD-1: “Improved Sustainability of Protected Area Systems” through its Outcome 1.1 Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas, resulting in Output 1.1 New protected areas mosaic within 300,000 ha¹⁰ of unprotected ecosystems will be supported by fostering the establishment of voluntary areas for conservation as an integral part of the land use planning at the community-landscape level and incorporating these into state and local planning instruments, including their insertion into CONANP’S national system of protected areas; and Output 1.2 New coverage of 12 unprotected threatened species¹¹.
27. The project is also aligned with Strategic Objective BD-2: “Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors” through Outcome 2.1 Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation, resulting in Output 2.1 Policies and regulatory frameworks for 2 production sectors¹²; and Outcome 2.2 Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks, resulting in Output 2.2 1 One regional land-use plan (Regional Action Plan) and one land-use plan for each participating municipality that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation; and Output 2.3 Certified production landscapes mosaic within 300,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems. Ultimately, the project is designed to achieve tangible global environmental benefits for biodiversity in a pilot landscape of 300,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems, where new protected areas covering at least 30,000 hectares and BD and ES conservation and restoration projects covering 150,000 hectares will increase the connectivity of critical habitats, interspersed with productive areas that include 70,000 hectares of certified forest management areas and 120 local pilot projects for BD and ES friendly production covering 48,000 hectares.

¹⁰ This ProDoc-target of 300,000 hectares is a modification of the 400,000 hectares PIF-target.

¹¹ In the present scenario key species in the project area are registered as threatened and requiring attention but their habitats are not protected.

¹² Strictly “production” sectors targeted by the project are Agriculture (SAGARPA) and Forestry (CONAFOR). The mining sector is also associated with land use change but is not a main project target. Other sectors involved include Environment (SEMARNAT, CONANP), Water (CONAGUA) and Social (CDI, SEDESOL) which are critical but may not be classified as “production” sectors.

28. The Project is consistent with Aichi targets 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11-15, 18 and 19.
29. The Project contributes to UN Environment Sub-Programme Environmental Governance: “The capacity of States to implement their environmental obligations and achieve their environmental priority goals, targets and objectives through strengthened laws and institutions is enhanced”, namely through the Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017, Expected Accomplishment 1 (Coherence and synergies: the United Nations system and the multilateral environmental agreements, respecting the mandate of each entity, demonstrate increasing coherence and synergy of actions on environmental issues) and Expected Accomplishment 2 (Law: the capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced).

B. Objectives and components

30. The Project Objective is “to integrate biodiversity conservation considerations into the management of protection and production areas in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico, through the development and implementation of a participatory strategy that engages communities, government and NGOs.”
31. The project is comprised of three technical components followed by a 4th component for project monitoring. The following table presents each Component and its respective Outputs and expected Outcomes as outlined in the Logical Framework of the Project:

Table 1: Project Components, Outputs and Outcomes

Component	Outcome	Outputs
1. Scientific base and tools for decision making	1. Management plans and decision making processes of key stakeholders involved in the biodiversity conservation management of the Sierra Tarahumara utilize the project’s diagnostic tools and data bases.	<p>Output 1.1: Sierra Tarahumara Data Monitoring and Information System (DM&IS) to support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making developed, including a comprehensive GIS based bioassessment reporting mechanism (thematic layers adapted in pilots).</p> <p>Output 1.2: Sierra Tarahumara Biodiversity and Environment Assessment to support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making realized.</p> <p>Output 1.3: Awareness and capacity building program implemented for local, state and federal level stakeholders within the project area, to engage and enable them in the use of data bases and tools produced under outputs 1.1 and 1.2.</p> <p>Output 1.4 Institutional, financial and technical assistance follow up program for stakeholders using the ST-DM&IS implemented.</p>
2. Environmental governance framework and policy alignment for ecosystem management	2. The environmental governance of the Sierra Tarahumara region improves in responsiveness to key issues for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services supply following a Regional Action Plan (RAP) that incorporates biodiversity criteria, funding commitments, evaluation	<p>Output 2.1: Coordination mechanism of federal, state and municipal authorities with local communities and non governmental actors for the development and implementation of the Regional Action Plan designed and established.</p> <p>Output 2.2: An agreed strategic Regional Action Plan developed which mainstreams BD and ES criteria into regional development policies and integrates the sustainable use of productive lands and the protection of areas with high value for BD</p>

	parameters and a strategy for upscaling as well as for economic sustainability beyond project completion.	<p>conservation and ES provisioning.</p> <p>Output 2.3: Policy improvement strategy developed drawing from PPG findings, the Diagnostic Analysis in component 1 and the Regional Action Plan, to propose changes in sectorial development policies and programs for the Sierra Tarahumara, including new or adapted regulations affecting funding allocation criteria, that mainstream measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and key ecosystem services.</p> <p>Output 2.4: An adaptive management model at the landscape level emphasizing forest lands developed and implemented, based on project learnings and best practices systematization including diffusion material in formats tailored to local stakeholders.</p> <p>Output 2.5 Outreach program developed to replicate and upscale the project's progress and results from the pilot level to the wider landscape in the Sierra Tarahumara.</p>
3. Pilot-scale interventions	3. Sustainable and integrated landscape and natural resource management effectively applied at the headwaters of the Rio Conchos, the Rio Fuerte and the Rio Mayo river basins results in a landscape mosaic of 300,000 ha that combine conservation areas and productive land under biodiversity and ecosystem services friendly management.	<p>Output 3.1: Component 1 tools adjusted to pilot site conditions: ecosystem types, landscape units, river basins, species inventories and prioritization of landscape units and habitat types conforming biological corridors.</p> <p>Output 3.2: Sustainable and integrated landscape and natural resource management plans developed in project area municipalities include voluntary conservation areas and areas to optimize biodiversity friendly production and ecosystem services, emphasizing water and forest resources, drawing from the RAP in Component 2.</p> <p>Output 3.3: Pilot programs and field activities to implement pilot projects identified under 3.1 and 3.2 focused on conservation</p> <p>Output 3.4: Pilot programs and field activities to implement pilot projects identified under 3.1 and 3.2 focused on sustainable production.</p>
4. Project monitoring and evaluation	4. Project implementation facilitated by results based management.	<p>Output 4.1: Baseline information about indicators used in project monitoring completed.</p> <p>Output 4.2: Project monitoring system is operating, providing systematic information on progress in meeting project outcome and objective targets.</p> <p>Output 4.3: Midterm and final evaluation conducted.</p> <p>Output 4.4: Lessons learned from this and other related projects management experience identified for replication in future operations.</p>

32. Component 1 develops a Sierra Tarahumara Data Monitoring and Information System (ST-DM&IS) and a Sierra Tarahumara Biodiversity and Environment Assessment to

support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making, including a comprehensive GIS based bioassessment reporting mechanism. An awareness and capacity building program will be implemented for local, state and federal level stakeholders within the project area, to engage and enable them in the use of tools and data bases produced by the project. The project will also provide follow-up assistance to stakeholders monitoring systematically key indicators of BD and ES by using the ST-DM&IS.

33. Component 2 establishes a coordination mechanism of federal, state and municipal authorities with local communities and non-governmental actors for the development and implementation of a Regional Action Plan (RAP), as a basis for a Common Agenda for the Sustainable Future of the Sierra Tarahumara. The RAP will mainstream BD and ES criteria into regional development policies and programs and will integrate the sustainable use of productive lands and the protection of areas with high value for BD conservation and ES provisioning. Drawing from PPG findings, the Biodiversity and Environment Assessment in Component 1 and the RAP, a policy improvement strategy will be developed to propose new regulations affecting funding allocation criteria in different government sectors that mainstream measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and key ecosystem services. Furthermore, an adaptive management model at the landscape level emphasizing forest lands will be developed and implemented, based on project learnings and best practices systematization. Through an outreach program, the project aspires to replicate and upscale results from the pilot level to the wider landscape in the Sierra Tarahumara.
34. Component 3 identifies and assesses the suitability of potential areas and sites for pilot project implementation utilizing and adapting tools and data from Component 1. Sustainable and integrated land and natural resource management plans will be developed in municipalities within the project's scope, including voluntary conservation areas and areas where biodiversity friendly production and ecosystem services can be optimized. Building on these assessments and land management plans, pilot programs and field activities regarding conservation and sustainable production will be implemented in communities and micro-watersheds of the project region.
35. Component 4 provides the structure for monitoring and evaluation of the project, through
36. Project Outputs by Outcome are spelled-out in Diagram 1 of Section IV (Reconstructed Theory of Change of the Project). Overall, the formulation and articulation of Outputs and Outcomes of the Logical Framework has been maintained in the reconstructed Theory of Change, and will consider further clarifications with the Project Team during the country visit, particularly regarding the synergies between the Components.
37. It is worth noting that this project was developed during GEF-5 when there were no GEF core indicator targets. As such, the reviewer identified the following GEF-7 core indicators in a retrospective manner:
 - Core Indicator 1. Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use
 - Core Indicator 3. Area of land restored
 - Core indicator 4. Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas).
 - Core Indicator 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.
38. Unfortunately, current data combines the area of land for indicators 3 and 4, so it is difficult to differentiate between area of land restored and area of landscapes under

improved practices. Furthermore, while the project's reports provide numbers of beneficiaries, this data is not disaggregated by gender.

C. Stakeholders

39. Stakeholders are all those who are affected by, or who could affect (positively or negatively) the project's results. The Intervention Strategy of the Project Document exposed in Section 3, as well as Section 5: Stakeholder Participation, describe how the three project components include these stakeholder groups and actions, involving more actors with more actions and more funds (quantitative increment) in a coordinated strategy with synergic effects and enhanced environmental governance for sustainably conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services (qualitative increment). At a disaggregated level key groups include:
 40. *Implementing partners*. WWF and CONANP.
 41. *Government officials and duty bearers* (e.g., national focal points, coordinators): During the development of the ProDoc, consultations confirmed the interest and willingness of key stakeholders to participate in project implementation by executing or co-financing specific project activities, to engage in efforts to improve inter-institutional coordination, and to provide broad institutional support to the project as a whole.
 42. Most of the federal institutions involved (CONANP, CONAGUA, CONAFOR and CONABIO) are decentralized entities falling under the general authority of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). Other important federal actors are SAGARPA/SADER, CDI/INPI and SEDESOL/Bienestar. State-level actors include the Secretary of Rural Development of the State of Chihuahua. These state and federal government agencies were involved in project implementation in different ways and provided additional funding for specific activities related to their area of competence and expertise. The Interinstitutional Assistance Program for the Indigenous People of the State of Chihuahua (PIAI) was a significant partner in designing and implementing the sustainable regional development strategy promoted by the project. CONANP, apart from its leading role in overall project management, was involved in creating synergies between the project and local actors; conservation and sustainable development activities supported by PROCODES and PET funds contributed to achieving project results in component 3; CONANP also provided expertise and funds for BD monitoring. CDI/INPI was a relevant partner in pilot projects in indigenous zones and sustainable production, especially with indigenous women, contributing lessons in achieving gender equity. SEMARNAT's contribution to the project consisted of two aspects: on the normative side, the institution contributed to prevent or mitigate negative impacts on ecosystems and wildlife habitats through its competence for authorising land-use changes (for example from forest use to mining) or approving environmental impact assessments; on the executive side, SEMARNAT's PET program added to pilot projects for water basin restoration in agricultural areas, wildlife habitat improvement and solid waste disposal and recycling. CONAFOR's program portfolio for the region supported aligning and co-financing pilot projects in forest conservation and restoration, nature tourism and payment for environmental services. CONABIO participated in the project by contributing its methodological experience and resources for developing biodiversity information and monitoring systems.
 43. *Civil society leaders* (e.g., associations and networks). Regional Forest Producers Associations (Asociaciones Regionales de Silvicultores - ARS) incorporate the ejidos and communities of a determined area within a Forest Management Units (Unidades de Manejo Forestal – UMAFORES). They assist ejidos, communities and individual forest owners in improving their forest management, for example by developing their forest management plans and preventive technical audits for certification of forest areas; the

project involved them not only in planning and implementing pilot projects, but also in designing the Regional Action Plan (RAP) in the context of building the Common Agenda for the Sustainable Future of the Sierra Tarahumara. CSOs like the Nátika Civil Association were also relevant actors, contributing their technical knowhow, knowledge of local socioeconomic and socio-cultural conditions and practical experience in different thematic areas that were relevant for the project. These include: Empowerment and capacity strengthening of communities, ejidos and local working groups; biodiversity, habitat and ecosystem monitoring; training and technical assistance for eco-friendly production practices and forest restoration activities; defence of community property rights; food and water security; sustainable protection of the community's natural resources. Academic and research institutions supported BD and ES monitoring, through research regarding habitat change and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, training for land and forest owners for introducing and managing BD and ES friendly land use practices and on capacity building for local and regional policy decision-makers in strategic planning. Important stakeholders from this sector were: UACH through its Faculties of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences in Las Delicias and of Zootechnics and Ecology in Chihuahua; the National Institute for Research on Forestry, Agriculture and Fishing (INIFAP) with its three experimental research centers in the state; the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez; the Center in Chihuahua of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and the School of Anthropology of North Mexico (ENAH-Chihuahua) with its campus in Creel.

44. *Beneficiaries* (e.g., households, tradespeople, disadvantaged groups, members of civil society etc.): Key project stakeholders at the social level are ejidos and indigenous communities. Norogachi ejido, UMAFOR San Juanito, residents of the municipalities of Balleza, Bocoyna, Guachochi, Ocampo and Guadalupe y Calvo. The project made a concerted effort to engage women in governance and productive activities. For example, in Outcome 2: 59.56% of the participants in construction of the RAP and "Regional Coordination Mechanism" were women.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

45. The implementation structure of the project includes numerous actors from the government, academic and civil society sectors involved in implementing the project strategy for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations in the decision-making in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua:
46. UNEP as GEF implementing agency (IA), to participate in the PSC and be in charge of supervision of monitoring and evaluation for the project.
47. Project executing agencies (EA) and implementing partners: WWF as project co-executing agency in charge of project fund administration and accounting, contract the project director and the PMU staff and provide additional technical support through its personnel in Chihuahua and Mexico-City. CONANP as the other project co-executing agency to provide technical support through its personnel in Creel (Sierra Tarahumara) and its Regional Office in Chihuahua.
48. Project implementing partners: WWF, CONANP and UNEP, as members of the Project Steering Committee, play the lead role in implementing and monitoring the project and maintaining its strategic focus.

49. Steering Committee (PSC) composed of CONANP and WWF, as project implementing partners, and UNEP as GEF implementing agency.¹³
50. Regional Council for the Sustainable Development of the Sierra Tarahumara as the mechanism for coordinating key stakeholder activities in the project area.
51. Project Management Unit (PMU) responsible for operative planning and day-to-day implementation of all project activities, as well as for management and follow-up of sub-grants and consultancies, composed of a Project Director, three Component 1-3 Coordinators, a Project Administrator and a Technical and Logistics Assistant.¹⁴
 - The Project Director and Institutional Coordinator to provide overall technical and administrative leadership to the project.
 - Three Component Coordinators to provide technical know-how for planning, implementation and follow-up to the activities foreseen under the respective project components.
 - Project Administrator to assist the Project Director in all administrative and financial management matters, particularly in budget management, procurement and financial reporting.
 - Technical and Logistics Assistant to support the Project Director and the three Component Coordinators in carrying out day-to-day operational functions.
52. Additional institutional, technical and administrative support to the PMU provided by CONANP and WWF personnel in Chihuahua and Mexico City.

Organigram (per Appendix 10 of the Project Document):

¹³ See for details and graphical representation of implementation arrangements Appendix 10: Decision-making flowchart and organigram.

¹⁴ For detailed description of PMU personnel profiles see Project Document Appendix 11: Terms of Reference.

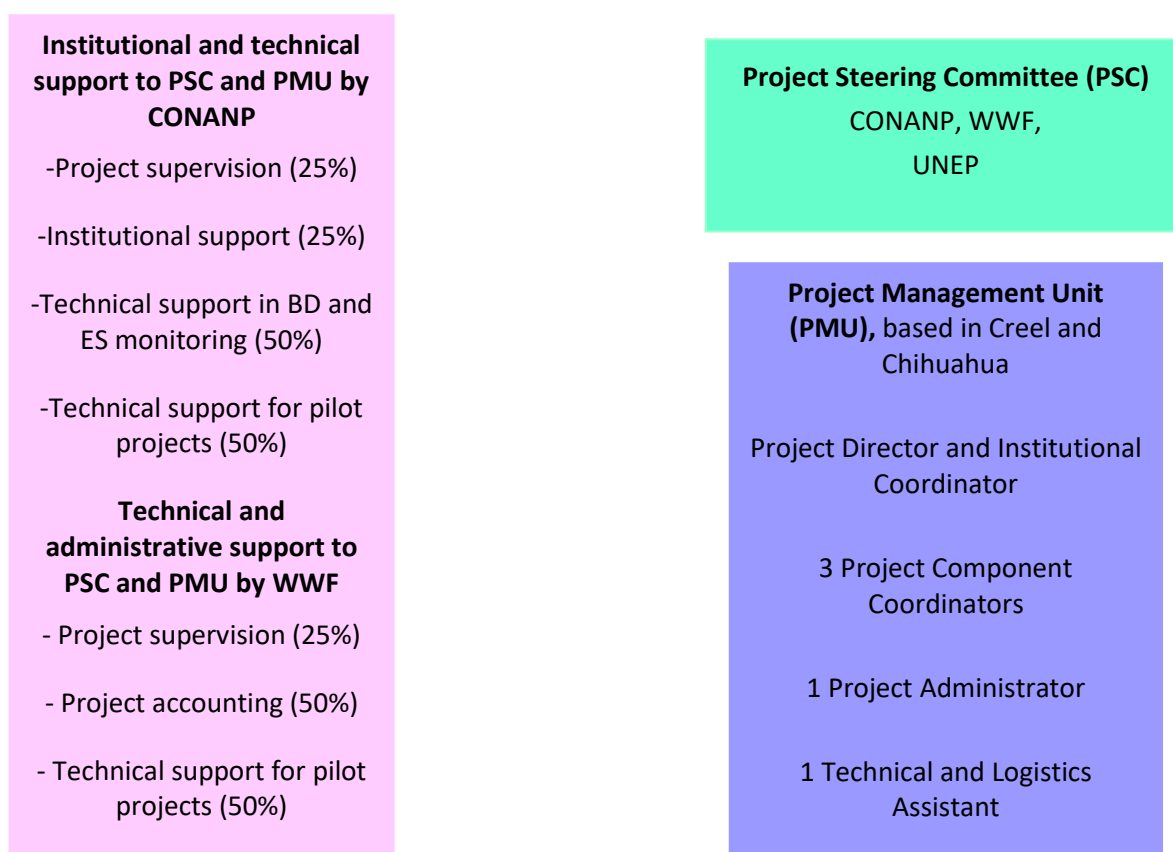


Figure 1: Organigram of the Project with key project key stakeholders

E. Changes in design during implementation (including responses to mid-term assessments, where appropriate)

53. There were no significant changes to the project’s design during implementation. Minor changes (methodological approaches, specific activities, 10 budget revisions to accommodate small changes between budget lines and reprogram unspent balances into the following year, forms of collaboration with partners, implementation period) were implemented as part of adaptive management. There were two no-cost extensions, the first until December 2020 and the second until April 2022, due to the pandemic. However, this did not entail changes to the project’s design or to its objective.

F. Project financing

54. Project expenditures were not reported by component, so it was not possible to analyse the expenditure ratio of planned versus actual.

Table 1. Expenditure by Outcome/Output

Component/sub-component/output <i>All figures as USD</i>	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 1 / Outcome 1	457,800	N/A	N/A
Component 2 / Outcome 2	1,075,900	N/A	N/A

Component 3 / Outcome 3	2,986,000	N/A	N/A
Component 4 / Outcome 4	147,000	N/A	N/A
PMC	233,300	N/A	N/A

55. The co-financing amounts reported in Table 2 reflect the amounts invested by project partners in conservation and sustainable production activities in the project area. The information shared was signed by the Regional Director North and Sierra Madre Occidental of CONANP and the General Coordinator of the Project. However, in various cases it was difficult to obtain the information due to administrative changes. In addition, some of the institutions stated that they did not have systematized information to report accurately.

Table 2: Co-financing Table

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UN Environment own Financing (US\$1,000)		Government (US\$1,000)		Other* (All co-financing sources to be identified) (US\$1,000)		Total (US\$1,000)		Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
- Grants			37,798,583	0					
- Loans									
- Credits									
- Equity investments									
- In-kind support			2,237,576	34,796,628					
- Other (*) -									
Totals			40,036,159	34,796,628					

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Sources of confirmed co-financing	Classification	Total US-\$
Secretary of Rural Development of the Chihuahua's State Government	Local Government	397,888.71*
***Secretary of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries	National Government	987,183.06*
	<i>Total</i>	<i>1,385,071.77</i>

*In kind

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

56. The Project was formulated and approved when a Theory of Change (TOC) was not explicitly requested and, consequently, the ProDoc included a very basic analysis of causal pathways or considerations of future impacts. The ProDoc did include a “Results Framework” (Annex 4) and a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Annex 7) that convey the overall “concept” of the Project and its implicit logical pathway. Based on these, a TOC is provided in Diagram 1. A direct discussion with the Project Team and the explanation of the meaning of some concepts expressed in the Outcome would be useful, which will be done during the field mission.
57. The successful achievement of the project’s Outcomes implies the fulfilment of relevant **assumptions** in the institutional and socio-political sphere that are clearly identified in the Logframe. However, the Logframe does not overtly consider **risks** or **drivers**, which are important to project implementation and therefore achievement of the Outcomes.
58. Regarding the pathway from Outcome to Impact, the Project Objective enshrines core elements of Project Impact, or **Global Environmental Benefit (GEB)** to which the Project is called to contribute. In the case of BD Projects, the contribution to the fulfilment of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is measured through core indicators such as number of hectares restored or under improved management (in or out of protected areas) and number of direct beneficiaries of GEF project interventions.
59. **Diagram 1** below provides a reconstruction of the pathway from the Project’s Outputs to Outcome and identifies the main Drivers and Assumptions¹⁵ as requested by the Theory of Change (TOC). The reconstructed TOC has maintained the structure of the Project Design, with its three technical components (see Table 1 in section 2), each of them with an expected Outcome and a group of Outputs to be delivered for each of them.
60. The Outcome of **Component 1** comprises a series of management plans and decision-making processes of key stakeholders involved in the biodiversity conservation management of the Sierra Tarahumara utilize the project’s diagnostic tools and data bases. This will be achieved through the development of Output 1.1 Data Monitoring and Information System (DM&IS) to support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making; Output 1.2 BD and Environment Assessment; Output 1.3 Awareness and capacity building program to use the tools from Outputs 1.1 and 1.2; and Output 1.4 Institutional, financial and technical assistance follow-up program for the DM&IS. Key **assumptions** for this are:
- 1) Most key stakeholders are willing to participate in the construction and application of a common Sierra Tarahumara Data Monitoring and Information System (ST-DM&IS) and in the Comprehensive ST Biodiversity and Environment Assessment.
 - 2) Operative rules and budgets of key stakeholders do not impede, or are adapted for, the use of the project’s diagnostic tools and data bases in their program planning and operation.

¹⁵ **Assumptions:** conditions that are beyond the direct control of the project or may be facilitated by supporting actions or conditions. **Drivers:** where the project has a measure of control and can make a meaningful influence (Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations, UN Environment Evaluation Office, October 2017)

- 3) An institution is willing and able to assume the responsibility for coordinating the monitoring process among key stakeholders beyond project lifetime.
61. The **drivers** that may play a crucial role in achieving Project results include:
- a. Experience, mandate and commitment of CONANP;
 - b. Support of UN Environment and WWF through PMU, National and International Consultants;
 - c. Institutional partners effectively involved;
 - d. Setting up a DM&IS, which is beneficial for information flow, participation and monitoring, is relatively low cost and has low political implications, and is therefore a “low hanging fruit” for mainstreaming BD and ES conservation.
62. The expected result of **Component 2** is to improve environmental governance by building a policy framework – a Regional Action Plan or Agenda – for ecosystem protection and management in the Sierra Tarahumara. This will be accomplished with the following Outputs: 2.1 Coordination mechanism of federal, state and municipal authorities with local communities and non governmental actors; 2.2 Regional Action Plan which mainstreams BD and ES criteria; 2.3 Policy improvement strategy for development policies and programs for the Sierra Tarahumara; 2.4 adaptive management model at the landscape level emphasizing forest lands; and 2.5 Outreach program. The achievement of this outcome depends essentially on the willingness of key actors present in the Sierra to cooperate in this effort to build a common platform or masterplan for sustainable regional development, including explicitly BD conservation considerations. Project activities can only partially influence the commitment of key actors with this plan, and certain **assumptions** must be valid for the component to be successful:
- 4) A critical mass of key stakeholders participates proactively in the design of the RAP, including state and federal agencies of all sectors, municipalities, communities, producer organizations, private sector, NGO and research centres.
 - 5) Indigenous communities can assert their proposals and rights in the design of the RAP.
 - 6) Differences over the strategy for sustainable development of the ST between sectors of key stakeholders can be negotiated and sound agreements are found.
 - 7) Key stakeholders undertake effective efforts and measures to incorporate RAP BD and ES criteria in their own programs, operative rules und budgets.
63. The **drivers** that may play a crucial role in achieving Project results include:
- e. Experience, mandate and commitment of CONANP;
 - f. Support of UN Environment and WWF through PMU, National and International Consultants;
 - g. Institutional partners effectively involved;
 - e. Technical capacities among main stakeholders to mainstream BD and ES concepts in RAP and productive practices;
 - f. Meaningful involvement and participation of IPLCs and other non-State actors to deliver all Outputs.

64. The expected outcome of project **Component 3** is the effective application of Component 1 and 2 findings and results at the headwaters of the Rio Conchos, the Rio Fuerte and the Rio Mayo river basins in the Sierra, combining conservation areas and productive land under BD and ES friendly management resulting in a landscape mosaic of 300,000 hectares. Underlying **assumptions** relate mainly to the willingness of municipalities and communities to commit themselves to cooperate with pilot project initiatives, but also to state and federal government actors to align their programs at the local level with requirements set by the Regional Action Plan and municipal action plans in the framework of the RAP:
- 8) Key actors, especially in the economic and public infrastructure sector, are willing to coordinate and co-finance pilot projects for conservation and sustainable production.
 - 9) Municipalities are willing to cooperate with the pilot project strategy, developing specific action plans in the framework of the RAP.
 - 10) Community and ejido authorities are interested to cooperate with pilot project initiatives.
 - 11) Problems of low social cohesion between *mestizos* and Rarámuri in many communities will not severely affect planning and implementation of pilot projects, and can be managed in a constructive way.
 - 12) Security conditions in most suitable and selected sites are acceptable and do not impede implementation of pilot projects.
65. The **drivers** that may play a crucial role in achieving Project results include:
- h. Experience, mandate and commitment of CONANP;
 - i. Support of UN Environment and WWF through PMU, National and International Consultants;
 - j. Institutional partners effectively involved;
 - e. Technical capacities among main stakeholders to mainstream BD and ES concepts in RAP and productive practices;
 - f. Meaningful involvement and participation of IPLCs and other non-State actors to deliver all Outputs;
 - g. Available experience in the field, agreement of IPLCs and effective methodology in place to systematize pilot experiences.
66. In general, the key **drivers** identified for this project reflect the principles, institutional changes and mechanisms that the Project wants to promote, strengthen and sustain. Whether these key drivers are fully operational, partially, or not at all, will need to be assessed during the evaluation exercise.

Diagram 1: Theory of Change (TOC) from Project Outputs to Main Project Outcome (based on ProDoc Appendix 17: Objectives Tree)

Impact/GEBs	2,294,696.46 ha. Under improved mgt and restoration	74,308.85 ha identified for ADVCS	Beneficiaries: 293 communities/ejidos/P.P; 33 NGOs	103,664.69 ha. certified sustainable forest management	5 municipalities include RAP BD criteria in Plans
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Strategic objective: Contribute to the conservation of BD and ES, and improve quality of life for communities in the Sierra Tarahumara of Mexico

Project objective: Develop and implement a participatory strategy to sustainably conserve biodiversity engaging communities, government, and NGO participation

DRIVERS: a) CONANP; b) UN Environment and WWF through PMU, National and International Consultants; c) Institutional partners d) Setting up a DM&IS, is “ low hanging fruit” for mainstreaming BD and ES; e) technical capacities among main stakeholders; f) participation of IPLCs and other non-State actors; g) available experience in the field; h) Awareness raising and information at all levels

Component 1: Develop scientific base and tools for decision making

Output 1.1 Sierra Tarahumara Data Monitoring and Information System (ST-DM&IS) for planning and decision-making

Output 1.2 Sierra Tarahumara Biodiversity and Environment Assessment

Output 1.3 Awareness and capacity building program to engage and enable stakeholders in the use of data bases and tools produced under outputs 1.1 and 1.2

Component 2: Environmental governance framework and policy alignment for ecosystem management

Output 2.1 Coordination mechanism for the development and implementation of a Regional Action Plan designed and established

Output 2.2 Regional Action Plan developed which mainstreams BD and ES criteria into regional development policies

Output 2.3 Policy improvement strategy developed including new regulations affecting funding allocation criteria that mainstream measures to conserve and sustainably use BD and ES

Output 2.4 An adaptive management model at the landscape level emphasizing forest lands, developed and implemented

Output 2.5 Outreach program developed to replicate and upscale the project’s progress and results from the pilot level to the wider landscape in the Sierra Tarahumara

Component 3: Pilot scale interventions: Create territorial mosaic combining areas for conservation with areas of BD and ES friendly production practices

Output 3.1 Component 1 tools adjusted to identify potential sites and actors for pilot interventions

Output 3.2 Sustainable and integrated landscape and natural resource management plans developed in project area municipalities

Output 3.3: Pilot programs and field activities to implement integrated pilot projects identified under 3.1 and 3.2 focussing on conservation

Output 3.4: Pilot programs and field activities to implement integrated pilot projects identified under 3.1 and 3.2 focussing on sustainable production

ASSUMPTIONS: 1, 4 and 8 key stakeholders participate ; 2) ability to use diagnostic tools and data bases in program planning and operation; 3) Institution accepts coordination role; 5) Indigenous communities’ priorities reflected in RAP; 6) stakeholder differences are negotiable; 7) stakeholders internalize RAP BD/ES criteria; 9 and 10) Locals cooperate with pilot strategies; 11) low social cohesion doesn’t impact project; 12) Security remains stable.

Barriers	Lack of diagnostic tools and info systems for planning	Weak environmental governance	Few BD/ES friendly mgt of productive/conservation areas
Long-term Solution	BD and ES conservation considerations are reflected in planning documents, institutional implementing mechanisms and practices.		
Threats	Forest Degradation	Deforestation	Decrease and Contamination of Water resources

V. REVIEW FINDINGS

67. The findings presented in this section provide a summative analysis of all gathered and triangulated information relevant to the parameters of the review criteria. Review findings are objective and evidence-based and directly relate to the review questions under each criterion (see Annex III Review Framework).

A. Strategic Relevance

Finding 1: The Project's approach (mainstreaming biodiversity in local planning and environmental management, informed by the identification and monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services at the landscape level) was innovative and ensured good participation and appropriation from local stakeholders, especially ejidos, Indigenous Peoples (IP) and NGOs.

Finding 2: The project objectives and strategies are aligned with policies and plans of GEF, UN Environment and national public institutions

Finding 3: Given the strategic importance of the STR to CONANP's conservation efforts, the project provides a number of relevant tools to PA management, BD monitoring and engagement of communities in the buffer zones/ areas of influence.

Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy¹⁶ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

68. The project was aligned with UNEP's MTS 2014-17 and corresponding POW at project design and subsequent MTS and POW during implementation. The ProDoc referred to UNEP Mexico's POW for 2014-2015 in which the development of the National TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) Initiative is included. This is directly related to the Tarahumara project pilot stage and constitutes further elements for the GoM to strategically guide investments in terms of sustainability. The POW also includes the design and development of Mexico's BioTrade Assessment, which looks for the generation of value-added products and services that are mainly derived from biodiversity. The implementation of tools, mechanisms and lessons learned under this BioTrade approach are fundamental to the Tarahumara project, establishing important linkages between national level policy development and on the ground interventions in this project.

69. Meanwhile, the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR) provided relevance to updated POW during project implementation. For example, PIR 2021 reported direct linkages with 2018/2019 Subprogramme 3 - Healthy and productive ecosystems via EA(b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making. As reported in the 2021 PIR, the project sought to demonstrate that the conservation of natural resources and increased productivity of activities in the field are not mutually exclusive. With the support of the protected area and the GEF integration programs simultaneously for this purpose, in terms of an

¹⁶ UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>.

integrated ecosystem approach, the project used the results of its Information and Data Monitoring System and piloting an initiation of productive and conservation initiatives in the field while developing participatory management. landscape-level plans. This process of testing better planning and decision-making brought together public and private entities, ranging from national agencies to indigenous communities and peoples.

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

70. The project is consistent with the GEF Biodiversity focal area strategy. It builds on the hypothesis that rather than approaching conservation and sustainable use areas separately and as mutually exclusive concepts, both should be integrated in one and the same land use planning exercise by local stakeholders using the ecosystem approach for a defined area. The result is a mosaic in which the human dwellers find sustainable livelihood options while preserving their natural resources, ecosystem services and biodiversity at the same time. The project is aligned with the following GEF Strategic Priorities in Biodiversity:

- BD-1 Outcome 1.1 Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas.
 - Output 1.1 New protected areas mosaic within 300,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems
 - Output 1.2 New coverage of 11 unprotected threatened species

71. The project contributed to Strategic Objective BD-1: "Improved Sustainability of Protected Area Systems" by fostering the establishment of voluntary areas for protection (Areas Destined Voluntarily to Conservation - ADVC) as an integral part of the land use planning at the community-landscape level and incorporating these into state and local planning instruments, including their insertion into CONANP'S national system of protected areas. This is a bottom-up approach involving local and indigenous people and other key stakeholders at all stages, to deliver a more sustainable scenario than the top-down imposition of protected areas, with the benefit of increased effectiveness and ownership of a PA system mosaic. The project guided the elaboration of ADVC proposals, which are now in various stages of review and approval by CONANP's central office. This approach increases the potential for habitat connectivity in an area that has been identified by CONABIO and CONANP as a significant gap on the Mexican map of ecosystems and species requiring strategic attention in this regard. The project also built professional capacity and developed essential monitoring and planning tools as well as consultation mechanisms to support the conservation and sustainable use of globally important biodiversity in this critical geographic spot covering both protected and non-protected areas.

- BD-2 Outcome 2.1 Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation
- Outcome 2.2 Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks.
 - Output 2.1 Policies and regulatory frameworks for 2 production sectors (forestry and agriculture)
 - Output 2.2 One regional land-use plan (Regional Action Plan) and one land-use plan for each participating municipality that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation

- Output 2.3 Certified production landscapes mosaic within 300,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems
72. Drawing from the same ecosystem-based strategy for land use planning that enables communities to create voluntary areas for protection, the project's integration of productive activities and well planned connection with their respective sector programs contributed to Strategic Objective BD-2: "Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors". Through its main contributing partners, the project supported interinstitutional coordination platforms. This included the most relevant government sector representation at various levels, ranging from formal municipal land management planning at the community level up to a Regional Action Plan that brought state and federal authorities together incorporating biodiversity criteria, funding commitments, evaluation parameters and a strategy for economic sustainability. The monitoring and planning tools developed by the project and their practical application in pilot areas involving communities and indigenous people and other key stakeholders were also crosscutting.
 73. Both strategic objectives were integrated under the umbrella of land use planning at the landscape level using microwatersheds as an intervention area and strategic results. The project created tools and capacity to improve the connectivity of the Mexican protected area system, improving the conditions of forests, agricultural lands and water ecosystems through the improvement of management practices, the maintenance of species habitat, landscape structure and extension necessary to secure evolutive and adaptive processes. Project contributions to integrated river basin management preserve the strategic value of water ecosystems, habitat, and species that are physically and biologically interconnected by water flows and the hydrological regime.
 74. The project achieved tangible Global Environmental Benefits for biodiversity in a pilot landscape of 300,000 hectares with an immediate upscaling potential to one million hectares. Integrated land use plans for these pilots result in a mixed scenario, where protected areas increase the connectivity of critical habitats interspersed with productive areas that include biodiversity friendly practices. As such, the global biodiversity benefits derived from the project consist mainly in the improved habitat conditions and via reduction of threats caused by unsustainable land use change patterns. The Sierra Tarahumara Region (STR) contains many threatened and endangered species among its extensive biodiversity. At the global scale, the project contributed to the preservation of biological diversity, including numerous globally threatened and endangered species listed under the IUCN Red List, as well as to the generation of ecosystem services, including water production and carbon storage, inherent to the largest forested area in the country. Specifically, species recognized globally as endangered and/or threatened will greatly improve their status of protection and conservation through the use of tools and capacity that the project created. These include the Mexican Wolf (*canis lupus baileyi*), Thick-billed Parrot (*rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*), Chihuahua Spruce (*picea chihuahuana*), Teozintle (*zea diploperennis*), Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), Neotropical river otter (*Lontra longicaudis*), North American black bear (*ursus americanus*), Spotted owl (*strix occidentalis*), and Military macaw (*ara militaris*).

Relevance to Global Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

75. With regards to national priorities, the overall scope of the project is not to build structures and mechanisms for enforcement of rules and policing regarding natural resource use. It does, however, seek to minimize the risks presented by

contradictory policies and perverse incentives by including the relevant stakeholders into its coordination mechanisms at regional and state levels and into the awareness raising and communication strategies as well. The Sierra Tarahumara Region (STR) is of strategic importance to CONANP's conservation efforts. As such, the project is highly relevant by providing a number of tools to PA management, BD monitoring and engagement of communities in the buffer zones/ areas of influence, ultimately supporting CONANP's efforts to foster ecosystem integrity and connectivity throughout the STR.

76. The project's objective, outcomes and activities contributed to the strategies of several key stakeholders for biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in the region:

- CONANP's strategic objective of conserving the country's most representative ecosystems and their biodiversity, through the National Protected Areas Program with the participation of all social and institutional sectors;
- CONAFOR's National Forestry Program with its subprograms and the Strategic Forestry Program 2025;
- CONAGUA's 2030 National Water Strategy (Agenda del Agua 2030) which considers the necessity to reach equilibrium on all hydrological basins, with clean rivers, universal potable water coverage and cities without catastrophic floodings;
- SAGARPA's Food Security Program (PESA), the Soil and Water Conservation and Sustainable Use program (COUSSA) and the Livestock Production Program (PROGAN);
- CDI's Territorial Management Strategy for Development with Identity and a variety of programs of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples;
- SEDESOL's nationwide Crusade against Hunger started in 2013 including five municipalities of the Sierra Tarahumara.

77. Finally, the project contributed to nine Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

78. Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere: Through the implementation of Pilot Projects and field activities, it seeks to strengthen the capacities of local actors for the sustainable use of their resources, through the development and implementation of a participatory strategy that involves communities, government and NGOs. In this way, the project will contribute to conserve biodiversity (BD) and ecosystem services (ES) of global importance in this area of the Sierra Madre Occidental, while improving the livelihoods and quality of life of its inhabitants.

79. Goal 2: Zero Hunger: Within the field activities, several actions were developed focused on strengthening food sovereignty of the region. Highlighting the execution of permaculture workshops for the communities, multiple on-site training for the implementation of the Key Line, hydrological design in temporary agricultural plots in the Sierra Tarahumara, sustainable agriculture, ecotechnics and community production.

80. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages: The contribution to this objective starts from the perspective of promoting well-being to the inhabitants of the region through actions that allow them to improve, protect and maintain the goods and services of ecosystems (such as fresh water,

food and plants and fungi that are part of the traditional medicine of the area), therefore and seeing it from that perspective, all the actions that the Project performs, influence and have the objective of conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Sierra Tarahumara.

81. Goal 5: Gender Equality: The Project has contributed to this objective thanks to governance processes at the regional and subregional community level where women have found a propitious space to participate in decision-making, in the implementation of actions that promote the conservation of the BD and ES and an empowerment within their communities.
82. Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation: The direct activities to improve the water condition was the implementation and evaluation of a slow sand filter in the municipality of Ocampo, generation of information for decision-making in the hydrological and productive processes of the basins in the area of influence of the project in the Sierra Tarahumara, as well as field activities to increase water infiltration and reduce erosion due to this cause.
83. Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth: The actions established in the Pilot Projects are focused on promoting activities that help to promote economic growth of the Sierra Tarahumara and at the same time improve the livelihoods and quality of life of their habitants. In addition, capacity building for local actors has been focused on helping to create a real economy to be less dependent on temporary government programs.
84. Goal 13: Climate Action: All actions established in the pilot projects are focused on conservation, keeping the subject of climate change as a transversal axis as it is an event of multiple causes and consequences. As climate change is one of the main causes of biodiversity loss, actions to counteract its effects are implicit in the expected results of this project.
85. Goal 15: Life on land: As part of the activities carried out in this period of time, the adoption of a landscape management model among key stakeholders has been promoted. Forest certification is promoted in its three modalities to maintain good management practices in the area, in addition to seeking to certify areas dedicated to conservation with more than 70,000 hectares.
86. Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development: The main objective of the project is to integrate considerations on the conservation of biodiversity within the management of the protected and productive areas of the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico, through the development and implementation of a strategy participation involving communities, government and NGOs, therefore, building alliances and promoting the participation of local actors has been one of the main contributions of the Project.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

87. The different technical tools developed by the project are vital in contributing to CONANP's work in the Tarahumara region. Monitoring guides continue to be used by PA and the stakeholder engagement approach used by the project has been replicated by PA staff with local communities.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

B. Quality of Project Design

Finding 4. The Project was well designed with a good vertical and horizontal logic, SMART indicators and M&E plan, inclusion of stakeholders and consideration of social and environmental impacts for project beneficiaries. The indicators were presented at the output level, which were aggregated at the outcome and objective levels. Some outputs did not fully reflect the activities to generate these.

88. The Review of the Project Design quality was based on the Project Document (ProDoc) and its Annexes, particularly Annex 1 (Budget), Annex 4 (Results Framework), Annex 5 (Workplan and timetable), Annex 6 (Key deliverables and benchmarks) and Annex 7 (Costed M&E plan). It is noted that the Mid-Term Review (carried out in 2018) does not mention any project design issues.
89. The reviewer used the "Template for the assessment of the Project Design Quality (PDQ)," prepared by UN Environment Evaluation Office, which contemplates a rating and weighting system based on a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory (6), Satisfactory (5), Moderately Satisfactory (4), Moderately Unsatisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (2), Highly Unsatisfactory (1), also in use for the main evaluation. The complete PDQ Assessment is presented in Annex C of the Inception Report.
90. Overall, the Project Design is well-articulated; the project's problem analysis; situation analysis; stakeholder mapping; stakeholder consultations during project preparation; monitoring and evaluation framework; and strategic relevance are well developed in the project documents. While there may be gaps or shortcomings, these design criteria, in general, are sufficiently well-constructed, complete and/or robust to withstand scrutiny.
91. Furthermore, the project's Outcomes, Outcome Indicators and End-of-Project Targets are well defined, and the Logical Framework provides a logical pathway from Outputs to Outcomes with relevant indicators. Learning, Communication and Outreach aspects are clearly described, as well as Efficiency and Financial Planning and Budgeting. The budget is clear and provides a clear reconciliation between GEF Budget (activity-based) and UNEP budget-lines, which facilitates accounting project expenditures by component. Many national partners are expected to co-finance the Project and their contribution is well detailed. The Workplan and Timetable show efficiency measures in terms of parallel implementation of activities from different components, where possible, to ensure the framework or bases of certain components are established and ready to proceed once key results from complementary components have been achieved. With regards to human rights and gender equality, the project design includes basic language that recognizes these aspects and their potential benefit during implementation.
92. The project design is strong on the identification of stakeholders and many different stakeholder groups were engaged during the design phase. The ProDoc includes a detailed and complete mapping of stakeholders (individuals and groups), including their interests or synergies with the project and their potential contribution. It reported how many persons (disaggregated by gender) participated in design meetings. Major stakeholders, particularly federal agencies, were included during project design and met several times during project preparation. According to the TR interviews with people who were involved in project design, the different agencies were adequately consulted on major issues (project components, outcomes, outputs, intervention strategies and areas) although final decisions were taken by CONANP, WWF and UN Environment. Even though there was a good involvement of agencies in the

design, this was not a guarantee for their involvement in the final implementation model and the foreseen involvement and collaboration of many identified stakeholders at the national and regional level in project execution or implementation did not take place. While there was no direct involvement of final beneficiaries (producers, land owners) in project design, these were involved in the design of individual activities during project implementation.

93. Table 2 presents the summary of the scores resulting from the assessment of the Project Design Quality (PDQ) (see Annex C). The overall rating of the Project Design Quality is **Satisfactory** (S).

Table 2: Summary of scores resulting from the assessment of the Project Design Quality (PDQ) (Annex C)

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/100)
A	Operating Context	5	0.4	0.2
B	Project Preparation	5	1.2	0.6
C	Strategic Relevance	5	0.8	0.4
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	1.6	0.8
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	4	0.8	0.32
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	4	0.4	0.16
G	Partnerships	4	0.8	0.32
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0.4	0.2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	0.4	0.2
J	Efficiency	4	0.8	0.32
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	5	0.8	0.4
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	5	1.2	0.6
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	4	0.4	0.16
	Overall assessment of the Project Design Quality			4.68

1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)	< 1.83
2 (Unsatisfactory)	>= 1.83 < 2.66
3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)	>=2.66 <3.5
4 (Moderately Satisfactory)	>=3.5 <=4.33
5 (Satisfactory)	>4.33 <= 5.16
6 (Highly Satisfactory)	> 5.16

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

Finding 5. Major contextual events were the ongoing security issues related to narcotraffickers and illegal loggers, accompanied by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. These caused major operational challenges for the Project with respect to working in certain areas of the STR and resulted in activity delays for which a project extension was awarded.

Finding 6. Administration changes in government institutions at all levels constitute an external factor that influenced project implementation. The project adapted its management strategically by involving new authorities. National government changes resulted in variable support from national government institutions with regards to availability of personnel and cofinancing.

94. In general, the project's implementation was carried out as expected, with varying disruptions from 3 external forces at the end of the project:

95. **Security:** there were several serious security issues that disrupted consistent intervention in the municipality of Bocoyna. The pressures from illegal logging and other illicit groups can be violent, with death threats and destruction of property. Despite this, project beneficiaries from Bocoyna continue to implement the skills they acquired through the project, especially the application of the keyline hydrological system.
96. **Change in administration:** The change in administration impacted the project in several ways. While changes related to elections were considered in project design in terms of risk (rated Moderate) and adaptive management (a mitigation strategy was defined based on previous experiences and expectations of institutional stability), the new administration is working to completely transform the federal government, including sharp budget cuts to the environmental sector, as well as internal re-structuring, both in the central offices as well as in Chihuahua. This resulted in several delays in contracting and limited CONANP's participation in project activities while new staff became aware of the project and their role in it. Furthermore, budgetary and personnel cuts affected the availability of staff to engage in project activities, both in field work as well as desk support, such as review/certification of ADVCS. In some cases, the participation of some institutions and organizations outside the environmental sector became more difficult due to changes in the administration and a shift in their priorities and programming resources. For example, SEDESOL disappeared and was partially replaced by BIENESTAR, SAGARPA became SADER, and CDI became INPI. However, some other alliances were strengthened.
97. **COVID-19 pandemic:** The onset of the pandemic near the end of the project made it necessary to implement adaptive management with regards to the gathering and sharing of lessons learned and the participation of partners that had been involved throughout the Project. The rebound in covid-19 cases in the project area prevented the execution of final planned activities, such as the systematization and validation of the project results. As such, the PMU had to adapt and work with the quarantine conditions that impeded in-person meetings. The pandemic situation forced the implementation of alternative measures to achieve a solid closure of activities despite this situation, relying predominantly on virtual events.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Mildly Unfavourable

D. Effectiveness

Finding 7. The Project achieved the vast majority of its planned outputs, both in quantity and quality. A few outputs surpassed the target value for its indicator, while a few fell short. A few outputs were achieved differently than planned because the Project activities were adapted to changes in the external context.

Finding 8. Key stakeholders at the local level and service providers were appropriately involved in the generation of outputs and this contributed to the quality and sustainability of results.

Finding 9. The Project outcomes and impact have benefitted all stakeholder groups.

Finding 10. Most assumptions included in the Project Results Framework held, particularly the willingness of local stakeholders to participate in the initiatives.

Availability of Outputs

98. The project was successful in producing most of the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries. The only outputs that were limited in their achievement were the systematization and validation of the project's results, due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the PMU and implementing partners agreed to a no-cost extension to allow virtual closure of the project activities and outputs. With regards to the project's success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc), the reviewer found evidence that differed greatly from the MTR. Instances of partial achievement should be recognized as success when there is notable advancement toward the goals, but the MTR did not reflect this. Key to project success was the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This is reflected in the completion of the project outputs, as shown in the table below:

Outputs (as listed in the project document)	Status	Comments and Results
Output 1.1: Sierra Tarahumara Data Monitoring and Information System (DM&IS) to support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making developed, including a comprehensive GIS based bioassessment reporting mechanism (thematic layers adapted in pilots)	Complete	The ST-DM&IS is based on GIS and available on the project website www.tarahumarasustentable.mx This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic Information system • Online Cartographic Server • Portable Geographic Information System
Output 1.2: Sierra Tarahumara Biodiversity and Environment Assessment to support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making realized.	Complete	An extensive study of the assessment of the BD and environment of the ST is available on the project website www.tarahumarasustentable.mx This assessment produced baseline indicators for the ST-DM&IS based on the information that was already available and/or collected. 11 priority indicator species are monitored by the ST-DM&IS: 3 birds, 2 reptiles, 3 mammals and 3 plants.
Output 1.3: Awareness and capacity building program implemented for local, state and federal level stakeholders within the project area, to engage and enable them in the use of data bases and tools produced under outputs 1.1 and 1.2.	Complete	The project's target stakeholders received the information and training for the use of the ST-DM&IS, including 7 UMAFORES monitoring forest degradation and 46 users (target was 20). This is supported by a document with the list of trainings given and scheduled.
Output 1.4 Institutional, financial and technical assistance follow up program for stakeholders using the ST-DM&IS implemented.	Complete	An agreement was established with CONANP to host/administer the ST-DM&IS at project end. However, at the time of this TR, WWF continues to maintain it. A full handover is pending.
Output 2.1: Coordination mechanism of federal, state and municipal authorities with local communities and non governmental actors for the development and implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) designed and established.	Complete	The project promoted the creation of a coordination mechanism between authorities of the three levels of government, CSOs and rural and indigenous communities of the ST, which supported the construction and development of the RAP. This is documented in the minutes of agreements of community,

		subregional and regional meetings Memories of the environmental governance workshops PTS multimedia material.
Output 2.2: An agreed strategic Regional Action Plan developed which mainstreams BD and ES criteria into regional development policies and integrates the sustainable use of productive lands and the protection of areas with high value for BD conservation and ES provisioning.	Complete	A consensual RAP was prepared with the participation of 25 federal and state government actors, 8 municipalities, 4 UMAFORES, 28 non-governmental organizations, 9 academic institutions and 66 rural communities. 59.56% of the participants were women. The RAP includes a public policy agenda for the incorporation of BD and SE conservation criteria. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and insecurity made it difficult to complete this activity as planned and many adjustments were necessary to deliver this output in full. The RAP includes a public policy agenda for the incorporation of BD and ES conservation criteria to promote ecological connectivity of the landscape between the protected areas in the Sierra Tarahumara, and is available on the project website.
Output 2.3: Policy improvement strategy developed drawing from PPG findings, the Diagnostic Analysis in component 1 and the Regional Action Plan, to propose changes in sectorial development policies and programs for the Sierra Tarahumara, including new or adapted regulations affecting funding allocation criteria that mainstream measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and key ecosystem services.	Complete	A Common Agenda was developed as a strategy to promote improvements in public policies and sectoral development programs; however, the pandemic situation made it difficult to carry out this activity as planned.
Output 2.4: An adaptive management model at the landscape level emphasizing forest lands developed and implemented, based on project learnings and best practices systematization including diffusion material in formats tailored to local stakeholders.	Complete	The adaptive landscape model was established through the RAP and Sustainable Management Plans were developed for 5 municipalities. These Sustainable Management Plans disseminate the adaptive landscape Model, integrating strategic lines and the implementation of good practices. The ProDoc target was 8 out of 12 municipalities in the ST, but based on the results obtained in the prioritization of sites, efforts were focused on 5 municipalities: Bocoyna, Guachochi, Balleza, Ocampo, and Guadalupe y Calvo.
Output 2.5 Outreach program developed to replicate and upscale the project's progress and results from the pilot level to the wider landscape in the Sierra Tarahumara.	Complete	The project's experiences and results were systematized, however the dissemination strategy at a broader level had to be postponed due to the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternatives were implemented using virtual applications to support the dissemination of

		materials, videos and radio spots, as well as PTS closing meetings.
Output 3.1: Component 1 tools adjusted to pilot site conditions: ecosystem types, landscape units, river basins, species inventories and prioritization of landscape units and habitat types conforming biological corridors.	Complete	There is a catalog of sites and characteristics of the projects using information from Component 1. The document "Prioritization of sites for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services and identification of their threats in the Sierra Tarahumara" uses information from Component 1.
Output 3.2: Sustainable and integrated landscape and natural resource management plans developed in project area municipalities include voluntary conservation areas and areas to optimize biodiversity friendly production and ecosystem services, emphasizing water and forest resources, drawing from the RAP in component 2.	Complete	Sustainable Management Plans are in place for 5 municipalities, which integrate strategic lines and the implementation of good practices. The applications for certification of 35 ADVC covering 74,308 ha. are under review, delayed due to personnel shortages in CONANP, COVID-19 restrictions and security issues. 10 FSC certified sustainable forest management areas covering 103,665 ha.
Output 3.3: Pilot programs and field activities to implement integrated pilot projects identified under 3.1 and 3.2 focused on conservation. AND Output 3.4: Pilot programs and field activities to implement integrated pilot projects identified under 3.1 and 3.2 focused on sustainable production.	Complete	5 Pilot Projects were implemented in the 5 municipalities in priority attention areas with actions for the recovery, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in key sites in the PTS territory under a community participation scheme. 68 BD & ES Conservation and restoration projects covering an area of 2,294,696 ha. 774 local productive activities in the baseline covering 1,905,552 ha + 187 new productive activities at the local level covering an additional area of 78,861 ha.
Output 4.1: Baseline information about indicators used in project monitoring completed.	Complete	The baseline information was supplemented and the monitoring indicators were defined for four indicators of the project monitoring system.
Output 4.2: Project monitoring system is operating, providing systematic information on progress in meeting project outcome targets.	Complete	A monitoring system for project activities was established and reviewed by the PSC, as reported in 6 Half-yearly Reports (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019) and 7 PIR (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021).
Output 4.3: Midterm and final evaluation conducted.	Complete	The mid-term review was carried out in 2018, and the management response was implemented. Final reporting by the EA was delivered as a requisite for the Final Review, which is underway, culminating with the present document.
Output 4.4: Lessons learned from this and other related projects management experience identified for replication in future operations.	Complete	The lessons learned that were generated from the experience of the project implementation were compiled and systematized. The project produced a document detailing lessons learned and

Achievement of Project Outcomes

99. The achievement of project outcomes was assessed as performance against the outcomes as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change. These are outcomes that were intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope.
100. **Outcome 1** comprises a series of diagnostic tools and data bases to inform key stakeholders in the development of management plans and decision-making processes regarding biodiversity conservation management of the Sierra Tarahumara. The reviewer considers that the expected Outcome 1 was successfully achieved. Following the Project's results framework, the indicators for the achievement are the aggregate of the four output indicators. This was achieved through the successful development of the ST-DM&IS (Output 1.1) to support conservation planning, evaluation and decision making. Crucial to this was the BD and Environment Assessment of 11 key indicator species (Output 1.2), and the corresponding awareness and capacity building program to use the ST-DM&IS tools (Output 1.3). Interviews with staff from CONANP, CONAFOR, SEMARNAT and UACH all made reference to the importance of the monitoring tools and systematization of the data produced by the project and the impact on their ability to fulfil their respective work plans and activities. Key stakeholders were willing to participate in the construction and application of the ST-DM&IS. Furthermore, CONANP has agreed to assume the responsibility for the ST-DM&IS (Output 1.4) which is key to the continued collective monitoring of BD and ES integrity in the Sierra Tarahumara beyond the project's lifetime.
101. **Outcome 2** consists of improving environmental governance by building a policy framework – a Regional Action Plan (RAP) – for ecosystem protection and management in the Sierra Tarahumara. The reviewer considers that the expected Outcome 2 was successfully achieved. Following the Project's results framework, the indicators for the achievement are the aggregate of the five output indicators, three of which were rated as highly satisfactory for having surpassed expected targets. This was accomplished through the development of a coordination mechanism of federal, state and municipal authorities with local communities (ejidos and IP) and non-governmental actors (Output 2.1) that resulted in the development of a Regional Action Plan (RAP) that mainstreams BD and ES criteria (Output 2.2). A Common Agenda was developed as a strategy to promote improvements in public policies and sectoral development programs for the Sierra Tarahumara (Output 2.3). This was complemented by the establishment of an adaptive landscape model through the RAP and Sustainable Management Plans for 5 municipalities (Bocoyna, Guachochi, Balleza, Ocampo, and Guadalupe y Calvo), integrating strategic lines and the implementation of good practices (Output 2.4). The achievement of this outcome depended on the willingness of key actors present in the Sierra to cooperate in this effort to build a common platform or masterplan for sustainable regional development, including explicit BD conservation considerations.
102. Beyond the concrete products generated by the project activities (outputs), the Project also generated a noticeable change in behaviour and attitude of the local governments. This is evidenced by the establishment of networks between municipalities, ejidos and local communities (including IP) that continue beyond the project's lifetime. The stakeholder engagement approach that was employed by the project to develop the RAP fostered collaboration and coordination across

the ST; there is a new and effective coordination at the bilateral level or among groups of municipalities. Interviews with municipality staff showed pride for the achieved results of the RAP and the obtained knowledge of “their” biodiversity.

103. **Outcome 3** is the effective application of Component 1 and 2 findings and results at the headwaters of the Rio Conchos, the Rio Fuerte and the Rio Mayo river basins in the Sierra Tarahumara, combining conservation areas and productive land under BD and ES friendly management resulting in a landscape mosaic of 300,000 hectares. As shown by the satisfactory achievement of the outputs in component 3, the implementation of good practices for sustainable management of landscapes, focusing on BD and ES conservation, was well done and herewith, Outcome 3 satisfactorily generated. Following the Project's results framework, the indicators for the achievement are the aggregate of the six output indicators, three of which were rated as highly satisfactory for having surpassed expected targets. Stakeholders from government, academia, and local communities (not PMU staff) who responded to the corresponding interview question, mentioned either the forest management and keyline system for agricultural production among the main tangible results of the Project. The reviewer also noted the 10 sustainable forest management certificates by the Forestry Stewardship Council, as well as the pending certification of 35 ADVC by CONANP. Ultimately, the success of this Outcome is due to the willingness of municipalities and communities to commit themselves to cooperate with pilot project initiatives, but also to state and federal government actors to align their programs at the local level with requirements set by the Regional Action Plan and municipal action plans in the framework of the RAP.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

104. The likelihood of impact is influenced by the degree to which the changes that are required between project outcomes and impact were achieved at the time of the review. The project's objective was “to integrate biodiversity conservation considerations into the management of protection and production areas in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico, through the development and implementation of a participatory strategy that engages communities, government and NGOs.” With the satisfactory achievement of the Project's outputs and outcomes, some of them even surpassed, the review findings confirm that this objective was achieved and impact is likely.
105. All stakeholders interviewed during the review coincide in recognizing the project's contribution towards (i) establishing a series of diagnostic tools and data bases to inform key stakeholders in the development of management plans and decision-making processes regarding biodiversity conservation management of the Sierra Tarahumara; (ii) improving environmental governance by building a policy framework – a Regional Action Plan (RAP) – for ecosystem protection and management in the Sierra Tarahumara; and (iii) the effective application of Component 1 and 2 findings and results in the Sierra Tarahumara, combining conservation areas and productive land under BD and ES friendly management resulting in a landscape mosaic.
106. Both public (mostly municipalities, but also some regional and national-level agencies) and private (private land owners) stakeholders have implemented planning, conservation and productive activities, adding to forest conservation by sustainable management practices/certification of forest (103,665 has), BD and ES conservation and restoration projects (2,294,696 has), local production projects using BD and ES friendly management/practices (1,984,414 has) and other activities supporting landscape integrity. All this is being supported by

information on biodiversity and ecosystem services (ST-DM&IS), which is used for monitoring of 11 key indicator species and the impact of conservation efforts.

107. The Project benefitted all project stakeholder groups, but to varying degrees. Land owners, agricultural producers and forest owners benefitted directly from improved practices and certification. These stakeholders benefitted from the information generated by the Project and the capacity building exercises that will sustain collective monitoring and management of BD and ES in the Sierra Tarahumara. Staff from municipalities and government agencies increased their capacities to consider BD and ES criteria in decision-making, and thereby apply sound environmental management. National level government agencies benefitted from the opportunity to coordinate actions, access to information (ST-DM&IS) and enhanced efficiency of their planning, conservation instruments. All these stakeholders have benefitted from the training activities in landscape planning, biodiversity monitoring and funding of activities. Finally, the population of the project area benefitted from the Project though improved environmental management and dissemination of information to the general public.

Rating for Effectiveness: Highly Satisfactory

E. Financial Management

Finding 11. The financial management of the project was conducted according to the budget planning throughout the implementation period and followed financial and operational standards of UN Environment. Financial reporting was correct, timely and transparent.

Finding 12. The reporting and availability of cofinancing by partner institutions was varied, resulting in a decrease in overall cofinancing levels to 7:1 compared to the 8:1 at CEO Endorsement.

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

108. The project followed UNEP's financial policies and procedures, as stipulated in the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed between UNEP and WWF upon project inception. In particular, the PCA describes how cash advances will be made, procurement procedures, as well as terms and obligations regarding project execution, sub-contracts, personnel administration, cost overruns, project management costs, maintenance of records, unspent balances and reporting/audit requirements. Adherence to these policies and procedures is evident in the Quarterly Expenditure Reports, Cash Advance documents, budget revisions, annual audits and other financial records made available to the reviewer.

109. Final expenditures varied slightly compared to the original budget, with a 12.8% increase in personnel costs, 7.2% decrease in sub-contracts, and minor adjustments in training, equipment and miscellaneous costs, as shown in the table below.

Budget Component	Original	Final	Difference
Personnel	1,369,600.00	1,544,328.11	+12.8%
Sub-contracts	2,649,300.00	2,457,829.05	-7.2%
Training	276,700.00	278,036.02	+0.50%
Equipment and premises	175,400.00	180,080.54	+2.70%
Miscellaneous	429,000.00	439,726.28	+2.50%

	4,900,000.00	4,900,000.00	
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110. Independent financial audits were done annually, in accordance with the ProDoc and PCA. The reviewer consulted the six audit reports and observed that the auditors found that funds were used properly, adhering to the contractual terms. No major observations on financial management were made. The budget was revised 10 times to adjust to spending and the no-cost extension of the project implementation period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Completeness of Financial Information

111. In general, the financial information provided was complete. The original budget (Prodoc) was detailed in terms of expenditures per project component, per calendar year and per UN Environment expenditure category. It also provided a breakdown per project component/outcome. Administration and reporting were further done following UNEP expenditure categories, and presented in budget revisions, periodic expenditure reports, and independent financial audits done annually. However, despite the detailed budgets and revisions provided, it was difficult to determine the expenditure per Component, and therefore conduct an analysis of planned vs. actual expenditure at the component level.

112. With regards to co-financing, the ProDoc included a total cofinancing amount of US \$40,036,159 from 7 sources (CONANP, CONAFOR, CDI, SEDESOL, Pronatura, WWF and UNEP), a ratio of 8:1 for GEF resources, as confirmed through commitment letters from each cofinancier. The Final report, however, shows a final confirmed cofinancing amount of US\$ 34,796,628.27, for a final ratio of 7:1. In various cases it was difficult to obtain the information due to administrative changes. In addition, some of the institutions stated that they did not have systematized information to report accurately. The final report provides the cofinancing data by source and type; however, while a co-financing commitment letter was required for the ProDoc, there is no commitment letter to prove final cofinancing at project end, rather, the information shared was signed by the Regional Director North and Sierra Madre Occidental of CONANP and the General Coordinator of the Project.

Table 3: Financial Management Table

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS		
Financial management components:	Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:	HS	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ¹⁷ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules	No	Audits, budget revisions, inventory list, fund transfer documents, periodic expenditures reports.
2. Completeness of project financial information¹⁸:		
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to	HS	Available in Anubis

¹⁷ If the Review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

¹⁸ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

A-H below)			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Appendix 1 Detailed GEF Budget and Appendix 2 Co-finance budget – both of which disaggregate by budget line, activity and type (cash or in-kind)
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	10 budget revisions
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	PCA with WWF
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Audits and Fund transfer documents
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Final report provides by source and type; however, while a co-fin commitment letter is required for the ProDoc, there is no commitment letter to prove final cofinancing provided at project end.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Periodic Expenditures Reports and Budget revisions all detailed by year and budget line, however, not by component.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes	Audits
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		HS	National Project Coordinator, Project director, and IA staff continuously and fully aware of financial management.
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS	
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS	
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		S	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS	
Overall rating			

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

113. The communication between the Finance and Project Management staff resulted in the effective and efficient management of the project. The PMU administrative assistant managed the Project's accounting in collaboration with WWF's Finance and Administrative Manager. According to interviewed staff of UNEP and WWF, the communication was consistent and timely. PMU staff found that budget management was fluent and transparent: they noted that questions or concerns with UNEP and GEF policies and procedures on spending and reporting requirements were addressed in a timely and respectful manner. The main responsible persons for budget control (project coordinator, WWF, and UN

Environment task manager) confirmed they were continuously fully aware of the financial status of the Project. All interviewed recipients confirmed correct and timely payments of instalments. However, the fact that CONANP, WWF and UN Environment all use different budgeting formats sometimes made reporting inefficient, due to the need to keep parallel accounting for institutional records. Expenditures were reported to UNEP every three months.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

Finding 13. The Project collaborated effectively with several national and local initiatives implemented by a variety of institutions, academia and NGOs.

Finding 14. The Project had a serious delay in its implementation, caused by safety issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Project was extended for more than one year. In practice, this ensured the satisfactory finalization of outputs and generation of outcomes. The Project extension did not affect financing and the Project was overall cost-effective.

Finding 15: Since the Project was implemented during a relatively long period of time (6 years), it had to adapt to several contextual factors, including a change in government and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Project management adapted adequately to these changes.

114. The project's implementation was efficient, due, in part, to being designed to build upon a strong baseline of previous and existing initiatives of project partners at state and federal levels. In particular, CONANP is permanently present in the Sierra Tarahumara with protected area directors and technical staff and planning and monitoring capacities, as well as years of project cooperation experience in the region with all kinds of actors, from federal and state entities, communities and producer organizations, to non-governmental actors and research institutions. Furthermore, CONANP's conservation and sustainable development activities supported by PROCODES and PET funds contributed considerably to achieving project results in component 3 by orienting and co-financing pilot conservation and sustainable production projects.
115. The project also benefited from lessons learned and an ongoing exchange of experiences with several GEF projects in Mexico, especially the GEF BD full size project "Integrating Trade offs between Supply of Ecosystem Services and Land use Options into Poverty Alleviation Efforts and Development Planning in Mixteca" implemented by UNEP (GEF ID 3813) and executed by CONANP and WWF, as well as the GEF BD full size project "Mainstreaming the Conservation of Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity at the Micro-watershed Scale in Chiapas" implemented by UNEP (GEF ID 3816) and executed by CONANP and Conservation International (CI). Interviews with PMU staff emphasized the importance of these exchanges with ongoing projects and how they enriched their management of the project's interventions to ensure maximum benefits.
116. At the state/local level, the project benefited from several government institutions and NGOs that were already engaged in monitoring biodiversity and status/dynamics of ecosystems and habitat. Their primary focus was on monitoring endangered species, on one hand, and on the other hand forest cover and production capacities. CONANP had been monitoring BD indicator species, like black bear, green macaw, thick-billed parrot and Chihuahua spruce, as well as

some migratory birds in some parts of the Sierra region, involving communities and NGOs (for example CONTEC and Tierra Nativa) in field observation. The Faculty of Zootechnics and Ecology of the Autonomous University of Chihuahua (UACH) was monitoring birds in the Copper Canyons. CONAFOR and the state Direction of Forest Development introduced a biometric system for the assessment of forest inventories in the Sierra. The UMAFOR San Juanito developed and applied a system for fine scale measurement and mapping of forest cover and deforestation processes. As such, the GEF project worked with these partners to strengthen and expand these efforts. The project's systematization of BD data and the development of a Regional Action Plan, bolstered by local interventions to promote sustainable practices such as keyline, were key to fostering a cost-effective and timely approach.

117. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the activities programmed for the closing of the project. However, adaptive management measures ensured efficient alternatives for project closure without any financial impact on the project, as follows:

- The Project was granted two no-cost extensions for a total of 20 months, shifting its Official End date to 30 April 2022 (including the administrative closure).
- The workshop on sustainable tourism in the municipality of Balleza, Chihuahua, which had already been programmed, had to be cancelled due to the impossibility of attending the field, as well as by the type of activities implied. However, pursuant to consensus decision of the Project Steering Committee, it was decided to allocate this resource to having the information generated by the project printed, which will be distributed among the different key actors of the region.
- Of the programmed 5 Closing Forums of the project, only 3 were developed. Likewise and pursuant to a decision by the Project Steering Committee, the remaining resources were allocated to having the documents printed.
- Implementation of work at home (home office), by maintaining basic duties at the office.
- Activities continue as normal remotely, with the exception of face-to-face meetings that must be held remotely or be postponed or cancelled.
- International trips should be postponed or cancelled until further notice. Trips inside the country should be approved by Senior Management Team (SMT) with no exceptions, and it is suggested that they be avoided as much as possible.
- For any duty where the presence of personnel is required at the offices, scaled work hours and greater physical space will be implemented to support the general objective of reducing the risk of contact.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Finding 16. The Project is supported by a detailed Monitoring & Evaluation plan, including reporting requirements, risk monitoring and a dedicated budget. Indicators are well designed for project monitoring at the output level.

Finding 17. The Project's M&E plan was operational and informed project management and technical reporting adequately. Progress reporting was done in a

timely manner, through annual Project Implementation Reviews and Quarterly Expenditure Reports.

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

118. The project document included a detailed presentation of the Project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan (Appendix 7). This included its budget, responsibilities, approach and activities to be implemented during project execution. The plan covered the monitoring planning, visits, stakeholder involvement, indicator and tracking tool monitoring, technical reporting, mid-term and final reviews. The total budget of all monitoring activities was US\$ 87,000 (1.7% of GEF budget) which did not include dedicated personnel but did include monitoring field visits, audits, evaluations and stakeholder meetings. The indicators used for monitoring are output level indicators in the results framework. These are detailed, comply with SMART standards and generally had good baseline and monitoring information. At this level, the results framework was a good tool for monitoring and planning. The project was supported by a sound monitoring plan that was designed to track progress against SMART¹⁹ results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes. The project M&E plan is consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The project Results Framework presented in Appendix 4 of the ProDoc includes SMART indicators for each expected outcome as well as mid-term and end-of-project targets. However, these did not consistently disaggregate by gender.

Monitoring of Project Implementation and Project Reporting

119. The project M&E plan was well implemented. There was no specific M&E officer but monitoring was the responsibility of the National Project Coordinator, who was in charge of the oversight, gathering of information and production of reports, in coordination with other PMU staff. The reviewer examined all periodic progress reports, project implementation reviews (PIR) and found them complete, informative and timely. The PIR included informative narratives on project progress and fair and detailed reporting on indicators, risk rating and stakeholder engagement. In addition, the Project made progress presentations to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Based on insights from project monitoring, the PMU adjusted its workplan annually and presented this to PSC. The PIR reported well how project monitoring informed adaptive management and changes were well reported to the IA and GEF. The ProDoc included a risk management analysis and monitoring plan and a detailed assessment of social and environmental safeguards. The risk management was adequately applied and reported upon in every PIR.

120. Since the Project was developed in GEF-5, there were no GEF core indicator targets defined at CEO endorsement. Based on the project reporting (PIR and final report), the reviewer identified the following GEF-7 core indicators in a retrospective manner:

- Core Indicator 1. Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use: 35 ADVC pending certification covering 74,309 ha.

¹⁹ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

- Core Indicator 3. Area of land restored: 2,294,696 has.
- Core indicator 4. Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas): sustainable forest management practices/certification of forest (103,665 has); local production projects using BD and ES friendly management/practices (1,984,414 has)
- Core Indicator 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.

121. Unfortunately, current data combines the area of land for indicators 3 and 4, so it is difficult to differentiate between area of land restored and area of landscapes under improved practices. Furthermore, in general, the Project did not include any quantitative result indicator on social aspects such as number of people benefitting or participating. Therefore, while the project's reports provide numbers of beneficiaries, it did not present data disaggregated for gender or marginalized groups.

122. The MTR was completed in 2018 and many of its recommendations followed up and reported upon. In particular, the recommendations on the extension of project implementation period, and improved communication were successfully implemented and resulted in improved project performance.

123. The present terminal review was done in December 2022, two years after formal project closure (December 2020).

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	Satisfactory
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H. Sustainability

Finding 18. The social and political basis for conservation and mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services in landscape planning and management has increased in the project area. This constitutes a strong basis for sustaining project results and progress towards impacts.

Finding 19. The continuation and replicability of many project results is dependent on continued financial resources. There are public and private institutions committed to providing continued technical support and monitoring, but ongoing funding is needed. There is insufficient consolidation of a financial strategy and corresponding mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

Finding 20. The institutional sustainability at the municipal and ejido level has been strengthened and constitutes a positive enabling environment for sustaining project results. At the state and national level, while there is expressed institutional interest to support the onward progress of impact at scale, the coordination and collaboration networks are not optimal, due in part to administrative changes in personnel and budget cuts.

Socio-political Sustainability

124. Socio-political sustainability depends on the continuity of uptake and application of the tools and processes developed by the project. CONANP staff, particularly those in the PA, expressed a commitment to using the monitoring guides and ST-DM&IS to support their management of BD and ES in their respective areas of responsibility. Furthermore, they commented on the usefulness of the public engagement mechanisms for interacting with communities in the area of influence of the PA they manage. The implementation and replication of the RAP and sustainable management plans generated through

Component 2 will also determine sustainability. Members of indigenous groups commented on the importance of the RAP process of giving them a voice to include criteria that was backed by traditional knowledge and prioritization of certain species and their uses. Women from local communities were engaged in productive activities that generated income and promoted an exchange of experiences and sense of community in areas that are often isolated. While there is a marked interest expressed by representatives of the municipalities and local communities, the current security issues hinder some of the activities relevant to these processes. Despite this, at a more local level, individuals and cooperatives continue to find ways to exchange lessons learned and develop networks of information and support between themselves.

Financial Sustainability

125. Financial sustainability is the weakest element of the project, due to several factors. The project design did not include a financing strategy for the pilot interventions, nor for post-project support to continue the environmental governance activities initiated by the RAP. While Component 1 does consider the need to define financing to maintain the ST-DM&IS, this is not detailed and current budget cuts do not bode well. Ongoing institutional changes affect programming, staffing and budgeting in federal agencies, which hampers their ability to commit to replication activities. This was evident during project implementation with regards to a 13% decrease in cofinancing availability. The COVID pandemic impacted Mexico's economy and post-pandemic recovery continues to impact the availability of resources at all levels. Members of local cooperatives also mentioned the difficulty incurred regarding access to materials to maintain current tools and productive activities, as well as support for capacity building opportunities.

Institutional Sustainability

126. In general, the increased interactions between government institutions and members of local communities and indigenous groups leads to greater institutional sustainability with regards to their respective mandates to work with key stakeholders and subsequent implementation of activities *in situ*. Beginning with CONANP, the project's monitoring protocols and guides directly enable a more effective monitoring of key indicator species, as well as the engagement of local communities in conservation and sustainable production activities that foster ecosystem connectivity between PA. The creation of ADVC supports CONANP's efforts to expand conservation areas through alternative schemes that engage private landowners. However CONANP's approval process has been very slow, and it is unclear how many ADVC will actually be formally recognized (at the time of this TR, only a handful had been approved of the more than 70 proposals sent to CONANP). With regards to CONAFOR, the project's implementation in forested areas, especially with regards to the FSC certification process, led to an increased involvement of CONAFOR, beyond what was initially envisioned during project design. This engagement of CONAFOR staff has resulted in a mainstreaming of BD and ES criteria in the agency's activities and approach to working with local communities and producers. Furthermore, the employment of former PMU staff by CONAFOR post-project ensures a transfer of capacity and knowledge to the institution and the forestry sector. Ultimately, while the project developed tools, methodologies and information systems that have the potential to foster institutional sustainability, ongoing personnel changes and budgetary cuts to the environmental sector present a serious risk.

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Finding 21. The Project was managed professionally with high quality, committed PMU staff. Initial hiring was delayed, but eventually resolved.

Finding 22. The project governance relied on a Project Steering Committee that was limited to UNEP, CONANP and WWF staff, with occasional input from CONAFOR. The PSC met annually at first and then almost monthly after the MTR, resulting in effective decision-making for the Project.

Finding 23. UN Environment backstopping, particularly by the Task Manager, was effective and welcomed by the project team and partner agencies.

Finding 24. Stakeholder participation at the local level (municipalities) and partners in execution (NGOs, academia, service providers) was good and strengthened during project execution. Participation and cooperation with national level partners was a challenge due to changes in administration and the ensuing personnel turnover and budget cuts. Project beneficiaries were progressively included in project implementation and their engagement increased through transparent information provision and effective benefit generation.

Finding 25. While the Project did not have a clear gender strategy, in practice, it did involve and empower women and youth. It was also pro-active in engaging the Indigenous Peoples that live and work in the STR, many of whom became strategic allies for the project.

Finding 26. The project's communication strategy was effective as it included various media for disseminating project information in Spanish and local languages via radio, printed material and virtual tools (www.tarahumarasustentable.mx).

Preparation and Readiness

127. The project design and existence of regional offices of both CONANP and WWF in Chihuahua were expected to provide "local advantage" to ensure strong preparation and readiness, especially in terms of positioning the project in State and municipal governments as well as with local communities, ejidos and Indigenous Peoples. Despite this local advantage, the project experienced a delay in initiating implementation after CEO approval by the GEF due to the slow contracting of the PMU, which in turn affected the implementation of the planned work plan and project activities. Fortunately, a combination of project design and institutional commitment succeeded in making up for this initial delay and the project was able to successfully complete the planned outcomes and ultimately contribute toward the objective.

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

128. The PMU consisted of a group of qualified professionals with a combination of experiences in forestry, community participation, conservation and productive activities. The diversity of experiences enabled a dynamic and effective implementation of the project at both institutional and local levels.

129. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was composed of WWF, CONANP and UN Environment, with participation of other actors such as CONAFOR, when necessary. The PSC provided a forum for institutional level coordination, as well as for dynamic planning and coordination of project activities, exchanges and cooperation/coordination of this project with other existing and emerging

initiatives throughout the life of the project. The PSC met periodically throughout the project's implementation and reviewed the project's progress via periodic reports on progress, guiding its implementation to maintain its strategic focus by making recommendations concerning the need to revise any aspects of the Results Framework or the M&E plan.

130. UN Environment support was limited to support by the GEF Task Manager and administrative staff at the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama. The collaboration with the Panama team has been considered optimal from all sides. The PMU, CONANP and WWF considered the collaboration with UN Environment to be effective at both the technical and administrative levels. Although the Task Manager generally only visits a country once per year (coinciding with the steering committee meeting), PMU and project partners highlighted their constant availability for calls or email communication, thereby generating a sense of consistent support. Administrative staff of PMU and WWF considered UN Environment's administrative support as highly efficient and helpful, especially with regards to reconciling the variety of reporting requirements and formats of GEF, CONANP, WWF and UN Environment. PSC members also considered UN Environment's Task Manager's contribution to PSC as strategically constructive and innovative, especially after a critical MTR. While this resulted in a situation alike to "micro-management" with almost monthly PSC meetings following the MTR, the project adjusted and completed in a successful manner. The reviewer also observed an effort by the Task Manager to promote collaboration with other UNEP programs in Mexico, especially in Oaxaca and Chiapas.

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

131. The project's design and institutional arrangements explicitly encouraged stakeholder participation and coordination. Efforts were made to build cross-sector linkages and participatory dynamics that are essential to ensuring maximum impact by the project. Stakeholder participation at the local level was high and contributed strongly to the project's outcomes and impact. The participation of local governments and other partners in execution, such as NGOs, service providers and academia strengthened during implementation. The participation of government agencies at the higher level (federal and state) varied. While the collaboration of the relevant national government institutions was analysed and confirmed during project design, this was more erratic during project implementation, due, in part to changes in government administration and resources that affected the commitment and availability of personnel to participate in project actions.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

132. While the ProDoc did not include a separate gender analysis and action plan, the project made a concerted effort to engage women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in project activities, specifically identifying opportunities to promote equality and inclusion during implementation as a cross-cutting issue not only in pilot projects but also as a principle of environmental governance. For example, one of the indicators for the ST-DM&IS in Output 1.1 is the aspect of livelihoods and human wellbeing, as measured by a) Human Development Index in pilot communities (gender disaggregated) and b) Access of communities/households to healthy and sufficient water. The coordination mechanism for Output 2.1 promoted gender equity, with support from the Chihuahua Women Institute (ICHIMUJ), SEDESOL/Bienestar, CDI/INPI, PIAI and competent NGOs. Indicator 2

of Outcome 2 and Indicator 5 in Outcome 3 are gender disaggregated. The Project contributed to the empowerment of these women because their existing knowledge was considered and they profited economically and socially through positions in producer organizations. The project recognized that the participation of the indigenous communities and the respect of their own ideas on environmental governance are crucial to succeed in the conservation of the Sierra Tarahumara. The RAP was published in Spanish and in the four indigenous languages - rarámuri, guarojío, tepehuano and pima - spoken in the Sierra Tarahumara; the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) was involved in the corresponding translation work.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

133. The ProDoc includes an annex on Environmental and Social Safeguards considered during project design. The implementation of actions that effectively ensure the respect and ownership of local stakeholders, has been considered a core aspect in the initiatives developed by the Project. From the beginning, it was decisive to address the promotion of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services based on the strengthening of environmental governance and the recognition of significant environmental and social risks that can be triggered if these safeguards are not considered.
134. To ensure the full and effective participation of the stakeholders, it is necessary to continue giving accompaniment by the main partners and those who will continue to have a presence in the territory. The challenges in these terms are aimed at ensuring the ownership of these methods developed by the project and seek to strengthen governance processes with cultural criteria, promote openness on the subject of gender and sustainability.
135. The project had positive environmental impacts because of its focus on conserving biodiversity and ecosystem service values. The project focus on improved understanding and conservation of ecosystem services also entailed positive social impacts, as these services provide important benefits to communities and towns in the region, such as improved water supply and quality and more protection against soil erosion and impoverishment of agricultural lands.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

136. The project's national execution modality and institutional arrangements enabled country ownership and driven-ness. As noted earlier, the level of institutional interest determined actual ownership levels, and the change in administration made that variable during project implementation. At project end, the interest of the main key stakeholders (indigenous and rural communities, municipalities, CSOs, federal and state governments) was evidenced in how to continue with the initiatives undertaken by the Project, both in the information generated in component 1 and in the field implementation strategies. Towards the closure of the project, the participation of the executors had a very high level of involvement, which shows ownership and is favourable for the sustainability of the project.

Communication and Public Awareness

The Project generated a large amount of information which was systematized and made available on the PTS website (www.tarahumarasustentable.mx). This highlights the information generated by Component 1, consisting of analysis and tools to support planning, evaluation and decision-making in biodiversity

conservation and ecosystem services, through an Assessment of Biodiversity and the Environment (EBMA-ST), a Data and Information Monitoring System of the Sierra Tarahumara (ST-DM&IS) and tools based on Geographic Information Systems (GIS); and Component 2, where eighteen diagnoses of environmental, social and economic aspects of the Sierra Tarahumara were generated, as well as the Regional Action Plan and the Common Agenda for the Development of the Sierra Tarahumara. Furthermore, the project created tools for public awareness campaigns, using virtual applications to support the dissemination of materials, such as radio spots, videos, among others, in Spanish and local indigenous languages. A story about the project was recently shared on UNEP's website: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/protecting-sierra-tarahumara-biodiversity-hot-spot>. As UNEP follows up the project's results, new stories regarding key subjects will emerge for publishing.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

137. Based on the findings from this review, the overall project performance is rated as “Satisfactory” and the project demonstrates successful impact at the landscape level (a table of ratings against all review criteria is found below). The project has demonstrated strong performance in the areas of Relevance and Effectiveness. The project would have benefited from further attention to Financial Sustainability.
138. The Project was conceptually and strategically well designed, with a few minor weaknesses. The Project goal and strategies were highly relevant for the participating institutions at the national, state and local levels as well as for the donor execution agencies. The Project’s approach (mainstreaming biodiversity in local planning and environmental management, informed by the identification and monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem services at the landscape level) was innovative and ensured good participation and appropriation from local stakeholders, especially *ejidos*, Indigenous Peoples (IP) and NGOs. Important outcomes were achieved in terms of local environmental planning, monitoring systems, pilot interventions, and the implementation of a Regional Action Plan that mainstreamed BD and ES criteria. The outcomes led to a comprehensive data and monitoring system, initial positive impact on biodiversity conservation, improved soil management and generation of environmental services. While this is still at the pilot/local level, there is an enabling environment for replication and scaling throughout the Sierra Tarahumara and beyond.
139. Project execution was efficient although there were delays in hiring the PMU and in activities due to the external context. This led to a no-cost project extension, which ultimately helped to consolidate project outcomes. The Project was well managed by a highly professional project team that successfully interacted with stakeholders at all levels to achieve the expected outputs. The strong participation of local stakeholders and the high-quality technical products were key factors for the success of the Project. The Project experienced some challenges to align with and ensure optimal engagement of national level stakeholders due to turn-over of personnel and budget cuts in CONANP. Despite this, many outputs were achieved jointly and national institutions are committed to the project’s sustainability.
140. The sustainability of the project’s results is rated as “Moderately Likely;” even though the social sustainability is likely, the financial sustainability and institutional sustainability are only moderately likely because of a lack of a financial strategy, economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and institutional constraints that were outside of the project’s control. Monitoring and reporting was done well, although the Project was weak in monitoring social aspects. The Project benefitted many different stakeholder groups and included women, IP and youth but this was not measured or reported sufficiently.
141. Based on the findings of the Project, the reviewer draws the following specific conclusions:
142. Conclusion 1. The project approach (landscape-level conservation, decentralized management, sustainability mainstreaming) is a relevant innovation for various levels of government and society.
143. Conclusion 2. The project objectives and strategies are aligned with policies and plans of GEF, UN Environment and national public institutions.

144. Conclusion 3. The Project was well designed with a good vertical and horizontal logic, SMART indicators with End-of-Project Targets and M&E plan, inclusion of stakeholders and consideration of social and environmental impacts for project beneficiaries. Learning, Communication and Outreach aspects are clearly described, as well as Efficiency and Financial Planning and Budgeting.
145. Conclusion 4. The Project took 17 months to establish a complete PMU and be fully operational, which affected the achievement of outputs in the first half of the project. To compensate for this and the delays due to COVID restrictions at project end, the Project was extended for more than one year. In practice, this ensured the satisfactory finalization of outputs and generation of outcomes. The Project extension did not affect financing and the Project was cost-effective overall.
146. Conclusion 5. The Project satisfactorily generated a large number of diverse outputs, some to a higher degree than planned. Some of the outputs were generated differently as planned, which was a result of adequate adaptive management. These outputs contributed similarly to the outcomes. The collaboration with local governments and the involvement of a large number of other stakeholders (academia, service providers, beneficiaries) was a key factor for the generation of quality outputs. A well implemented communication strategy that included local languages resulted not only in the dissemination of outputs to a wide audience but also helped to increase capacities of project beneficiaries.
147. Conclusion 6. Since the Project was implemented during a relatively long period of time (6 years), it had to adapt to several governmental changes and contextual factors, including the COVID pandemic. The Project management adapted adequately to these changes.
148. Conclusion 7. The Project is supported by a detailed and well-arranged monitoring and evaluation plan, including reporting requirements, risk monitoring and a dedicated budget. Indicators are well designed for project monitoring at the output level. The Project's M&E system informed project management and technical reporting adequately. Progress reporting was done in a timely manner, through annual Project Implementation Reviews and Quarterly Expenditure Reports. Monitoring included two gender indicators but limited to % involvement, rather than number of individuals.
149. Conclusion 8. The Project engaged local project partner agencies and beneficiaries (municipalities, NGOs, academia, producers, land owners) in an effective manner with project activities, which was key to generating results. In the pilot projects, a diversity of good practices was generated, with the following characteristics: effective, replicable, innovative, appropriate to the educational context, comprehensive, sustainable. Although the participation of national and regional level public agencies has been continuous during the Project and important joint activities have been implemented, their engagement has been a continuous challenge for the Project.

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

150. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Chapter 0. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of **Satisfactory**.

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

The UNEP Evaluation Office formally quality assesses (see Annex IX) management led Terminal Review reports and validates the performance ratings therein by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations.

The Evaluation Office assesses a Terminal Review report in the same way as it assesses the initial draft of a Terminal Evaluation report. It applies the following assumptions in its validation process:

- That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.
- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.
- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.
- That the project team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office validates the overall project performance rating at the '**Satisfactory**' level.

Table 4: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance	Project design based on gaps and threats identified during PIF phase, linking systemic and institutional interventions. Project builds on prior GEF/WWF/UNEP support initiatives and aligned with their policies and plans. Project approach was innovative and ensured good participation and appropriation from local stakeholders.	HS	Rating validated	HS
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	The project was aligned with UNEP's MTS 2014-17 and POW at project design and subsequent MTS and POW during implementation. The ProDoc referred to UNEP Mexico's POW for 2014-2015 and the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR) provided relevance to updated POW during project implementation.	HS	Rating validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners strategic priorities	<p>The project is aligned with the following GEF Strategic Priorities in Biodiversity:</p> <p>BD-1 Outcome 1.1 Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Output 1.1 New protected areas mosaic within 300,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems -Output 1.2 New coverage of 11 unprotected threatened species <p>BD-2 Outcome 2.1 Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation</p> <p>BD-2 Outcome 2.2 Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Output 2.1 Policies and regulatory frameworks for 2 production sectors (forestry and agriculture) -Output 2.2 One regional land-use plan (Regional Action Plan) and one land-use plan for each participating municipality that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation -Output 2.3 Certified production landscapes mosaic within 300,000 ha of unprotected ecosystems 	HS	Rating validated	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	<p>The project provides a number of tools to PA management, BD monitoring and engagement of communities in the buffer zones/ areas of influence, ultimately supporting CONANP's efforts to foster ecosystem integrity and connectivity throughout the STR. Please see list of programs on p. 38.</p>	S	Rating validated	S
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	<p>The project developed different technical tools that contribute to CONANP's work in the Tarahumara region. Monitoring guides continue to be used by PA and the stakeholder engagement approach used by the project has been replicated by PA staff with local communities. Please see list of national programs on p. 38.</p>	S	Rating validated	S
Quality of Project Design	<p>Project was well designed with a good vertical and horizontal logic, SMART indicators and M&E plan, inclusion of stakeholders and consideration of social and environmental impacts for project beneficiaries. Indicators were presented at the output level, which were aggregated at the outcome and objective levels. Some outputs fully reflected the activities to generate these.</p>	S	Rating is validated but note reservations. The project design did not appear to consider an exit strategy integral to this type of national capacity development project. While some indicators in the results framework included gender disaggregated data, gender equality and beneficiaries were not well captured in the log frame.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Nature of External Context	External contextual events (i.e., ongoing security issues related to narcotraffickers and illegal loggers, accompanied by the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak) caused major operational challenges for the Project with respect to working in certain areas of the STR and resulted in activity delays for which a project extension was awarded. Administration changes in government institutions at all levels also impacted project implementation with regards to availability of personnel and cofinancing.	MU	Rating validated	MU
Effectiveness	Project achieved the majority of planned outputs. A few outputs surpassed the target value, while a few fell short. A few outputs were achieved differently than planned because the Project activities were adapted to changes in the external context. Key stakeholders at the local level and service providers were involved in the generation of outputs, contributing to the quality and sustainability of results. The Project outcomes and impact benefitted all stakeholder groups. Most assumptions included in the Project Results Framework held, particularly the willingness of local stakeholders to participate in the initiatives.	HS	Overall rating adjusted with justification. Rating of effectiveness adjusted as Achievement of Outcomes is rated "Satisfactory".	S
1. Availability of outputs	The project was successful in producing most of the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries. The only outputs that were limited in their achievement were the systematization and validation of the project's results, due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see table p. 43-36.	HS	Rating validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The achievement of project outcomes was assessed as performance against the outcomes as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change. Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 were all successfully achieved.	HS	Rating is adjusted. The assessment of achievement of outcome 1 does not include sufficient information on the change achieved at outcome level. Evidence for achievement of outcome 1 is largely restricted to the availability of outputs rather than evidence of use of DM&IS in management plan preparation and decision making processes. Outcomes 2 and 3 appear to have achieved the expected change. Other notes of reservation: The assessment of achievement of outcomes is based on the reviewer's assessment and does not systematically refer to outcome indicators and targets met but is based on an aggregate of attaining output targets, e.g. "Following the Project's results framework, the indicators for the achievement are the aggregate of the six output indicators". Reference to the RTOC in the assessment and relative strength of causality appear not to be considered in the assessment of outcome achievement. The definition of the outcomes partly is partly in line with the UNEP definitions of an outcome. While Outcome 2 and 3 indicates change, such change is not well captured in the formulation of Outcome 1: "Management plans and decision making processes of key stakeholders involved in the biodiversity conservation management of the Sierra Tarahumara utilize the project's diagnostic tools and data bases."	S
3. Likelihood of impact	With the satisfactory achievement of the Project's outputs and outcomes, some of them even surpassed, the review findings confirm that this objective was achieved and impact is likely. All stakeholders coincide in recognizing the project's sustaining contribution to improving information systems, planning and governance tools, and practical application <i>in situ</i> of improved practices and certification.	L	Rating is validated but note reservations. While the assessment appears justified, it is not supported by a satisfactory analysis and review of RTOC.	L
Financial Management	Financial management was conducted in a satisfactory manner. Financial reporting was correct, timely and transparent. The reporting and availability of cofinancing by partner institutions was varied, resulting in a decrease in overall cofinancing levels to 7:1 compared to 8:1 at CEO Endorsement.	S	Rating validated	S
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	The project followed UNEP's financial policies and procedures, as stipulated in the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed between UNEP and WWF upon project inception.	S	Rating validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Completeness of project financial information	The financial information provided was complete. Administration and reporting followed UNEP expenditure categories, and presented budget revisions, periodic expenditure reports, and annual independent financial audits.	S	Rating validated	S
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	The communication between the Finance and Project Management staff resulted in the effective and efficient management of the project. The PMU administrative assistant managed the Project's accounting in collaboration with WWF's Finance and Administrative Manager. CONANP, WWF and UN Environment all use different budgeting formats which made reporting inefficient, due to the need to keep parallel accounting for institutional records. Expenditures were reported to UNEP every three months.	S	Rating validated	S
Efficiency	The Project collaborated effectively with several national and local initiatives implemented by a variety of institutions, academia and NGOs. The Project had a serious delay in its implementation, caused by safety issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Project was extended for more than one year. In practice, this ensured the satisfactory finalization of outputs and generation of outcomes. The Project extension did not affect financing and the Project was overall cost-effective.	S	Rating is validated but note reservations. The project had two 'no cost extensions' both appear to be related to implementation delays incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the no-cost extensions, there were 10 revisions to the project budget.	S
Monitoring and Reporting	The Project is supported by a detailed M&E plan, including reporting requirements, risk monitoring and a dedicated budget. Indicators are well designed for project monitoring at the output level. The M&E plan was operational and informed project management and technical reporting adequately. Progress reporting was done in a timely manner, through annual Project Implementation Reviews and Quarterly Expenditure Reports.	S	Rating validated	S
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The ProDoc included a detailed presentation of the M&E plan (Appendix 7), as well as a budget, responsibilities, approach and activities to be implemented during project execution.	S	Rating validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Monitoring of project implementation	The project M&E plan was well implemented. Periodic progress reports and project implementation reviews (PIR) were complete, informative and timely. GEF-7 core indicators were applied in a retrospective manner, but current data is not sufficiently disaggregated for all these core indicators, i.e., area of land restored vs. area of landscapes under improved practices, and gender.	S	Rating validated	S
3. Project reporting	Progress reporting was done in a timely manner, through annual Project Implementation Reviews and Quarterly Expenditure Reports. The MTR was completed in 2018 and the Terminal Review was done in December 2022.	S	Rating validated	S
Sustainability	The social and political basis for conservation and mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services in landscape planning and management has increased in the project area, constituting a strong basis for sustaining project results and progress towards impacts. However, there is insufficient consolidation of a financial strategy and corresponding mechanisms, and, while institutional sustainability at the municipal and ejido level has been strengthened and there is institutional interest at the state and national level, the coordination and collaboration networks are not optimal.	ML	Rating validated	ML
1. Socio-political sustainability	CONANP expressed a commitment to using the monitoring guides and ST-DM&IS to support their management of BD and ES, as well as the public engagement mechanisms for interacting with communities in the area of influence of the PA. Members of indigenous groups commented on the importance of the RAP process of giving them a voice. Individuals and cooperatives continue to find ways to exchange lessons learned and develop networks of information and support between themselves. While there is interest by representatives of municipalities and local communities, current security issues hinder some activities relevant to these processes.	L	Rating validated	L
2. Financial sustainability	Financial sustainability is the weakest element of the project. The project design did not include a financing strategy for the pilot interventions, nor for post-project support to continue the environmental governance activities initiated by the RAP. The COVID pandemic impacted Mexico's economy and post-pandemic recovery continues to impact the availability of resources at all levels.	ML	Rating validated	ML

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Institutional sustainability	Increased interactions between government institutions and members of local communities and indigenous groups leads to greater institutional sustainability with regards to their respective mandates to work with key stakeholders and subsequent implementation of activities <i>in situ</i> . The creation of ADVOC supports CONANP's efforts to expand conservation areas. CONAFOR staff engagement in the project has resulted in a mainstreaming of BD and ES criteria in the agency's activities. While the project developed tools, methodologies and information systems that have the potential to foster institutional sustainability, ongoing personnel changes and budgetary cuts to the environmental sector present a risk.	ML	Rating validated	ML
Factors Affecting Performance	The Project was managed professionally by the PMU staff. Initial hiring was delayed, but eventually resolved. Project governance relied on a Project Steering Committee composed of UNEP, CONANP and WWF staff, with occasional input from CONAFOR. Stakeholder participation at the local level and execution partners was good and strengthened during project.	S	Rating validated	S
1. Preparation and readiness	The project design and existence of regional offices of both CONANP and WWF in Chihuahua provided "local advantage" to ensure strong preparation and readiness, especially in terms of positioning the project with stakeholders. However, there was a delay in initiating implementation due to the slow contracting of the PMU, which in turn affected the implementation of the planned work plan and project activities. Project design and institutional commitment made up for this initial delay.	MS	Rating validated	MS
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The PMU consisted of a group of qualified professionals with a combination of experiences in forestry, community participation, conservation and productive activities that enabled a dynamic and effective implementation of the project at both institutional and local levels. The PSC provided a forum for institutional level coordination and met periodically throughout the project's implementation and reviewed the project's progress.	S	Rating validated	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UN Environment support was provided by the GEF Task Manager and administrative staff at the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama. The collaboration with the Panama team has been considered optimal from all sides.	HS		HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
<i>2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:</i>	Ongoing institutional changes in CONANP affected programming, staffing and availability of resources, which affected the commitment and availability of personnel to participate in project actions. CONANP was instrumental in developing the monitoring guides and ST-DM&IS, but future maintenance of the system was not defined in operational detail. The creation of ADVC supports CONANP's efforts to expand conservation areas, yet CONANP's approval process is very slow, so it is unclear how many ADVC will be formally recognized.	MS	Rating validated	MS
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Efforts were made to build cross-sector linkages and participatory dynamics that are essential to ensuring maximum impact by the project. Stakeholder participation at the local level was high and contributed strongly to the project's outcomes and impact. The participation of government agencies at the higher level (federal and state) varied.	S	Rating validated	S
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The project made a concerted effort to engage women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in project activities, specifically identifying opportunities to promote equality and inclusion during implementation as a cross-cutting issue not only in pilot projects but also as a principle of environmental governance.	MS	Rating validated	MS
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The ProDoc includes an annex on Environmental and Social Safeguards considered during project design. The project took care to address the promotion of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services based on the strengthening of environmental governance and the recognition of significant environmental and social risks that can be triggered if these safeguards are not considered.	MS	Rating validated	MS
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project's national execution modality and institutional arrangements enabled country ownership and driven-ness. As noted earlier, the level of institutional interest determined actual ownership levels, and the change in administration made that variable during project implementation.	MS	Rating validated	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
7. Communication and public awareness	The Project generated a large amount of information which was systematized and made available on the PTS website (www.tarahumarasustentable.mx). The project created tools for public awareness campaigns, using virtual applications to support the dissemination of materials, such as radio spots, videos, among others, in Spanish and local indigenous languages.	S	Rating validated	S
Overall Project Performance Rating	Based on the findings from this review, the overall project performance is rated as "Satisfactory" and the project demonstrates successful impact at the landscape level.	S	Rating validated	S

C. Lessons learned

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)
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 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.
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

	<p>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.</p>
<p>Lesson Learned #4:</p>	<p>Engaging bachelor's, master's and doctoral students is a cost-effective option for continuous monitoring of species, development of alternative practices and impact.</p>
<p>Lesson Learned #5:</p>	<p>In the implementation of the pilot projects: Take care of the relationship with the people of the communities (producers, <i>ejidatarias</i>, 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.</p>
<p>Lesson Learned #6:</p>	<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>
<p>Lesson Learned #7:</p>	<p>The permanent presence of the project's technical staff in Chihuahua allowed constant support for project beneficiaries, achieving their</p>

	<p>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)</p>
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<p>Lesson Learned #8:</p>	<p>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)</p>
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D. Recommendations

151. Recommendation 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 and participation could be enhanced.
152. Recommendation 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.
153. Recommendation 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 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."
154. Recommendation 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 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.

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Table 5: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator Response
Pag. 6 Acrónimos	Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples) - Incluir su nuevo nombre: Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas.	The new name has been added to the list of Acronyms and reference made in the document.
Pag. 10, par. 1	Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (National Council for Natural Protected Areas) – Debe ser “National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP).” Homogenizar en todo el documento el nombre.	The name has been corrected in the document.

ANNEX II. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

Table 6: People consulted during the Review

Organization	Name	Position/Involvement in Project	Gender
MachiKo	Dinorah Meneses	Environmental Governance and Environmental Education Campaign	F
Municipality of Guachochi	Ramón Caro	Former Public official Biophysical bases for Municipal Ecological Planning	M
Natika	Maria Luisa Bustillos	Pilot Project, PAR, Application of SMDI-ST	F
Ejido Norogachi	José Antonio Sandoval	Pilot Project, PAR, Application of SMDI-ST	M
Ejido Caborachi	Estanislao Rubí	Environmental Governance	M
UACH	Alfredo Pinedo	SMDI-ST	M
SEMARNAT	Gustavo Heredia	Appropriation SMDI-ST, ADVC	M
EMA	Martín García	Appropriation SMDI-ST, SE y ADVC	M
Ej. San Ignacio de Arareko	Chayito	Pilot Project, ADVC	F
Ej. Retiro y Gumeachi	Manuela Zamarron	Governance and Pilot Project	F
PRODECAVI	Juan Paulo Romero	PAR	M
INPI	Victor Martinez	Environmental Governance	M
Former Public Official of the State Govt.	Teresa Guerrero	Common Agenda and PAR	F
CONANP	Israel Aguirre	Environmental monitoring and governance protocols	M
CONANP	Celene Moncayo	All components	F
CONANP	Maria Elena Rodarte	Regional Director, North and Sierra Madre Occidental of CONANP	F
CONFORMO	Fernando Ayala	Governance and Pilot Project	M
FORMAC, AC	Josselin Portugal Robles	Governance and Pilot Project	F
FORMAC, AC	Celso Eliver Ayala Burges	Governance and Pilot Project	M

WWF	Eduardo Rendón	Deputy Director of the Terrestrial Ecosystems Program	M
WWF	María del Carmen Quintanar	Finance and Administration Manager	F
WWF	Anuar Martínez	Participation in the construction of the SMDI-ST- PAR	M

Questions used to guide the interviews:

	Executing Partners (UNEP, WWF, CONANP)	PMU	Government Organizations (SEMARNAT, CONAFOR, INPI, etc)	CSO and Local Stakeholders
Que fue su rol en el proyecto?	x	x	x	x
Diseño				
¿En qué medida se ha logrado el objetivo general del Proyecto GEF?	x	x	x	x
¿Cuáles han sido los principales logros del Proyecto? ¿Qué impactos ha tenido el Proyecto?	x	x	x	x
¿En qué medida los componentes del proyecto, así como sus otras características (elección de socios, estructura de la Unidad de Gestión del Proyecto, mecanismos de implementación, alcance, presupuesto, procesos administrativos y uso de recursos) permitieron el logro de los objetivos?	x	x	x	
En cuanto al diseño del proyecto, ¿la lógica de intervención fue adecuada? ¿Fueron los resultados del proyecto claros y lógicos y dirigidos hacia necesidades claramente identificadas?	x	x	x	
¿Se ha utilizado el marco lógico, los planes de trabajo o las modificaciones realizadas a los mismos como herramientas de gestión durante la ejecución del proyecto?	x	x		
¿Qué factores contribuyeron al logro o no de los efectos deseados?	x	x		
¿Existen estrategias y experiencias desarrolladas por el proyecto que tengan potencial de replicación?	x	x	x	x
¿Existen diferencias en el avance a nivel de los pilotos con intervención directa del proyecto?	x	x	x	x
Describir las tecnologías de información electrónica utilizadas para apoyar la aplicación, participación y seguimiento, así como otras actividades del proyecto (incluido el	x	x	x	x

intercambio con las partes interesadas del proyecto global). (por ejemplo, capacitación basada en la web, videoconferencias, correo electrónico, etc.)				
¿Se han logrado otros resultados no deseados en el diseño del proyecto?	x	x	x	x
Relevancia				
¿Fue el proyecto relevante para los propósitos del Programa de País? ¿Por qué sí/no?	x	x	x	
¿Respondió esta intervención a las prioridades de desarrollo del país o área de influencia?	x	x	x	
¿Ha habido algún efecto o algún tipo de cambio de política?	x	x	x	x
¿Cuáles han sido los cambios, positivos o negativos, generados por el trabajo del proyecto?	x	x	x	x
¿Se tuvieron en cuenta otros proyectos durante la implementación del proyecto, a nivel nacional, regional y global y sus lecciones aprendidas?	x	x	x	
¿Se consideraron adecuadamente los factores externos? ¿Cuán flexibles fueron los diferentes niveles de gestión para adaptarse al cambio?	x	x	x	x
¿En qué medida existen riesgos financieros, institucionales, socioeconómicos y/o ambientales para la sostenibilidad a largo plazo de los resultados del proyecto?	x	x	x	x
Admin				
¿Estaban bien diseñadas y distribuidas las responsabilidades entre los socios y se cumplieron? ¿Fueron pertinentes estos arreglos?	x	x		
¿Qué instituciones gubernamentales participaron en la ejecución del proyecto?	x	x	x	x
¿Cómo fue su participación? ¿En qué medida el Gobierno apoyó (o no) el Proyecto, comprendió su responsabilidad y cumplió con sus obligaciones?	x	x	x	
¿Cuál era el papel de ONU Medio Ambiente vs WWF en la implementación?	x	x		
Describe la supervisión periódica de las actividades durante la ejecución.	x	x		
Describe cómo ONU Medio Ambiente y el Gobierno colaboraron juntos en la ejecución del proyecto.	x	x		
Describe cómo se llevó a cabo la selección, contratación, asignación de expertos, consultores y personal de contraparte	x	x		
¿Los arreglos administrativos consideraron y fueron adecuados a las características de dispersión geográfica y heterogeneidad de condiciones requeridas por el proyecto?	x	x		

¿Cómo ha sido en la práctica el cofinanciamiento en especie y en efectivo?	X	X	X	
¿Qué lecciones se pueden identificar con respecto a la eficiencia?	X	X	X	X
Participacion/Beneficiarios				
¿La estructura del proyecto garantizó la participación adecuada de todos los socios?	X	X	X	X
¿Cuáles son las organizaciones no gubernamentales que realmente participaron en el diseño e implementación del Proyecto? Por favor especifica	X	X	X	X
¿Cómo se podría mejorar la participación de las ONG?	X	X	X	X
¿Qué procesos requirieron la implementación de un enfoque participativo? ¿La estrategia implementada fue adecuada? ¿Qué resultados se lograron?	X	X	X	X
¿Hasta qué punto el proyecto fue relevante para las prioridades y las necesidades de los hombres y mujeres beneficiarios?	X	X	X	X
En cuanto a los factores socioculturales, ¿ha habido cambios, tanto previstos como no previstos? ¿Fueron estos cambios bien aceptados por la población beneficiaria y por otros?	X	X	X	X
¿Cuál ha sido el apoyo y participación de las instituciones involucradas? ¿Ha habido fortalecimiento institucional?	X	X	X	
Sostenibilidad				
¿Qué prácticas de sistematización de experiencias se están realizando?	X	X		
¿La información generada por el proyecto se difunde correctamente a nivel de país? ¿Cómo?	X	X	X	
¿Qué indicaciones hay de que los resultados serán sostenibles? por ejemplo, a través de las capacidades requeridas (sistemas, estructuras, personal, etc.)?	X	X	X	X
¿Están los beneficiarios comprometidos a continuar trabajando en los objetivos del proyecto una vez finalizado?	X	X	X	X
¿Cuál ha sido el grado de apropiación de los objetivos y resultados por parte de la población beneficiaria en las diferentes fases del proyecto?	X	X	X	X
Recomendaciones y Lecciones Aprendidas				
¿Qué recomendaciones haría para mejorar la ejecución, resultados o impactos del Proyecto?	X	X	X	X
¿Qué pueden ser lecciones aprendidas y que deberían/pueden corregirse en el futuro?	X	X	X	X

ANNEX III. REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Relevant Review Criteria assessed based on some specific questions and indicators, as synthesized in the following table:

Table A.1 – Main questions / Criteria

Review Criteria	Review Indicators	Means of Verification/ Data Sources
A) Strategic Relevance		
<p>1) Were the objectives and implementation strategies consistent with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-17 and Programme of Work (POW)? • GEF Strategic Priorities (GEF-5) including the Bali Strategic Plan, South-South cooperation, Human Rights and Gender approach? • National Environmental priorities, issues and needs? <p>2) Was the Project complementary to other existing interventions?</p>	<p>Level of alignment with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aichi Targets - UNEP MTS 2014-17 and POW 2014-15 - GEF-5 Strategic Objectives of Biodiversity Focal Area - national environmental issues and needs. - National plans in Biodiversity, National Development Plan <p>Level of coordination and synergy with other projects in Biodiversity</p>	<p>-Comparison of ProDoc and annual reports with UN Env programmes, MTS Expected Accomplishments, GEF Policies, Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC).</p> <p>-Interviews with UN Environment staff, WWF, staff, project staff, CONANP staff.</p> <p>-Relevant national plans and policies</p> <p>-NBSAP</p> <p>-Interviews with UNEP, WWF, CONANP, CONAFOR, project staff</p>
B) Project Design		
3) To what extent the strengths and	- Scoring rates of PDQ (Inception phase)	- PDQ assessment (Inc. Report)

weaknesses found in the Project Design Quality (PDQ) assessment in the Inception Report had a significant role in Project's achievement?	compared with Project scores at Evaluation	- Table of Project Scores at Evaluation
C) Effectiveness		
C.1 Delivery of Outputs		
<p>4) To what extent did the project overall deliver the expected Outputs in terms of both quantity and quality?</p> <p>5) How inclusive and participatory has the process been for delivering the monitoring and DM&IS Outputs?</p> <p>6) How inclusive and participatory has the process been for delivering the institutional/planning Outputs related to the RAP? What has been the role of the IPLCs in the process?</p> <p>7) What were the criteria for selecting the planned pilot sites, and in which way did they contribute to mainstreaming BD and ES criteria in planning and productive activities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level (%) of Outputs delivery (as stated in LogFrame and TOC) - Timeliness of Outputs delivery - Number of people benefiting from the Outputs - Quality of Outputs delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project final Report - PIRs - Interviews with beneficiaries / participants - Documents analysis (e.g. quality of Documents produced, design of training courses, etc.) - Logical Framework and TOC (Pathway from Outputs to Outcomes)
C.2 Achievement of Outcomes		
8) To what extent did the Project contribute to creating a scientific base	- Quantity and quality of the information posted in the DM&IS;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project final Report - PIRs

<p>and tools for decision making?</p> <p>9) To what extent did the Project contribute to creating and environmental governance framework and policy alignment for ecosystem management?</p> <p>10) To what extent did the Project have a catalytic role in implementing field experiences, case-studies or replicable models regarding the sustainable use and management of BD and ES?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent of institutional up-taking by CONANP - Extent of institutional up-taking by CONANP; - Extent of up-taking by Municipalities, ejidos and indigenous communities; - Replication / up-scaling of elements of the RAP in other communities; - Number of BD/ES conservation initiatives in place in the selected communities subsequent to the pilot experiences; - Possible replication/upscaling of pilot initiatives in other communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reconstructed TOC (Pathway to Outcomes) - Interviews, Meetings, Workshop with Project Team and main Stakeholders - Triangulation of different data and sources - Documents produced by the Project (Manuals for monitoring species, Key-line, etc.) - Monitoring and reporting of the pilot cases
<p>C.3 Likelihood of Impact</p>		
<p>11) Has the Project played a significant catalytic role in the progress to Impact?</p> <p>12) Has the Project identified and discussed with the national stakeholders the main bottle-necks, assumptions and key driving forces to Impact? Have Project Stakeholders drawn relevant lessons in that perspective?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of achievement / progress of impact indicators - Quantity and quality of Driving forces in place and of holding (or not) Assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project final Report - PIRs - Reconstructed TOC - Interviews, Meetings, Workshop with Project Team and main Stakeholders - Triangulation of different data and sources

D) Financial Management		
<p>13) Did the Project follow financial management standards and adherence to UN Environment's financial management policies? (financial reporting, audits, inventories, etc.)</p> <p>14) Has there been any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance?</p> <p>15) Did forms of adaptive management and budget revisions significantly change the design of the original budget?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project expenditures reported in a timely manner - Financial audits and inventories carried out in a timely manner - Rate of Expenditures by Component - Level and quality of communication between Management staff and Financial staff (at Project and UN Env level). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly Financial Reports - PIRs - Interviews with Management and Financial officers - Budget revision analysis, audits reports, etc.
E) Efficiency		
<p>16) <u>Time efficiency</u>: did the Project achieve the expected results in the scheduled timeframe or within a reasonable, well-grounded project extension?</p> <p>17) <u>Cost-effectiveness</u>: did the Project deliver maximum results from the given resources, i.e. did the Project obtain the maximum results at the lowest possible costs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duration and effectiveness of project extensions - Expenditures / Component - Balance between expenditures / Component - Ratio: Actual / Expected expenditures by Component - Effective use of existing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project final Report - PIRs - Expenditures analysis by component

	<p>(human, material, financial)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementarity with other existing programmes / projects - Ratio: Actual / Expected co-financing 	
F) Monitoring and Reporting		
<p><u>Monitoring Design and Budgeting:</u></p> <p>18) To what extent a monitoring and evaluation plan was adequately designed and funded?</p> <p><u>Monitoring of Project Implementation:</u></p> <p>19) To what extent did the Project implement the M&E Plan foreseen in the ProDoc?</p> <p>20) Which were the main actors of Project M&E?</p> <p>21) Which evidence exists that Project Monitoring has led to the effective tracking of results achievement and to actions of adaptive management and positive readjustments?</p> <p>22) Did the Project undertake a Mid-term Review / Evaluation?</p> <p>23) Did the Project monitor the representation and participation of disaggregated groups (including gender, vulnerable and marginalised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of the Monitoring Plan of the Project (Ann. 7 of the ProDoc) - Existence and use of monitoring tools / system used by the Project Team, including disaggregated data by gender, by community, by stakeholders' groups - Work-plans adjustments objectively based on the existing Monitoring tools / system - Use of the instrument "Tracking Tools" - Implementation of Mid-Term Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc and Annexe 7 of the ProDoc - Progress Reports - PIRs - Technical reports of specific activities - Mid-term Review / Evaluation Report

<p>groups) in project activities?</p> <p><u>Project Reporting</u></p> <p>24) To what extent the Reporting System put in place represented a reliable, objective and workable system for the communication and assessment of the progress by the Project Team towards the Implementing Agency (UN Environment Task Manager, Financial Manager, Sub-Programme Coordinator)</p> <p>25) To what extent did the Implementing Agency provide timely and meaningful feed-back to the Evaluation Team?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timeliness and quality of 6-month Progress Reports and PIRs - Quantity and quality of feed-backs received by the Implementing Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress Reports - PIRs - Communications (mails, comments, etc.)
<p>G) Sustainability</p>		
<p><u>Socio-political Sustainability</u></p> <p>28) To what extent will social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project outcomes?</p> <p>29) To what extent will the socio-political context be conducive to open platforms of interaction, dialogue and political negotiation around mainstreaming BD and ES in planning and production processes in the country?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of ownership, interest and commitment of government and other relevant institutional actors and social groups in putting forward the BD/ES Mainstreaming agenda in the country - Existence of platforms of discussion, interaction and dialogue (e.g. formal and informal working groups, public hearing fora, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PIRs - Documents produced by the Project - Interviews with stakeholders

<p><u>Financial Sustainability</u></p> <p>30) How will the implementation of the DM&IS and RAP be financially sustained for the continued monitoring and mainstreaming of BD/ES conservation?</p> <p>31) Are the Project's Outputs and Outcomes financially sustainable?</p> <p><u>Institutional Sustainability</u></p> <p>32) To what extent are the processes triggered by the Project likely to gain institutional sustainability at short and medium-term?</p> <p>33) How likely is the inclusion of BD/ES criteria in other municipal planning instruments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-financing level - Existence of possible external funding agencies (including GEF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusiveness of the on-going process - Replicability of the on-going process - National ownership of the on-going process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with Project Team, CONANP, WWF, UN Environment Team - PIRs - Interviews with Project Team, CONANP, WWF, UN Environment Team
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ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Documents consulted during the main evaluation phase

- Terms of Reference of the Terminal Review
- Evaluation Criteria and Ratings Table (UN Environment, 2022)
- Evaluation Process Outline for Evaluation Consultants (UN Environment, 2022)
- Guidance on the Structure and Contents of the Inception Report (UN Environment, 2022)
- Template for the Assessment of Project Design Quality (UN Environment, 2022)
- Stakeholder Analysis in the Evaluation Process (UN Environment, 2022)
- Use of Theory of Change in project evaluations (UN Environment, 2022)
- Project Document “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico” and its Annexes (in ANUBIS)
- GEF Project Identification Form (PIF) “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico” (2012, in ANUBIS).
- Mid-Term Review Report of “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico” (2018)
- From ANUBIS: PIRs, Budget Revisions, Audit Reports, Consultants reports, Steering Committee reports, etc.

Websites consulted during the main evaluation phase

<https://www.cbd.int/>

<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/database>

www.tarahumarasustentable.mx

ANNEX V. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

I. Table 7: Project Funding Sources Table (IF NOT ALREADY WITHIN THE REPORT)

II. Table 8: Expenditure by Outcome/Output

Please note this information was not available due to recording of expenditures by year but not by component.

Component/sub-component/output All figures as USD	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure
Component 1 / Outcome 1	N/A	N/A
Component 2 / Outcome 2	N/A	N/A
Component 3 / Outcome 3	N/A	N/A

ANNEX VI. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Table 9: Financial Management Table (IF NOT ALREADY WITHIN THE REPORT)

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
4. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		HS:HU	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ²⁰ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	
5. Completeness of project financial information²¹:			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		HS:HU	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	[specify here level of detail provided]
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes/No or N/A	
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes/No or N/A	
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes/No or N/A	
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes/No or N/A	[specify here level of detail provided]
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes/No or N/A	
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	
6. Communication between finance and project management staff		HS:HU	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		HS:HU	
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS:HU	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		HS:HU	
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		HS:HU	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		HS:HU	
Overall rating			

²⁰ If the review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

²¹ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name: Allyson Tinney Rivera

Profession	International Consultant for Project Design and Evaluation
Nationality	USA
Country experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, UK. • Africa: Mauritania, Senegal • Americas: Canada, USA, Mexico, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Uruguay. • Asia: Cambodia, China, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam. • Oceania: Australia, New Zealand.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Short biography:

Ms. Rivera has more than 20 years of experience in GEF project design and evaluation. She works with UNDP, UNEP, FAO, Conservation International and WWF.

Ms. Rivera holds a Master degree in Urban and Regional Planning (2001) from the University at Buffalo, as well as a Bachelor degree from Allegheny College for a double major in International Studies and Environmental Studies, with a minor in French (1996).

She is fluent in English and Spanish, with moderate French and beginner German skills.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- GEF project development in the form of PIF, Project Document and CEO Endorsement Request elaboration.
- GEF project evaluation through annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), Mid-term Reviews (MTR) and Terminal Reviews (TR).

Selected assignments and experiences:

Independent reviews/evaluations:

- UN Environment/Conservation International/GEF :
 - Lead Consultant for Mid-Term Review Mission and Report of UNEP/CI/GEF Full-Size Project: Mainstreaming the conservation of ecosystem services and biodiversity at the sub-watershed scale in Chiapas, Mexico (2013)
- UN Environment/WWF/GEF:
 - Lead Consultant for Mid-Term Review Mission and Report of UNEP/WWF/GEF FSP: "Integrating trade offs between supply of ecosystem services (ES) and land use options into poverty alleviation efforts and development planning in the Mixteca, Mexico" (2014)
- UNDP/GEF:
 - Lead Consultant for Terminal Evaluation Mission and Report of MSP: Capacity Building in and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management in Suriname (2012).
 - Lead Consultant for Mid-Term Review Mission and Report of FSP: "Transforming management of biodiversity rich community production forests through building national capacities for market based instruments" (2015).

ANNEX VIII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF project
 “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity
 Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico”
 GEF ID Number - 4883”**

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP Sub-programme:	Ecosystem Management	UNEP Division/Branch:	UN Environment Programme Ecosystems Division GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit Biodiversity and Land Branch
Expected Accomplishment(s):	To conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Sierra Tarahumara of Mexico, improving at the same time the livelihoods and quality of life of its inhabitants.	Programme of Work Output(s):	PoW 2018/2019 Subprogram 3 – Healthy & Productive Ecosystems
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	UNDAF SDG1, SDG2, SDG3, SDG5, SDG6, SDG8, SDG13, SDG 15, SDG17, UNDAF Cooperation area III, Environmental sustainability and green economy, direct effect 6		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7²²)			
Dates of previous project phases:	Extensions: June 2019 – June 2020 12 months, June 2020 – December 2020 6 months	Status of future project phases:	-

FROM THE PROJECT’S PIR REPORT (use latest version) :

Project Title:	Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity
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²² This does not apply to Enabling Activities

	Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico
Executing Agency:	Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP)
Project partners:	World Wildlife Fund (WWF), National Forest Commission /CONAFOR
Geographical Scope:	Latin America and Caribbean
Participating Countries:	Mexico

GEF project ID:	4883	IMIS number*²³:	GFL/5060-2711-4C62
Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity	GEF OP #:	BD 1 Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems BD 2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	BD 1, 2	GEF approval date*:	3 April 2014
UNEP approval date:		Date of first disbursement*:	30 July 2014
Actual start date²⁴:	13 June 2014	Planned duration:	June 2014 – June 2019 (60 months)
Intended completion date*:	June 2020	Actual or Expected completion date:	December 2020
Project Type:	Full Size Project	GEF Allocation*:	USD 4,900,000
PPG GEF cost*:		PPG co-financing*:	USD 34,796,628.27
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	USD 34,796,628	Total Cost*:	USD 39,696,628.27
Mid-term Review/eval. (planned date):	May 2018	Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	4 th quarter 2021
Mid-term Review/eval. (actual date):	May 2018	No. of revisions*:	
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:		Date of last Revision*:	
Disbursement as of 30 June 2021:	USD 4,864,959.17	Date of planned financial closure*:	30 April 2022
Date of planned completion²⁵*:	June 2020	Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021:	USD 4,864,959.17
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December 2021:	USD 34,796,628.27	Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 31 December [year]*:	
Leveraged financing²⁶:			

2. Project Rationale²⁷

²³ Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer

²⁴ Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases were a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.

²⁵ If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.

²⁶ See above note on co-financing

²⁷ Grey =Info to be added

The project objective was to integrate biodiversity conservation considerations into the management of protection and production areas in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico, through the development and implementation of a participatory strategy that engages communities, government and NGOs. Achieving its objective, the project will contribute to conserving biodiversity (BD) and ecosystem services (ES) of global significance in this zone of the Sierra Madre Occidental, while improving the livelihoods and quality of life of its inhabitants. The project's geographical scope includes 12 municipalities in the Sierra Tarahumara covering an area of 41.652 km² of high-biodiversity ecosystems - mostly mountain pine, pine-oak and tropical deciduous forests - that are key for the provision of ecosystem services for local communities and large parts of Chihuahua and other states of North-western Mexico.

The project objective should be attained by achieving the following outcomes (results):

1. Management plans and decision making processes of key stakeholders involved in the biodiversity conservation management of the Sierra Tarahumara utilize the project's diagnostic tools and data bases;
2. the environmental governance of the Sierra Tarahumara region improves in responsiveness to key issues for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services supply following a Regional Action Plan (RAP) that incorporates biodiversity criteria, funding commitments, evaluation parameters and a strategy for upscaling as well as for economic sustainability beyond project completion;
3. Sustainable and integrated land and natural resource management effectively applied at the headwaters of the Rio Conchos, the Rio Fuerte and the Rio Mayo river basins results in a landscape mosaic of up to 300,000 hectares that combine added conservation areas and productive land under biodiversity and ecosystem services friendly management.

3. Project Results Framework

The goal or strategic objective to which the project should contribute is to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Sierra Tarahumara of Mexico, improving at the same time the livelihoods and quality of life of its inhabitants.

The project objective is to develop and implement a participatory strategy to sustainably conserve biodiversity (BD) and ecosystem services (ES), engaging communities, government and NGOs.

The project defined three strategic components: (1) Scientific base and tools for decision making. (2) Environmental governance framework and policy alignment for ecosystem management. (3) Pilot-scale interventions. A fourth component refers to (4) Project monitoring and evaluation.

Component 1: The expected result was that the key stakeholders involved in the management of natural resources and well-being in the Sierra Tarahumara would use the diagnostic tools and information provided by the project in their plans and decision-making processes. The main tools are the Data and Information Monitoring System of the Sierra Tarahumara (SMDI-ST), as well as the Baseline Diagnosis of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Sierra Tarahumara; which are integrated into a Geographic Information System (GIS).

Component 2: Its objective was to strengthen environmental governance in the Sierra Tarahumara in response to key problems and threats to the conservation of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services. For this, a "Coordination Mechanism" of local, traditional, municipal, state, federal authorities and non-governmental stakeholders was established, which will act as a "Regional Council". This coordination mechanism in the Sierra Tarahumara, which began through the creation of subregional community networks and a regional network, has laid the foundations to develop and promote the Regional Action Plan (RAP) and the establishment of a Common Agenda for the Sustainable Future of the Sierra Tarahumara.

Component 3: Within this component, early actions were promoted to trigger local and micro-regional projects that will allow the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The objective was to create a landscape mosaic of at least 300,000 hectares where conservation and production areas are integrated. As the PTS progressed, sites were identified and evaluated where the intervention was complemented with the establishment of pilot closure projects using the tools and data from Component 1 and the results of Component 2.

Component 4: The expected result under this component was the facilitation of project execution based on results management and the application of the lessons learned from the project in future operations.

Indicators for measuring the achievement of these objective are:

- Number of key governmental and non-governmental actors outside the environmental sector* that have included explicitly biodiversity considerations and goals in their policies, programs, plans and actions, adopting RAP BD criteria, funding commitments and evaluation parameters (*key actors are identified in ProDoc section 2.5);
- Number of communities and ejidos actively participating in programs that have defined objectives, actions and funds for conservation of biodiversity;
- Amount of funds provided by different key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders for explicit biodiversity conservation programs from 2014 to 2018;
- Percentage of families/women participating in project activities assessing a) an improvement in their quality of life; b) an improvement in the value of their natural resources.

4. Executing Arrangements

The present project is the product of a partnership between CONANP and WWF, based on their common interest and experience in the application of biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation approaches in the Sierra Tarahumara. The institutional framework of the project includes numerous other actors from the government, academic and civil society sectors who will be involved in implementing the project strategy for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem service considerations in the decision-making in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua.

- The project established a Steering Committee (PSC) composed of CONANP and WWF, as project implementing partners, and UNEP as GEF implementing agency. The formal representative of each executing partner is the institution's general director in the state of Chihuahua or corresponding region, although they may nominate a representative to attend PSC meetings. The steering committee was chaired by WWF and CONANP by annual rotation and meet quarterly. Its principal functions is to analyze and approve regular work plans, terms of reference and contracting of sub-grant partners and consultancies; provide strategic guidance and oversight to project implementing organizations and consultants; review progress and evaluation reports; discuss problems or strategic issues that might arise during implementation and provide support for the necessary inter-institutional coordination and contributions to project activities.
- Project executing agencies and implementing partners: WWF as project co-executing agency oversee project fund administration and accounting, contract the project director and the PMU staff and provide additional technical support through its personnel in Chihuahua and Mexico-City. CONANP as the other project co-executing agency will provide technical support through its personnel in Creel (Sierra Tarahumara) and its Regional Office in Chihuahua. To keep CONANP informed about the financial execution of the project and observing its implementation development and monitoring, WWF will send the financial reports to CONANP before submitting them to UNEP.
- Project implementing partners: WWF, CONANP and UNEP, as members of the Project Steering Committee, played the lead role in implementing and monitoring the project and maintaining its strategic focus. They will contribute co-financing for the project under the three project components with technical, administrative and institutional support.
- UNEP as GEF implementing agency, participated in the PSC and was in charge of supervision of monitoring and evaluation for the project, including overseeing the mid-term and final evaluations, review and approval of semi-annual and annual reports, technical review of project outputs and providing inputs to the PMU as needed. UNEP provided guidance on relating the GEF-financed activities of the project to global, regional and national environmental assessments, scientific and technical analysis of ES and BD, policy frameworks and plans, and international environmental agreements. Furthermore UNEP acted as technical backstopping entity on relevant issues in particular related to Environmental Management. UNEP Mexico office also served as strategic liaison providing guidance in

particular through its ongoing role advising Mexico's environmental policy agenda development at the national level, and supporting further development of initiatives and proposals with the GoM, GEF and others.

- A Regional Council for the Sustainable Development of the Sierra Tarahumara was the mechanism for coordinating key stakeholder activities in the project area. This Council will develop the Regional Action Plan and the Common Agenda for the Sustainable Future of the Sierra Tarahumara, conceived as instruments for mainstreaming BD and ES criteria into institutional policies, programs and funding allocations. The Council was composed of state and federal government entities, like DDF, SDUE, CET, CONANP, CDI, SAGARPA, CONANP, CONAFOR, CONAGUA, SEMARNAT, SEDESOL; municipalities; public-private bodies like PIAI and UMAFORES; civil society organizations, including WWF and PRONATURA; universities and research centres; and representatives of ejidos and indigenous communities. Recognized experts with both scientific knowledge and practical experience in the fields of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem service payments, sustainable production and watershed management were also invited to participate in this Council. The Council acted as an important communication platform for facilitating coordination between governmental and non-governmental actors in the project area.

5. Project Cost and Financing

Total Budget as indicated in the Final Report (US\$):

Cost to the GEF Trust Fund:	4,900,000.00
Co-financing total:	34,796,628.27
Total project cost:	39,696,628.27

Co-finance summary:

Cost to the GEF Trust Fund:	4,900,000
Co-financing:	
In-kind	
National Commission of Natural Protected Areas CONANP:	2,462,793.43
National Forest Commission /CONAFOR:	26,851,218.68
National Commission for the development of Indigenous Peoples /CDI:	1,821,284.95
Ministry of Social Development /SEDESOL:	1,280,403.44
Secretary of Rural Development of the Chihuahua's State Government:	397,888.71
WWF:	995,856.00
Secretary of Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries:	987,183.06
Total co-financing:	34,796,628.27
Total project cost:	39,696,628.27

Financing Plan Summary for the project (US\$) as stated in 2021 PIR:

	Project Preparation a	Project Grant b	Total c = a + b	Project Grant at PIF
GEF	100.000	4.900.000	5.000.000	4.900.000
Co-financing	200.000	40.036.159	40.236.159	21.250.000
Total	300.000	44.936.159	45.236.159	26.150.000

Project Framework (US\$)

Project components	GEF-financing*		Co-financing*		Total (\$)
	(\$) a	%	(\$) b	%	c = a + b
1. Scientific base and tools for decision making	457,800	9.3	764,000	1.9	1,221,800
2. Environmental governance framework and policy alignment for ecosystem management	1,075,900	22.0	1,515,000	3.8	2,590,900
3. Pilot-scale interventions	2,986,000	60.9	37,095,000	92.7	40,081,000
4. Project monitoring and evaluation	147,000	3.0	89,000	0.2	236,000
5. Project management	233,300	4.8	573,159	1.4	806,459
Total project costs	4,900,000	100.0	40,036,159	100.0	44,936,159

* Percentage refers to contribution at CEO endorsement to total financing in each component.

Project co-financing

Sources of confirmed co-financing	Classification	Type		Total US-\$	%
		Grant	In-kind		
CONANP	National Government	769,230	1,120,000	1,889,230	4.7
CONAFOR	National Government	2,500,000	0	2,500,000	6.2
CDI	National Government	13,076,922	0	13,076,922	32.7
SEDESOL	National Government	20,000,000	0	20,000,000	50.0
PRONATURA	NGO	320,007	0	320,007	0.8
World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	NGO	982,424	367,576	1,350,000	3.4
UNEP	International organization	150,000	750,000	900,000	2.2
Total Co-financing		37,798,583	2,237,576	40,036,159	100

6. Implementation Issues

The main implementation issues of the project as identified by 2018 MTE are as follows:

- The governance of the project was not clear and did not work according to what was established in the prodoc.
- The commitment of the implementing partners has not been adequate. The lack of institutional capacities of the implementing partners resulted in staff rotation, officials' priorities varied and affected participation in the project regardless of institutional commitments.
- There was no adaptation process of the prodoc in the face of the challenges encountered in the implementation and the project does not have an adaptive management. As of the date of the evaluation, no evidence was found of any request to assess the design of a monitoring and evaluation system, or of risk management and safeguards, none of them considered in the prodoc.
- The skills of the personnel hired for the PMU were not sufficient for the proper management of the Project and the implementation strategy is not suitable given the needs and complexity of the project in the field.
- On the other
- On the other hand, despite having a very low level of program and budget performance, the surveys applied to project beneficiaries showed that it has had a positive impact on the perception of the people involved: those involved in the project have improved their

understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem services; improved their living conditions to some extent and the project has contributed to leaders of federal, state and local institutions and organizations being clear about what biodiversity criteria need to be adopted in policies, programs, plans and actions.

- The Project has built relationships of trust with producers, community authorities and key actors, generated relevant information on biodiversity, and developed tools for territorial planning. So there were elements that could form a basis of a governance mechanism and a participatory regional development strategy in the Sierra Tarahumara. Achieving these elements was likely to require an extension of the project and a stronger commitment from the implementing partners.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy²⁸ and the UNEP Programme Manual²⁹, the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP). Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project, where applicable.

8. Key Review principles

Review findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

The “Why?” Question. As this is a Terminal Review and a follow-up project is likely or similar interventions are envisaged for the future, particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultant(s)’ minds all through the review exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project’s results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for reviews. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A

²⁸ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

²⁹ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

Communicating Review Results. A key aim of the Review is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all review deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main Review Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Task Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant will plan with the Task Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key review findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of a review brief or interactive presentation.

9. Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**³⁰ listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TR:

Q1: To what extent have the the development and implementation of a participatory strategy that engages communities, government and NGOs led to integration of biodiversity conservation considerations into the management of protection and production areas in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua?

Q2: What impact has been achieved by actors engaged in the project moving on and deploying their knowledge in novel areas? How were the lessons learned used in applying agile and adaptive management of the project?

Q3: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

Q4: How effectively has the project addressed MTR recommendations?

Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a **summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report:**

- a) Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:
What was the performance at the project's-completion against Core Indicator Targets? *(For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided³¹).*
- b) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:
What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
- c) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:
What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

³⁰ The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.

³¹ This does not apply to Enabling Activities

- d) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:
 What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this Review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*
- e) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:
 What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

10. Review Criteria

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the review criteria. The set of review criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

Annex 1 of these Terms of Reference provides a table with a list of various tools, templates and guidelines that can help Review Consultant(s) to follow a thorough review process that meets all of UNEP's needs.

A. Strategic Relevance

The Review will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Review will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

i. **Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy³² (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities**

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building³³ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. **Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities**

³² UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

³³ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

The Review will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence³⁴

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization³⁵, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation.
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity.
- Country ownership and driven-ness.

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating³⁶ should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation.
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity.

³⁴ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

³⁵ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

³⁶ In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

C. Nature of External Context

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval³⁷). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an *Unfavourable* or *Highly Unfavourable* external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and Task Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs³⁸

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs available and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness.
- Quality of project management and supervision.³⁹

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes⁴⁰

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the outcomes as defined in the reconstructed⁴¹ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project

³⁷ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

³⁸ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019).

³⁹ For GEF funded projects 'project management and supervision' will refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP, as Implementing Agency.

⁴⁰ Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

⁴¹ UNEP staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during a review will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2013 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the review.

outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision.
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation.
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity.
- Communication and public awareness.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (*i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact*), the Review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project reviews is outlined in a guidance note and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role⁴² or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Review will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management).
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation.
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity.
- Country ownership and driven-ness.

⁴² The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

- Communication and public awareness.

E. Financial Management

Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The Review will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Review will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Review will assess the level of communication between the Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness.
- Quality of project management and supervision.

F. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion the Review will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities⁴³ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. Consultants should note that as management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to UNEP and Executing Agencies.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness).
- Quality of project management and supervision.
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation.

G. Monitoring and Reporting

⁴³ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART⁴⁴ results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards project objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

The performance at project completion against Core Indicator Targets should be reviewed. For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided.

iii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system (Anubis) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the Task Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and GEF reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision.
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g disaggregated indicators and data).

H. Sustainability

Sustainability⁴⁵ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of

⁴⁴ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

⁴⁵ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

The Review will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the Review will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

ii. Financial Sustainability

Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Review will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where the project outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

The Review will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Review will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation.
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined).
- Communication and public awareness.
- Country ownership and driven-ness.

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Review Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other review criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the Review Criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the reviewed project should be given in this section)

i. Preparation and Readiness

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The Review will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the Review will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

For GEF funded projects 'project management and supervision' may refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by

UNEP as Implementing Agency. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the executing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program occurring since the MTR should be reviewed. This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment⁴⁶.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular the Review will consider to what extent project, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

The completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management

⁴⁶The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

(avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements⁴⁷ were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are reviewed above under Quality of Project Design). The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint. Implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Review will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

The Review will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Review should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Review will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate

The project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

⁴⁷ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Terminal Review will be an in-depth review using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative review methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) should provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

The findings of the Review will be based on the following:

- (a) **A desk review** of:
 - Relevant background documentation, inter alia biodiversity and natural resource management strategies, other substantive documents prepared by the projects and others;
 - Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
 - Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool and others;
 - Project deliverables (e.g. publications, reports, assessments, surveys);
 - Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;
 - Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

- (b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:
 - UNEP Task Manager (TM);
 - Project Manager (PM)
 - Project management team;
 - UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
 - Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
 - Project partners based on stakeholder analyses;
 - Relevant resource persons;
 - Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

- **Surveys**
- **Field visits**
- **Other data collection tools**, all as appropriate for the terminal review and elaborated in the inception report.

11. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

The Review Consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.

- **Draft and Final Review Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

A **Review Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluation and review findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Task Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

Review of the Draft Review Report. The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the Task Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. The Task Manager will then forward the revised draft report to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Task Manager for consolidation. The Task Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

The final version of the Terminal Review report will be assessed for its quality by the UNEP Evaluation Office using a standard template and this assessment will be annexed to the final Terminal Review report.

At the end of the review process, the Task Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate the **Lessons Learned**.

12. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the Task Manager in consultation with the Fund Management Officer, the Head of Unit/Branch, the Portfolio Manager and the Sub-programme Coordinators of the relevant UNEP Sub-programmes as appropriate.

The Review Consultant will liaise with the Task Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of 4 months [1 August 2022 to 30 November 2022] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 8 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of biodiversity and land management issues is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English and Spanish is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Review Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Task Manager, for overall quality of the review and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Review Deliverables, above. The Review Consultant will ensure that all review criteria and questions are adequately covered.

13. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Review.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Inception Report	
Review Mission	
E-based data collection through interviews, surveys and other approaches.	
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	
Draft Review Report to Task Manager (and Project Manager)	
Draft Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	
Final Review Report	
Final Review Report shared with all respondents	

14. Contractual Arrangements

The Review Consultant(s) will be selected and recruited by the Task Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance and approval by the Task Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per Annex I document #9</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Review Report (<i>as per Annex I document #10</i>)	30%
Approved Final Main Review Report	40%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Task Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP’s information management systems (e.g. PIMS, Anubis, SharePoint, etc.) and, if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review Report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by UNEP, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch or Portfolio Manager until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to the Project Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultant’s fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.

ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Quality Assessment of the Terminal Review Report

Review Title: Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project “Integrating the Management of Protection and Production Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua, Mexico”
GEF ID 4883 (2014 – 2020)

Consultant: Allyson Tinney Rivera

All UNEP Reviews are subject to a quality assessment by the UNEP Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the review product (i.e. Main Review Report).

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>Quality of the Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main review product. It should include a concise overview of the review object; clear summary of the review objectives and scope; overall project performance rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic review questions), lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Clear and concise summary, including narrative summary of the recommendations, main findings and concluding analysis. A summary of performance ratings by criterion is included in the Executive Summary.</p> <p>The executive summary does not specify level of achievement of outcomes, as emphasis of the review is on availability of outputs.</p> <p>Strategic questions and their responses and lessons learned are not included in the executive summary.</p>	4
<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the review; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates;</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>A clear and well-structured introduction of the project, covering all required elements,</p>	4.5

<p>number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.)</p> <p>Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings?</p>	<p>including the target audience for the Review findings. Some elements of the introduction were included in the Executive Summary.</p> <p>No institutional context of the project regarding the sub-programme, and Division was provided. However, this information was included in other section of the document.</p>	
<p>II. Review Methods</p> <p>A data collection section should include: a description of review methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.). Efforts to include the voices of different groups, e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) should be described.</p> <p>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.</p> <p>The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described.</p> <p>It should also address review limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider review questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.</p> <p>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. E.g. <i>Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made</i></p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Detailed and well-structured description of Review methods. All elements are very well covered, including the limitations to the methodology.</p> <p>Information on methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) were reached, and their experiences captured effectively would have been appreciated.</p> <p>Ethics and human rights in collecting data and interviews and consideration of vulnerable groups are not mentioned.</p>	<p>4.5</p>
<p>III. The Project</p> <p>This section should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Context:</i> Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • <i>Results Framework:</i> Summary of the project's results 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Well-structured section.</p> <p>List of stakeholders provided, however, their interests and</p>	<p>4.5</p>

<p>hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stakeholders:</i> Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners:</i> A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation:</i> Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing:</i> Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing 	<p>influence in the project are not analysed in line with EO evaluation tools.</p> <p>Project implementation structure and partners described and diagram included. Particulars of UNEP set up are not well described (task manager, finance, country office/ regional office, etc.). Emphasis on executing partner.</p>	
<p>IV. Theory of Change</p> <p>The reconstructed TOC at Review should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors.</p> <p>This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Review</i>⁴⁸ was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where different groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) are included in, or affected by the project in different ways, this should be reflected in the TOC.</p> <p>Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/ revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the TOC at Review. <i>The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.</i> This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>RTOC presented based on existing results framework with assumptions and drivers. Intermediate states are not identified.</p> <p>RTOC (diagram 1) does not include gender and vulnerable groups under assumptions (or drivers). RTOC refers components instead of outcomes – emphasis appear to be on outputs, which leads to a unsatisfactory narrative and analysis of causality between outcomes and impact (explaining the who and why?). Outcome 1 definition is weak.</p> <p>Need – or no need - for revision of the</p>	<p>2</p>

⁴⁸ During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Design* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions). During the review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Review*.

	RTOC has not been addressed by the reviewer in this chapter.	
<p>V. Key Findings</p> <p>A. Strategic relevance: This section should include an assessment of the project’s relevance in relation to UNEP’s mandate and its alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation⁴⁹) with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities vi. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities vii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities viii. Complementarity with Existing Interventions 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>All the elements are comprehensibly covered.</p>	5
<p>B. Quality of Project Design To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u>?</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Good analysis of the project design. Weaknesses related to lower ratings, e.g., on governance and supervision arrangements could have been mentioned.</p>	4.5
<p>C. Nature of the External Context For projects where this is appropriate, key external features of the project’s implementing context that may have been reasonably expected to limit the project’s performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval⁵⁰) and how they have affected performance, should be described.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Good analysis of nature of external context which includes analysis of security, change in administration and COVID-10.</p> <p>The criterion is rated “Mildly Unfavorable”. The correct term would be “Moderately Unfavourable”.</p>	4.5

⁴⁹ A project’s inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

⁵⁰ Note that ‘political upheaval’ does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project’s design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

<p>D. Effectiveness</p> <p>(i) Outputs and Project Outcomes: How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention.</p> <p>The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Detailed and useful summary of the outputs of the project with indication of the evidence found.</p> <p>There is no discussion of the engagement of, or addressing the needs of, differentiated groups.</p> <p>Achievement of project outcomes analysed and reference made to interviews and reviewer's assessment of completion. An overview table with target indicators would have been useful. Assessment of outcome achievement based on extent to which output targets were met.</p> <p>Analysis does not refer directly to the RTOC narrative.</p> <p>The sub-criteria has not been rated but an overall rating of Effectiveness is provided.</p>	4
<p>(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact?</p> <p>How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed?</p> <p>Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Good analysis of the likelihood of impact, including in the ratings table. Information on whether the project may or may not have unintended effects would have been appreciated.</p> <p>Analysis would have</p>	4

	<p>benefitted from reference to a full RTOC narrative and analysis of strength of causality from outcomes to impact.</p> <p>This sub-criterion has not been awarded a rating.</p>	
<p>E. Financial Management This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table. Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff 	<p>Final report:</p> <p><i>(if this section is rated poorly as a result of limited financial information from the project, this is not a reflection on the consultant per se, but will affect the quality of the review report)</i></p> <p><i>Most elements are covered in detail and indicating the evidence found.</i></p> <p><i>Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures are described based on documents made available to the reviewer. It is not clear from the evidence provided if there was timely approval and disbursement of cash advances to partners.</i></p> <p><i>Completeness of financial information is reviewed and considered complete by the reviewer. It was difficult for the reviewer to obtain information on co-financing.</i></p> <p><i>Communication between finance and project management staff assessed based on interviews with UNEP (task manager) and WWF</i></p>	4.5

	<i>staff.</i>	
<p>F. Efficiency To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of delays and no cost extensions • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint. 	<p>Analysis of efficiency with focus on delivery within time available made. Makes reference to other ongoing projects (para. 115-116) that would have been more appropriate under strategic relevance and/or relevant factors affecting performance.</p>	4.5
<p>G. Monitoring and Reporting How well does the report assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) • Monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) • Project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor reports</i>) 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>This section provided a clear presentation of the actual monitoring of project implementation, budgeting and reporting.</p> <p>Monitoring design and budgeting is presented in two findings as reviewer's statements and not with evidence. Cross-reference would have been useful.</p>	4
<p>H. Sustainability How well does the review identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability (<i>including issues of partnerships</i>) 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>A good discussion is provided of these different aspects of sustainability.</p> <p>Financial sustainability was briefly assessed with regards to outcome 1 but not outcome 2 and 3.</p> <p>Sub-criteria of</p>	4.5

	sustainability not rated but overall rating provided.	
<p>I. Factors Affecting Performance These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the review report cover the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and readiness • Quality of project management and supervision⁵¹ • Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity • Environmental and social safeguards • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness 	<p>Most topics are covered in this section as well as in the main body of the report.</p> <p>Preparation and readiness is assessed satisfactorily.</p> <p>Quality of project management and supervision is reviewed on part of UNEP's supervision vis a vis the executing partners. It could have been useful if evidence of UNEP's feedback on the project management performance of executing partners had been included.</p> <p>Stakeholders' participation and cooperation has a summarized assessment.</p> <p>Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality evidence based on outcome indicators that gender disaggregated and example of indigenous languages publication shows it was considered to some extent.</p>	4.5

⁵¹ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the overall supervision/technical backstopping provided by UNEP, as the Implementing Agency. Comments and a rating should be provided for both types of supervision and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

	<p>Environmental and social safeguards assessment is satisfactory.</p> <p>Country ownership and driven-ness presents a summarized assessment.</p> <p>Communication and public awareness is a summarized assessment includes examples of comms products, however, information on the effectiveness in driving changes towards results beyond outputs e.g. downloads, etc. is not provided.</p> <p>Sub-criteria assessment does not include ratings.</p> <p>An overall rating for factors affecting performance is provided.</p>	
<p>VI. Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <p>Quality of the conclusions: The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section.</p> <p>It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Eight conclusions are presented and a summary of ratings in a ratings table comprising all criteria including sub-criteria.</p> <p>Consistency between findings and conclusions.</p> <p>Extent of achievement of outcome 1-3 is not concluded but a general statement made on “important outcomes were achieved” and contribution of outputs to outcomes</p>	<p>4</p>

	<p>in Conclusion 5.</p> <p>Reference to strategic questions and responses is not made.</p>	
<p>ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit review findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Eight lessons learned are presented. Context/comment format is not followed. The lessons are a mix of positive lessons and prescriptive action (lesson 6, 8).</p>	3
<p>iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations:</p> <p>To what extent are the recommendations <u>proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results</u>? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when.</p> <p>At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.</p> <p>In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.</p> <p>Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Weak formulation of recommendations; the prescribed actions are not sufficiently defined in a way that can guide their implementation (who does what, how, when). The presentation of the recommendation did not follow the structure provided in the TR guidelines.</p> <p>No recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions (as per the TR Guidelines) of similar UNEP interventions is given.</p>	2
<p>VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality</p>		
<p>i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete, including a gender disaggregation total for respondents.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Overall, the report follows the report template provided by the Evaluation Office.</p> <p>Annex 1 with two</p>	4

	<p>stakeholder comments, annex i2 with list of people consulted, questions to guide interviews (in Spanish), annex 3 review framework, annex 4 of key document consulted, annex 5 project budget and expenditures (N/A), annex 6 financial management, annex 7 CV of reviewer, annex 8 review TORS are included.</p> <p>Completeness of annexes – Annex 2 does not include names of UNEP staff interviewed (as such interviews were indicated to have been carried out in Chapter II. Review Methods)</p> <p>Gender disaggregation of interviewees made in Chapter II. Review Methods.</p> <p>In Chapter V. Review Findings, ratings of sub-criteria under Factors affecting performance are not listed but are displayed in the report's Conclusions and Recommendations, Table 4. Summary ratings table.</p>	
<p>ii) Quality of writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for Well-written and concise report in language adequate for a review report in-line with UNEP Evaluation Office requirements. Cross-referencing between criteria assessments and evidence presented in the main report under evaluation findings and the summarized ratings table is not complete (e.g. Assessment of complimentary with existing interventions/ coherence and summary table reference to page 38). Emphasis on qualitative assessment. Assessment related to criteria and factors provides summarized assessments with some direct</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Well-written and concise report in language adequate for a review report in-line with UNEP Evaluation Office requirements.</p> <p>Cross-referencing</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>evidence included.</p> <p>Good use of table to show delivery of outputs, however, without including indicator target. Project identification table was modified to include PIR project data.</p> <p>Lessons learned and recommendations are not presented in the standard format required.</p> <p>Throughout the report refers to UN Environment and not UN Environment Programme.an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow UNEP Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?</p>	<p>between criteria assessments and evidence presented in the main report under evaluation findings and the summarized ratings table is not complete (e.g. Assessment of complimentary with existing interventions/ coherence and summary table reference to page 38).</p> <p>Emphasis on qualitative assessment. Assessment related to criteria and factors provides summarized assessments with some direct evidence included.</p> <p>Good use of table to show delivery of outputs, however, without including indicator target. Project identification table was modified to include PIR project data.</p> <p>Lessons learned and recommendations are not presented in the standard format required.</p> <p>Throughout the report refers to UN Environment and not UN Environment Programme.</p>	
<p>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</p>	<p>4</p>	

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the review report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.