



Project UNDP-PIMS No. 5727 - GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

Project Mid Term Review Report

Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

**Consultants: Eduardo Durand
Tatiana Delgado**

Lima / La Habana, May 2021

i. Basic Project Information

Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Project 'Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)'

UNDP PIMS# 5727

GEF Project ID# 9319

MTR timeframe:

March/May 2021

Report Delivery Date:

14/05/2021

Region and Country included in the Project:

LAC - Cuba

GEF Focal Area / Strategic Program

Cross-Cutting Capacity Development

Executing Agency

Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) through Environmental Agency (AMA/IGT)

Members of the Evaluation Team:

Eduardo Durand

Tatiana Delgado

Acknowledgements:

The evaluation team expresses its appreciation for the valuable support and contributions to the evaluation work by the officials and technicians of the Government of Cuba, in particular Ms. Maritza García, President of the Environment Agency, and Mr. Yoel Cuzán, director of the Project Management Unit (PMU), as well as to each and every person in the Unit and the various sectors and entities that participated in the interviews and meetings, whose relationship is included *in extenso* in this report. Special mention is deserved by the staff of the UNDP Country Office, especially Ms. Grisel Acosta, Yamilka Caraballo and Patricia Fernández, for their constant assistance and guidance for the realization of each stage of the work.

The evaluation team also expresses its appreciation for the excellent and fraternal treatment received during the evaluation process, and its satisfaction at having collaborated with this stage of implementation of the Project, hoping it concludes successfully for the benefit of comprehensive and sustainable national development.

ii. Table of contents

i. Basic Project Information	2
ii. Table of contents.....	3
iii. Acronyms and abbreviations	5
1 Executive Summary	6
1.1 Project Information Table	6
1.2 Project Description	7
1.3 Summary of the progress of the Project	8
1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table.....	9
1.5 Summary of conclusions	11
1.6 Summary table of recommendations	14
2 Introduction	17
3 Project Description and Context	19
4 Findings	23
4.1 Project Strategy	23
4.1.1 Project Design	23
4.1.2 Results Logic Framework.....	24
4.2 Progress towards results	26
4.2.1 Analysis of the Capacity Development (CD) scorecard	26
4.2.2 Analysis of progress towards results.....	28
4.2.3 Barriers to achieving the goal of the Project.....	35
4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management	36
4.3.1 Management Arrangements	36
4.3.2 Work planning	37
4.3.3 Finance and co-finance	38
4.3.4 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems.....	40
4.3.5 Stakeholder engagement	40
4.3.6 Reporting	41
4.3.7 Communications	41
4.3.8 Covid-19	42
4.4 Sustainability	43
4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability.....	43
4.4.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability	43

Mid-Term Review “Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)”

4.4.3	Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability	43
4.4.4	Environmental risks to sustainability	43
4.4.5	Sustainability rating.....	44
5	Conclusions and Recommendations	45
5.1	Conclusions	45
5.2	Recommendations	49
6	Lessons learned	51
	ANNEXES	52
A.	Project Outcomes Logical Framework Evaluation Matrix	
B.	MTR Terms of Reference	
C.	MTR evaluation matrix	
D.	Interview Guide Questionnaire	
E.	Rating Scales	
F.	List of people interviewed	
G.	List of documents reviewed	
H.	Table of Financing and Co Financing	
I.	Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Form	
J.	MTR Final Report Clearance Form Signed	

iii. Acronyms and abbreviations

AMA	Agency of Environment
CEO	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i> (GEF)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America
CITMA	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.
CITMATEL	Information Technology and Advanced Telematics Services Company
Consumimport	Importer company attached to the Ministry of Foreign Trade.
CUP	National currency of Cuba
DMAA	Directorate of Environment (CITMA)
DOCIA	Directorate of Organization
DPP	Directorate of Programs and Projects (CITMA)
ECOVALOR	Project for financial sustainability of the economic value of biodiversity and the environment.
ECOVIDA	Center of Environmental Research and Services, Pinar del Río
MTR	Mid-Term Review (MTR)
ETECSA	Telecommunications Company of Cuba S.A
FCOM	Faculty of Communications of the University of Havana
GEF	Global Environment Fund (GEF)
GEF	Global Environment Facility (FMAM)
infoGEO	Acronym agreed for the name of the Project
IGT	Institute of Tropical Geography
INRH	National Hydraulic Resources Institute
INSMET	Institute of Meteorology of Cuba
MINAG	Ministry of Agriculture
MINCEX	Ministry of Foreign Trade
MINCOM	Ministry of Communications
NIM	National Implementation Modality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ONEI	Bureau of National Statistics and Informatics
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PNAP	Non-Program Associated Projects
PNCTI	National Science, Technology, and Innovation Program
PNDS	National Plan for Economic and Social Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
USD	US Dollars
ProDoc	Acronym for 'Project Document'
SIA	Environmental Information System
SIEC	Supplementary Statistics Information System, ONEI
SINBIOD	Project for the biodiversity integrated information system in Cuba's westernmost region.
Solintel	National company of computer and communications technologies.
ToR	Reference Terms of References
PMU	Project Management Unit

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Project Information Table

Project Title	Integrating the obligations of the Rio Convention into national priorities by strengthening information and knowledge management to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)		
PNUD Project ID (PIMS #):	5727	PIF Approval Date:	January 7, 2016
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	9319	CEO Endorsement Date:	February 3, 2017
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Project ID:	00094885 00098959	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):	January 24, 2018
Country:	Cuba	Date project manager hired:	-
Region:	Lake	Inception Workshop date:	Jan 30, 2018
Focal Area:	Multifocal areas	Mid-Term Review completion date:	May 15, 2021
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	<i>Cross-Cutting Capacity Development</i>	Planned closing date:	January 24, 2022
Trust Fund [indicate GEF, TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEFTF	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	
Executing Agency/Implementing Partner:	UNDP		
Other execution partners:	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)		
Project Financing	At CEO endorsement (USD)	At Mid-Term Review (USD)*	
[1] GEF financing:	1,488,573	1,488,573	
[2] UNDP Contribution:	50,000	50,000	
[3] Governance:	1,935,145	1,935,145	
[4] Other partners:	-	-	
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3 + 4]:	1,985,145	1,985,145	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	3,473,718	3,473,718	

1.2 Project Description

The purpose of the Project is described as strengthening capacities to improve the incorporation of multilateral environmental agreements (Rio Conventions) into decision-making and planning processes, through the development of knowledge and information management capabilities to improve environmental monitoring.

The Project was accepted by the GEF with a funding of USD 1,488,573, and is co-financed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) of Cuba (1,935,145), and with a contribution from UNDP (50,000). Its implementation is expected for a period of four years (January 2018 to January 2022) under the NIM modality (National Implementation Modality), having as an implementing partner the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), and UNDP Cuba as guarantor, fund manager, and support entity.

The project's expected outcomes are three:

- A sustainable National Environmental Information System for the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of reliable and accurate environmental information, knowledge, and data, integrating the commitments contained in multilateral environmental agreements.
- The expansion of environmental and geographic information and knowledge systems and their cores, to contribute to the incorporation of environmental commitments into sectoral, national, and territorial planning processes.
- A reliable National Environmental Information System with selected sectoral strategies that help meet the commitments of the Rio Conventions

The design and development of the Project are framed within the implementation of the policies, strategies and plans of the sectoral and territorial levels of the government of Cuba, as well as in international commitments and agreements, contained in the following provisions:

- National Environmental Strategy
- National Economic and Social Development Program by 2030
- Territorial Environmental Strategies
- Sustainable Development Goals by 2030
- Rio Convention

In addition, its implementation has been related to the legal order emerged from the new Cuban economic and social model, and the approval of the new Constitution of the Republic in 2018. The Project has aligned itself to these transformations by enhancing its results and adhering to the initiatives of electronic government (Decree-Law No. 370/2018, regarding the computerization of society in Cuba¹; and Decree-Law No. 6/2020 of the Government Information² System).

¹ <https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/es/decreto-ley-370-de-2018-de-consejo-de-estado>

² <https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/es/decreto-ley-6-de-2020-de-consejo-de-estado>

The implementation of the Project is also aimed at meeting the needs and situations related to compliance, monitoring, and information for decision making, knowledge management and research and communication and environmental education, identified by the 'Self-Assessment of National Capacity for Environmental Management in Cuba' (2011).

In terms of UNDP priorities, the Project aligns with the agency's global and national strategies, consistent with the 1.3 and 1.5 outcomes of the strategic plan for the period 2014-2017, which calls for solutions at the national and territorial level for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste; and the appropriate institutional, legislative and political conditions to encourage the implementation of climate and disaster management measures at the national and territorial levels. At the national level, it aligns with the Country Program document for the period 2014-2018, whose outcome 7 addresses the integration of environmental concerns into the development plans of the productive and service sectors.

The Project has been designed and implemented in coordination with existing similar programs and projects, with these it exchanges information through the infoGEO platform, and carries out training activities (*Ecovalor* Project, on economic incentives, to achieve financial sustainability in the use and conservation of natural resources, environment, pollution, and climate change; *Connecting Landscapes Project*, on biodiversity conservation and management of protected areas; *SINBIOD project*, on biodiversity information system; and the *National Program to Combat Desertification and Drought*).

The project is implemented as a pilot, in the territories of Matanzas and Pinar del Río because of its geographical and environmental representativeness, the level of development of government structures and computerization. At the same time, it prioritizes the water resources and agriculture sectors, in line with the main environmental situations and threats mentioned in the country.

The Project involves the proactive participation of actors in the various sectors of society: Ministries and their corresponding central and decentralized bodies, local governments, state-owned enterprises, producers, and academic institutions; playing different roles as service providers, implementers, and beneficiaries, among others.

1.3 Summary of the progress of the Project

Since its beginning, the Project met the right conditions for a successful implementation, with the potential of an appropriate technical team, and a highly favorable national policy and regulatory framework that would have allowed - during the elapsed time since its inception – to reach progress as it was foreseen in the project document (ProDoc).

The Project has been adversely affected in its implementation schedule by two external conditions: the economic, financial and trade blockade of the U.S. Government against Cuba, particularly in recent months of 2019, which caused a drastic reduction in the country's socio-economic activity; and the COVID-19 pandemic with consequent restrictive health measures. These two factors caused a delay in the import of the technological equipment necessary for the implementation of the data centers on the selected nodes; and or forced to adaptive measures in the managing of technical and administrative activities to optimize performance and comply with the plans.

On the other hand, as has been commented by several actors, the situation and need to optimize virtual communications, and the spread of the use of cyber programs is fulfilling a convergent role for the purposes of the Project, as an extensive institutionalization of this practice occurs, that will in the end favor the implementation and scope of the national information system.

Despite the difficulties described, the Project has moved towards its goals consistently, especially in the areas of institutional and territorial coordination, and in convergence and synergies with other projects linked to the management needs of geographical and sectoral information, especially in water and agriculture as key sectors and part of pilot activities.

It is not possible at this stage of progress to evaluate the function and operability of the planned system and platforms without having the technological equipment and the enablement of data centers, and the arrival of imported equipment. It is expected, however, that it will be possible to make satisfactory progress until the end of the project implementation period (end of January 2022), in activities not dependent on the installation of equipment, and to continue to refine the system in its composition, training and inter-agency coordination.

In terms of project management, expenditure execution and financial resources, there is satisfactory implementation that will enable the above progress to be made. The biggest limitation is the time available, and the difficulties in accelerating processes that do not depend on the installed capabilities of the Project.

1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	<p><u>Objective Achievement</u></p> <p><i>'Strengthen environmental information and knowledge management to integrate the goals under multilateral environmental agreements into national planning and decision-making.'</i></p> <p>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p>	<p>Of the three indicators of achievement of the Objective of Project, the first, concerning the establishment of an interconnected national system, cannot yet be fully met if equipment and facilities are not installed on time. The second, referring to the technical capabilities installed, shows satisfactory progress, but its effectiveness could be enhanced if the system is completed. The third, concerning the pilot operation of the System, cannot be evaluated without the installation in the priority delegations. On average, progress towards the Goal is judged to be moderately satisfactory so far.</p>

Mid-Term Review "Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

Measure	Rating	Achievement Description
	<u>Outcome 1</u> <i>'National Environmental Information System'</i> Satisfactory (S)	<p>This outcome is essentially affected by delays in the acquisition of equipment. Indicator 4 on improving data management protocols and standards has a satisfactory step forward, due to being relatively independent of equipment; indicator 5 regarding the development of manuals and guidelines is not satisfactory as a more complete installation is required for its achievement. Indicator 6 is highly satisfactory, as it refers to the broad regulatory and institutional framework.</p>
	<u>Outcome 2</u> <i>'Strengthened technical capabilities for the implementation of the National Information System Ambiental'</i> Satisfactory (S)	<p>There is a satisfactory progress towards Outcome 2, whose indicators are mainly related to the establishment of the operational unit of the System, the improvement of the interoperability of interconnected systems, and the development of a resource mobilization strategy. The relative independence of the activities leading to this Outcome from the barriers causing arrears has led to a satisfactory progress in each of the various activities planned.</p>
	<u>Outcome 3</u> <i>'Early implementation of the Environmental Information System'</i> Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<p>While progress in the achievement indicator on good practices for incorporating overall obligations into sectoral plans may be considered moderately satisfactory, the other two indicators relating to policy decisions and greater awareness and understanding of environmental values require more time to work with the operating System, which would hardly be achieved in the remainder of the Project, considering delays in the import process, which have affected the installation of technological solutions.</p>
Progress towards results	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<p>Currently, the average rating in progress towards results is moderately unsatisfactory, considering that the imbalance with positive achievements lies essentially in unforeseen delays and short time remaining. The analysis carried out confirms that there are satisfactory results, and at the same time external difficulties that limit their execution.</p>
Adaptive Management and Project Implementation	Satisfactory (S)	<p>The assessment in this regard reveals efficiency and adaptive capabilities in the professional team in charge and in the participating actors, whose joint action has alleviated adverse situations with proactivity</p>

Measure	Rating	Achievement Description
		and effectiveness. However, there are still situations to be resolved.
Sustainability	Moderately Likely (ML)	This aspect shows the political and operational will to maintain official financial support to the Project, and the commitment to seek additional financing that compensates for the monetary official exchange differential introduced during the implementation of the Project. Moderately likely sustainability is considered if an extension of the Project runtime is not obtained. The positive benefits and effects of an extension would undoubtedly result in a complete implementation, and consequently scalable to the rest of the country; these effects extend to a better response to the international commitments made.

1.5 Summary of conclusions

On general aspects:

- There is agreement and convergent opinions among the interviewees, in terms of the main situations faced, and the visions and recommendations of action to enhance the progress of the Project and overcome delays in relation to the original plan of the ProDoc.
- Delays in implementation have been due to structural and external reasons for the implementation process, both for the extensive preparation of the document 'National Terms of Reference', which determine the start of the implementation of the Project as defined in national regulations; and by the impact of health measures in response to the Covid19 pandemic. In short, the Project has only had 15 months of implementation without being affected by delays of external origin, to which has been added the tightening of the economic, financial and commercial blockade of the U.S. Government,³ which affects key activities related to importing technological equipment.

On the design of the Project:

- It has been demonstrated that the design of the Project originates prior to its current formulation, whereas the need for a national environmental information system and preliminary actions aimed at this achievement were already present in government plans and concerns.
- Actors and beneficiaries have a positive view on the importance of the Project as it covers a need of the SIA set out in the National Environment Strategy, to serve as a decision-making tool related to environmental management and vulnerability to climate change.

³ Official name in Cuba to refer to this imposition of the U.S. Government.

- National commitments to the Rio Conventions have certainly driven this initiative, whose need for response led to the request for funding to the GEF and the consequent allocation of funds for the Project.

On the design and strategy of the Project

- Most actors agree that the design of the Project's strategy was a challenge due to the innovative and unusual nature of other projects implemented in the environmental area, causing the need for adaptive measures in its implementation.
- A satisfactory level of concertation and alignment is evident since the design of the Project, as it considered the interests and perspectives of the actors involved. This process has been especially relevant because it is a tool designed to be understood and used by a considerable number and diversity of actors.
- It is common for the actors interviewed to perceive the importance and significance of the project for the purposes of planning the country's development, consequently with the National Program for Economic and Social Development by 2030 (PNDES 2030) and the National Environmental Strategy.
- There is consensus among the actors and executors on the suitability of the initial selection of sectors (water and agriculture), and territories for the establishment of platforms and data centers (Matanzas and Pinar del Río), considering them representative of the needs and priorities that the Project has.
- Despite these positive perceptions, the evaluation process finds that the resulting structure of indicators for Project results is not suitable in terms of standard design recommendations (S-M-A-R-T) and requires adjustments that facilitate a better correspondence with the theory of change implicit in the Project, and effective monitoring of progress.

On the management of participation and interinstitutional management

- The implementation of the Project has been facilitated by the level of convergence and concertation between the participating actors, and by the degree of purposeful response to society's computerization policies, strategies, and environmental and climate commitments of the country at all levels of government.
- The barriers mentioned to harmonize interests and change institutional perspectives towards a common purpose - initiatives and Programs that require transverse actions and changing work habits are common – have been considered and progress is revealed in this effort, due to training and follow-up work by the PMU that is valued by all actors.
- In terms of gender equity and women's participation, the very composition of the people involved in the Project and in the interviewees indicates that there is a majority participation of women in areas of management and execution of actions in the Project.

- The evaluation highlights the proactivity, positive attitude, and technical solvency in their respective activities and tasks, of the staff interviewed, at each level and position of responsibility in the execution of the Project. In this sense, the permanence in positions – in many cases since before the formulation of the Project – and the low turnover of the management staff, are conditions that contribute to this quality.

On the process and progress of implementation of the Project

- The project implementation process has been affected by the delay in its effective start due – as noted – firstly, to the delay in the formalities established by the national party for the approval of international cooperation projects; then by the tightening of the economic, financial and trade blockade of the U.S. Government against Cuba; and subsequently, by the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, which has already had almost two years of negative impact on the Project's capabilities to make progress in its activities.
- This affected the process of acquiring the required technological equipment, and subsequently, the fulfillment of tasks and the achievement of the planned objectives. The strategy of enhancing the virtual modality with the use of several communication channels, and the use of the collaborative platform itself infoGEO, has been a successful adaptive element that has allowed to continue the activities during lockdown.
- The documentation reviewed and interviews conducted show that the Project already has positive results in terms of information management that is fueling the pilot system, and that it is already being applied to the demands of local users.

On mechanisms for managing, monitoring, and assessing impact on beneficiaries

- It has been found that some relevant actors in terms of information generation are already linked to the system and are providing data, including INRH and the projects with which synergies have been established.
- It has been demonstrated that territorial actors are already accessing the platform as an environmental management and citizen service tool. Interviewees have expressed their perception of the usefulness of the platform for monitoring environmental and climate variables as indicators of compliance with the country's multilateral agreements.

On aspects of knowledge management: information, communication, education and support to social associations and organizations.

- This key and core aspect of the Project, it is not possible to have a complete perception of progress yet without the installation of equipment and tests of consistency and scope. However, the prospects for comprehensive system development are on track and promising.
- Interviewees recognize the efforts made by the Project to publicize the platform and promote its understanding by users in sectors and territories. There is a positive

response to workshops and trainings, of provincial and municipal scope that included producers, cooperatives, and communities.

- There is positive and relevant convergence and partnership between infoGEO and 'Eco Valor', 'Connecting Landscapes', 'OP-15' and 'SINBIOD' projects in the practice of information management, facilitating the alignment and supply of criteria for homogenization and validation of protocols and data.

On the risks in the sustainability of the actions promoted by the Project

- The Project is supported by political commitments and obligations at all levels of government and, therefore, the actors interviewed have expectations that there will be budget availability for the financing of actions after the end of the Project.
- Most actors are concerned about the need for a longer project implementation time to demonstrate the usefulness of the fully operational, functional, interconnected, and supported platform with adequate technological infrastructure.
- Project Outcome 2 includes a provision to secure financial resources for at least five years after the closure of the Project, which – in principle – seems feasible through the current public budget and facilitated by synergies with other convergent projects.

1.6 Summary table of recommendations

Rec #	Recommendations	Responsible entity
Key	Take action to achieve the extension of the project implementation period by exploring direct options to GEF-UNDP, and second-phase alternatives or new project, based on escalation of what has been achieved. In the meantime, the deadlines, and possibilities for completing activities should be reviewed, and the objective and goals prioritized by anticipating difficulties in obtaining the extension.	Ministries and entities involved Project's-Committee High level of government.
A	Objective	
A.1	Acquire additional ICT equipment to extend the experience at the national level. The new challenges facing the SIA in the coming years will require international advice on other environmental dimensions of the SIA, and for the consolidation of the IT platform.	National Project Committee PMU UNDP
A.2	To consider intensifying training and dissemination activities, as well as preliminary coordination with other delegations territories in order of priority, and with other governmental sectors, in order to buy time and capitalize on the interest of the actors, until the installation of the system with the equipment and facilities in process.	PMU
A.3	Review the logical framework and combine in a single goal, the level of maturity that you want to achieve with an SIA designed from multiple perspectives, in a future scenario to meet the goals,	National Project Committee PMU

Mid-Term Review "Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

	considering the theory of implicit change in the objective and the goals of the Project.	
B	Outcome 1	
B.1	Continue and strengthen the actions of alignment to the dynamic process of normative and political order for economic and social development, and on the computerization of Cuban society, in anticipation of the stages of operation of the System.	National Project Committee PMU
B.2	The indicator stated as "Improvement of the relevant legal and regulatory framework for the management of information and environmental <i>knowledge</i> " is not achievable as it exceeds the competences of the participants in the Project. It is suggested to replace the term "improvement of the legal framework..." by "inputs to improve the legal framework..."	National Project Committee PMU
B.3	Modify the third goal of indicator 1, set as "Data transaction costs are reduced", as it is ambiguous and not measurable in comparative or timely form, thus limiting the scope of the actions necessary to obtain the Outcome.	National Project Committee PMU
C	Outcome 2	
C.1	Explore the collaboration of international cooperation and exchange of experiences with other countries on the subject of environmental information, in order to seek innovative solutions regarding information management, and maintain the <i>momentum</i> achieved through training to local stakeholders and actors and the general interest in infoGEO.	National Project Committee PMU UNDP
C.2	Maintain systematicity and effective achievements in the Outcome for the System operativity when equipment arrives.	National Project Committee PMU
D	Outcome 3	
D.1	Enrich the synergies created with other projects, and propose an articulated strategy for the future escalation of infoGEO towards other territories and other dimensions of environmental information, by optimally leveraging the resources of all those collaboration projects that could support in the creation of technological conditions and infrastructures for becoming widespread.	Ministries National Project Committee PMU
E	Project Implementation and Adaptive Management	
E.1	Follow up through the Capacities Development Scorecard so that comments on the assigned score are focused on justifying how the	MUP

Mid-Term Review "Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

	Project has influenced the strengthening of referred capabilities and highlighting achievements. Establish the next actions considered by the Project with a view to obtaining the expected results.	
E.2	Inform the GEF of the implications of the new exchange rate in the country, in the amount of co-financing originally agreed, as the basis for any variation that comes up in the implementation of the commitment for that cause.	National Project Committee PMU
E.3	Completing the process of hiring a backup on ETECSA servers, complementing the information protection policy at the CITMATEL Data Center	PMU
F.	Sustainability	
F.1	Access to measures to remove barriers that limit the implementation of the Project and accelerate imports and pending procurement with the importing company, so that the arrival of the equipment can be ensured, which is conditioning the future sustainability of infoGEO.	Ministries National Project Committee PMU

-----000-----

2 Introduction

This document contains the mid-term evaluation (MTR) of the Project ‘Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making’, herein after referred to as infoGEO. The MTR of the infoGEO Project covers processes from their design, formulation, and inception in January 2018, until March 2021, covering the reporting periods of the 2019 and 2020 PIRs. The realization of the MTR, which is usually carried out in the middle of its implementation period, was delayed for reasons beyond the management of the Project, and the unforeseen limitations caused by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic at the global and national level.

The MTR, as set out in the consultancy ToRs and GEF UNDP standards, aims to determine the Project's progress towards its objectives and expected outcomes in the Project Document (ProDoc), and to assess signs of its success or lack of success to identify the required changes and recommend actions to ensure efficient and effective development and implementation by achieving the expected goals and outcomes for its completion, and the sustainability of its actions and operation.

The evaluation approach focuses on the critical analysis of the project's planning and formulation strategy, its components, expected outcomes, goals and success indicators formulated based on the theory of change applied. This approach is part of the FMAM (GEF) and UNDP guidelines and directives on aligning approaches with national directives and policies, the rationality of expected change, the relevance and consequence of components and outcomes, and the quality of the success indicators outlined, with reference to the rating standard S-M-A-R-T.⁴

The evaluation methodology has been aligned with GEF and UNDP regulations and guidelines for the case⁵, as well as the ToR of the commission made to the consulting team and was presented in the evaluation inception report. The evaluation matrix summarizing the methodology used is attached to this report (see **Annex C**)⁶.

As described, the consultant team reviewed the available technical, administrative and technical management reports and documents (see **Annex G**), received after the MTR interception meeting, which included a virtual exhibition meeting and dialogue with the main government actors involved in the implementation of the Project, which took place on 16 March.

After the review of the documentation, the interviews were arranged and conducted. Virtual interviews were conducted with 22 people from 13 entities, selected and designated by the Environment Agency, the Project Management Unit, and relevant staff from the UNDP country office, which is considered to have been sufficient samples of the diversity of

⁴ The acronym SMART refers to the desirable characteristics of indicators: *Simple* (simple), *Measurable* (measurable), *Achievable* (achievable or feasible), *Relevant* (relevant or relevant), and *Timebound* (referring to compliance deadlines).

⁵ ‘Guidance for conducting Mid-Term reviews of UNDP-supported, Gif-financed projects’. UNDP-GEF Directorate, 2014.

⁶ Annexes **B** to **G** are in Spanish; only Annexes **A**, **H**, and **X (Audit Trail)**, submitted separately) have been translated into English.

government actors from public agencies and companies, as well as local governments, currently developing related projects, and specialists in various sectors (See **Annex F**). The gender balance in this composition was satisfactory, with 12 women included in the total of 22 interviewees.

The interviews were conducted based on guide questionnaires adapted to each type of participant (see **Annex D**); and the responses were summarized and systematized based on the evaluation matrix presented in the MTR initiation report.

It is important to note that, as had already been anticipated in the ToRs of the commission, the conditions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic did not allow the evaluation process to be ideally implemented as it was not possible for the evaluation team to travel and verify progress and achievement in the field. Therefore, all interviews and coordination were conducted in a virtual manner, totally fulfilling the program; and in cases where it was not possible to conduct interviews with the designated person, alternate officials were chosen whose input was equally effective and relevant. In this sense, the evaluation team has obtained perceptions and views that together reveal consistency and coincidence in the key aspects, as well as a clear correspondence with the documentary information.

It should be added that the local presence of the national consultancy was very effective in being able to carry out the necessary contacts and coordination in a closer and face-to-face manner, as in the case of the interview with the director of the PMU, whose contributions were crucial to complement the information received.

The structure of the MTR report follows the GEF-UNDP guidelines contained in the ToRs of the commission, and contains this introduction, a brief description of the Project, and the core section of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The findings section (numeral **4**) discusses the design and strategy of the Project, the Results Logic Framework, both narratively and in the required formal matrix (see **Annex A**), where goals and indicators are evaluated by objective and components, according to the established guidelines, and progress towards the results with the corresponding qualification.

The evaluation report is supplemented by the rest of the Annexes (**B** to **I**) required by the ToRs and contained in the table of contents, without being part of the body of the report, as separate documents. Annexes **H** and **I** shall be attached to this final report by UNDP; and Annex **X**, **Audit Trail** for **GEF/UNDP**, is issued separately and will be translated to English.

The following is the summary of the main lessons learned from the evaluation exercise, both from the implementation of the project and from the evaluation process itself. Finally, the executive summary is included which summarizes all aspects of the evaluation and precedes the more detailed sections of information.

3 Project Description and Context

The purpose of the Project is described as strengthening capacities to improve the incorporation of multilateral environmental agreements into decision-making and planning processes, through the development of knowledge and information management capabilities to improve environmental monitoring.

This purpose has been present in the country's plans and strategies, and has been expressed, planned, and promoted by government actors since before the formulation of the infoGEO Project as an initiative presented for funding by the Global Environment Fund (GEF).

The Project was accepted by the GEF with funding of USD 1,488,573, and is co-financed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) of Cuba (1,935,145), and with a contribution from UNDP (50,000).

Its implementation was foreseen; in principle, for a period of four years (January 2018 to January 2022) under the modality of NIM (*National Implementation Modality*), having as an implementing partner the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), and UNDP Cuba as guarantor, fund manager, and support entity.

The Project was designed with a view to achieving the following outcomes:

- A sustainable National Environmental Information System for the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of reliable and accurate environmental information, knowledge and data that integrates the commitments contained in multilateral environmental agreements into decision-making.
- The expansion of environmental and geographical information and knowledge systems and their cores, to contribute to the incorporation of environmental commitments into sectoral, national, and territorial planning processes.
- A reliable National Environmental Information System with selected sectoral strategies that contribute to meeting the commitments of the Rio Conventions.

The design and development of the Project has been framed, since its inception, within the implementation of the policies, strategies and plans of the sectoral and territorial levels of the government of Cuba, as well as international commitments and agreements, contained in the following provisions:

- National Environmental Strategy
- National Economic and Social Development Program by 2030
- Decree-Law of the Government Information System
- Territorial Environmental Strategies
- Sustainable Development Goals by 2030
- Rio Convention

Its respective implementation has coincided with an acceleration in the legal system in the national context derived from the development of the new Cuban Economic and Social Model and the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic in 2019. The Project has been able to take advantage of these transformations in enhancing its results, adhering to cutting-edge initiatives of electronic government, generated by Decree-Law No. 370/2018 "Regarding

computerization of society in Cuba" and Decree-Law No. 6/2020 "of the Government Information System".^{7 8}

The implementation of the Project is also aimed at meeting a set of needs and situations related to compliance, monitoring, information for decision making, knowledge management and research and communication and environmental education, identified by the 'Self-Assessment of National Capacity for Environmental Management in Cuba' (2011), such as the following:

- Lack of infrastructure for environmental compliance and monitoring
- Inadequate monitoring and compliance
- The lack of a timely decision-making information system
- Lack of standardization of existing information and data
- The low dissemination of environmental and state information from international negotiations and reports related to multilateral agreements
- Insufficient integration between communication and education Programs
- Inadequate integration of environmental aspects into training programs for decision-makers.

About UNDP's priorities, at the time of its formulation the Project was aligned with the agency's global and national strategies. At the global level, it is consistent with the 1.3 and 1.5 results of the strategic plan for the period 2014-2017, which respectively calls for solutions at the national and territorial level for the sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste; and the appropriate institutional, legislative and political conditions to encourage the implementation of climate and disaster management actions at the national and territorial levels.

At the national level, it aligns with the Country Program document for the period 2014-2018, whose outcome 7 addresses the integration of environmental concerns into the development plans of the productive and service sectors. This initiative is also legitimized as a priority in the UNDP Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2021 and in the Country, Document agreed with the Government for the period 2020-2024.

The Project has been designed and executed in convergence with existing similar programs, with which it coordinates, exchanges information through the infoGEO platform, and carries out training activities. These include the following:

- *UNDP/GEF project 'Ecovalor'*: aimed at implementing economic incentives, to achieve financial sustainability in the use and conservation of natural resources and the *environment*, the fight against pollution, and the facing of climate change.
- *UNDP project (GEF) 'Connecting Landscapes'*: proposes a paradigm shift in biodiversity conservation and protected area management in Cuba, from a landscape approach that integrates protected areas and their areas of influence.
- *SINBIOD* project aims to establish an integrated system that allows to provide high quality information permanently, on the biological diversity of the westernmost region of Cuba.

⁷ <https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/es/decreto-ley-370-de-2018-de-consejo-de-estado>

⁸ <https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/es/decreto-ley-6-de-2020-de-consejo-de-estado>

- *UNDP/UN-Environment/FAO/GEF Program 'National Action Plan to Combat Desertification and Drought':* prevention, reversal and recovery of lands affected by desertification and for mitigating the effects of drought.

These and other projects currently under implementation address other emerging environmental situations in Cuba: (i) land degradation caused by erosion, salinity, compaction and loss of soil fertility; (ii) loss of biodiversity caused by habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss, overexploitation of resources, and introduction of invasive alien species; (iii) pollution of soils, atmosphere and water resources caused by the use of outdated technologies, lack of clean production practices, and lack of adequate financing mechanisms for the minimization, treatment and recovery of waste; (iv) deforestation; and, v) water scarcity, aggravated by salt intrusion, overexploitation and pollution.

The Project is implemented as a pilot, in the territories of Matanzas and Pinar del Río because of its geographical and environmental representativeness, the level of development of government structures and computerization, and the confluence of existing programs and projects in those regions. At the same time, it prioritizes the water resources and agriculture sectors, in line with the main environmental situations and threats mentioned in the previous paragraph. To this end, working agreements have been signed between representatives of the above-mentioned sectors of each territory to facilitate the exchange of information and ensure the level of commitment required.

The Project involves the proactive participation of actors in the various sectors of society: Ministries and their corresponding central and decentralized bodies, local governments, state-owned enterprises, producers, and academic institutions; different conditions of service providers, implementers, and beneficiaries, among others. The main institutional actors are as follows:

- *Directorate of the Environment of CITMA*
- *Directorate of International Relations at CITMA*
- *Environment Agency*
- *National Bureau of Statistics and Information*
- *Ministry of Communication*
- *Ministry of Foreign Trade*
- *National Institute of Hydraulic Resources*
- *Matanzas Science Technology Park*
- *CITMATEL*
- *Delegation of CITMA in Pinar del Río (Environment Unit)*
- *CITMA Delegation in Matanzas*
- *Finca Tierra Brava*
- *Ministry of Agriculture*

In the context of its implementation, the Project has been adversely affected by two predominant external conditions: (i) the U.S. Government's economic, financial and trade blockade against Cuba, particularly in recent months of 2019, which caused a drastic reduction in the country's socio-economic activity; and (ii) the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent restrictive measures. These two factors have caused delays in the import of the technological equipment necessary for the implementation of the data centers on the selected nodes; and

have forced adaptive measures to conduct technical and administrative activities to optimize performance and comply with plans.

As an observation – as a way of compensating to the situation, mentioned by some actors - the need to optimize virtual communications and the spread of the use of cyber programs would be fulfilling a convergent role for the purposes of the Project, by institutionalizing and extending a practice that will facilitate the implementation and scope of the national information system in the end.

4 Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

4.1.1 Project Design

The evaluated Project was designed to cover a set of needs related to information and knowledge management, identified through the diagnosis called "Self-assessment of the National Capacity for Global Environmental Management in Cuba" carried out in 2011.

In addition to the above, the Project allows to comply with the provisions of the National Environmental Strategy 2010-2015 that establish the design of an Environmental Information System in order to offer an overview of the state of the environment and evaluate its trend through indicators ; and in the Strategic Cycle 2016-2020 also includes the design and gradual implementation of the environmental information system, as one of the priority activities. At the same time, the Project was aligned since its design, with the Government Information System, governed by ONEI, whose importance is renewed with the promulgation of Decree Law No. 6 in July 2020 which establishes the corresponding new principles of organization and operation.

The above characteristics reveal the relevance of the emergence of the Project in a context where computerization was beginning to become a national priority promoted from the central government and which has now become even more important due to virtualization measures taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It should be noted that the Project was designed on the basis of the existing platform infoGEO, which collected, though incipiently, environmental information relevant to the Rio Convention and other multilateral agreements, under the management of the IGT - WADA agency, dependent from CITMA - whose members currently direct the Project from the Management Unit. This particularity facilitated, to some extent, early coordination with relevant factors such as CITMA itself, ONEI, MINCOM and MINCEX.

In relation to the above, it can be said that the Project has, since its inception, been highlighted by efforts to convene key stakeholders, submit decisions for consultation, receive feedback and promote consensus among actors, including Programs with common objectives and interests, with whom it was planned to work together and whose experiences were considered from the design stage. While some of these coordination activities were considerably prolonged during the implementation period, it can be said that the strategy embodied in ProDoc has proven effective over a certain period of time, and is currently reflected in a high degree of commitment, understanding and appropriation from actors involved.

On the other hand, two decisive risks have been identified, to some extent foreseeable, that were not considered at the planning stage and materialized during implementation. These identified the following:

- The reiteration of the signing of the ToR by the relevant institutions as part of a national administrative process.
- Import delays caused by the U.S. political and economic blockade of Cuba.

Although the Project's reaction to these situations was appropriate, preventive actions could have been taken to avoid or reduce the negative effects of these factors, had they been identified in a timely manner.

Finally, it should be noted that the support of the UNDP team was key to the mainstreaming of gender considerations during the design stage from which monitoring of indicators of female participation in capacity-building activities, the designation of a focal point and work with gender experts were established.

4.1.2 Results Logic Framework

Project Structure

The logic of the project structure is expressed in its Objectives, Results, or *Expected Outcomes*, and end-of-project goals in each case, for which twelve indicators have been formulated in total:

Objective: *Strengthen environmental information and knowledge management to achieve the goals under multilateral environmental agreements in national planning and decision-making.*

Goals:

- *Cooperation agreements between partner agencies in the national environmental information has been signed in month 12.*
- *In month 12, the National Environmental Information System has been designed.*
- *Partner agency databases and information systems have benefited from the new state of the art of technology*

Indicators:

1. *Establishment of an interconnected environmental system*
2. *Better technical capabilities to incorporate environmental and global data, information and knowledge*
3. *Piloting the new interconnected information system*

Outcome 1: *National Environmental Information System.*

Goals:

- *Information gaps have been closed.*
- *Information and data metrics are appropriate and standardized.*
- *Data transaction costs are reduced.*
- *Clear data information exchange protocols have been formulated.*
- *An appropriate level of redundancy has been agreed between partner agencies.*

Indicators:

4. *Improved data collection, analysis, and storage protocols and standards*
5. *Development of manuals and guides on best practices for integrated global environmental and socio-economic planning.*
6. *Improving the relevant legal and regulatory framework for the management of environmental and knowledge information*

Outcome 2: *Strengthened technical capabilities for the implementation of the National Environmental System.*

- Goals:**
- *The coordination unit of the National Environmental Information System has been established and is operational for month 6.*
 - *The technical committee of the National Environmental Information System meets every three months.*
 - *The databases and information systems of the partner agencies are technologically connected to the National Environmental Information System by month 24*
 - *Actors from all partner agencies have actively participated in the 'learning by doing' management.*
 - *New realistic financing alternatives have been identified.*
 - *Financial resources have been secured to ensure the administration of the system for at least 5 years*

- Indicators:**
- 7. *Operational unit established to coordinate the National Environmental Information System.*
 - 8. *Improving the interoperability of interconnected information systems.*
 - 9. *Development of a resource mobilization strategy.*

Outcome 3: *Early implementation of the Environmental Information System.*

- Goals:**
- *Global environmental obligations are more effectively integrated into sectoral development plans for month 44.*
 - *Independent peer reviews give an average rating of 4 on the 5-point Scale of Likert to evaluate sectoral plans.*
 - *Two sectoral development plans have been formulated or updated using the National Information System and based on good practices for month 24.*
 - *The early implementation of these two sectoral plans will show clear benefits in terms of the three Rio Conventions.*
 - *Values of understanding and environmental awareness have been improved.*
 - *Decision-makers have been provided with of information and knowledge in useful formats.*
 - *A statistical analysis of the baseline and end of the project indicates that the knowledge of the actors and the relationship between global environmental and sustainable socio-economic development has improved by at least 15%.*
 - *At least 500 actors have been analyzed in baseline assessments and at the end of the project.*
 - *The actors evaluated have participated in the activities of the project.*

- Indicators:**
- 10. *Timelier environmentally friendly and sustainable development decisions.*
 - 11. *Demonstration of good practices to incorporate global obligations into sectoral development plans.*
 - 12. *Increased awareness and understanding of global environmental values.*

Quality analysis of Indicators

The logic framework analysis reveals that some of the goal indicators do not meet in their formulation the characteristics S-M-A-R-T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Temporarily defined).

The first target of the Objective indicator "A networked *environmental information system is established*", which relates to the signing of interinstitutional agreements to support the SIA, is not relevant because the SIA is considered a policy instrument in Law 81 Environmental of

the Republic of Cuba⁹. Article 36 of that law demands the Agencies of the Central Administration of the State, and other entities involved in the SIA, to deliver to CITMA, as the state body in charge of the system, all the information contained in the environmental indicators. In this regard, interinstitutional agreements to support the SIA are essentially redundant, and a review would therefore be recommended.

Moreover, the two remaining targets referred to by this indicator are not, together, capable of holistically expressing a specific future condition, by no longer considering some elements associated with an information system seen as a complex techno-social phenomenon. It is advisable to combine in a single goal, the level of maturity desired to achieve with a SIA designed from multiple perspectives, in a future scenario to meet the goals. A possible rethinking, with an integrated goal that would replace the three envisaged for this indicator in the original design of the Project, would-be: "... The SIA is designed and in a development phase at month 36.". This state of the SIA is characterized by the following:

- a. Partnerships between those involved have been strengthened through mechanisms of collaboration and communication
- b. The content of information from at least two prioritized sectors is defined in at least two territories
- c. Data governance mechanisms and standards have been formalized for key SIA processes.
- d. The IT platform capable of integrated managing of SIA data has been developed and providing the multidimensional analyses required to support environmental data-driven decision-making.

The third goal of Indicator 1 of Outcome 1, set as "*Data transaction costs are reduced*", is ambiguous and not measurable, not relating to the extent to which and how such reduction could be assessed, nor is it temporarily defined. It is recommended to replace this target with a data reuse measure as follows: "Primary environmental data are reused at the subnational level from month 36".

The indicator stated as "*Improvement of the relevant legal and regulatory framework for information and environmental knowledge management*" is not achievable because it exceeds the capacities of the participants in the Project; as it is a country regulatory framework, involving a national policy, the approval of which is at the level of the Council of Ministers, outside the scope of the competences of the participants of infoGEO. It is recommended to make an amendment to this indicator, replacing the terms "improvement of the legal framework..." by "inputs to improve the legal framework...".

4.2 Progress towards results

4.2.1 Analysis of the Capacity Development (CD) scorecard

Project-driven capacity building, in line with the strategic objective of the GEF focal area that corresponds to it, is assessed through five results - cross-cutting to the three results set out in the Logical Framework - the progress of which is described below. The scope of the

⁹ <https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/es/ley-81-de-1997-de-asamblea-nacional-del-poder-popular#:~:text=La%20present%20Read%20se%20denomine, and %20la%20socie%20en%20general>.

capabilities developed by the Project is limited to prioritized territories and sectors, due to available resources and execution time.

Capabilities for commitment

The Project contributes to the improvement of environmental governance in prioritized sectors and territories by promoting the awareness of its governing bodies among civil society, through participation in workshops and field visits to different municipalities. It has also succeeded in establishing a conciliation mechanism between the main actors that has enabled the development of the 2030 PNDES and 2030 SDS indicator set in a consensual manner.

Capabilities to create, access and use information and knowledge

The infoGEO platform allows the exchange of information between the different connected actors; among them are, in addition to the main territorial and sectoral nodes; related programs and projects, the agroecological farm Tierra Brava and even civil society, through the '*Bienestar*' platform that operates as a channel of citizen participation. However, it has not involved to the extent sufficient, the academy, the productive sector and civil society to gather scientific knowledge as well as traditional knowledge, and to inform and educate population.

Skills for the development of strategies, policies, and legislation

Improved quality of useful information for policy and standards development; ensuring its reliability, relevance, systematization, and analysis through the implementation of the infoGEO platform. However, the level at which these inputs are used in strategic and regulatory planning processes has not been reached. Apart from this, a SIA guiding document proposal has been developed as an input for the development of the Law and Regulations of the SIA.

Management and implementation capabilities

The Project is in the process of building technical capabilities through the '*learning by doing*' methodology, as well as developing a financial strategy to sustain over time the trainings required to maintain and extend the operability of the SIA.

Capabilities to monitor and evaluate

The SIA supported by the infoGEO platform contributes to the ability to monitor compliance with multilateral agreements by having adequate indicators for this purpose. However, its use to carry out comprehensive assessments of the status of commitments or actions aimed at achieving them is not yet evident.

In short, the Project stands out for the level of conciliation that has occurred to carry out the diagnosis prior to the implementation of the platform, including the development of information flows and indicators, as well as the general awareness and understanding of the strengthening of the SIA through infoGEO. However, the necessary extension of this stage and delays caused by factors outside the Project have led to the failure at the time of the MTR to continue to strengthen decision-making, develop strategies, policies and legislation, as well as their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, it is recommended, in order to better follow up through the Scorecard, that comments on the assigned score be focused on justifying how the Project has positively influenced to strengthen the capabilities referred to or the reasons why no achievements are yet evident, as the case may be. Similarly, it is suggested to clearly establish the next actions

anticipated by the Project with a view to obtaining the expected results. Currently, the Capacity Development Scorecard describes the future benefits of project implementation, and the expected results in terms of capacity building and knowledge management; but it does not indicate the next steps, strategies and activities to address barriers or continue progress towards expected outcomes.

4.2.2 Analysis of progress towards results.

This section contains the results of the critical analysis of the results framework detailed in the matrix contained in Annex A, at the end of this document, which has made a comparative assessment of progress since the PIR reports (June 2020), updated with the information collected and revised, as well as the interviews conducted and supplementary data as of March 2021.

The achievement rating (**green**, **yellow**, and **red**) refers to the level of achievement in each outcome relative to the goals and time to achieve them; and the standard achievement level rating is expressed in the letters **HS** (highly satisfactory), **S** (satisfactory), **MS** (moderately satisfactory), **MU** (moderately unsatisfactory), **U** (unsatisfactory), and **HU** (highly unsatisfactory).

Project Objective:

Strengthen environmental information and knowledge management to integrate the goals under multilateral environmental agreements into national planning and decision-making.

Indicator (1): *Establishment of an interconnected environmental system*

MS

Partnerships between data providers (INRH, MINAGRI), IT and telematics service providers (XETID and CITMATEL) and CITMA entities responsible for governing the SIA (DMA, and territorial delegations in Matanzas and Pinar del Río) have been consolidated; as well as ONEI for its guiding role in the Government Information System.

Other agencies are committed to the development of SIA, such as AMA and IGT, with technical leadership. The alliance established with the academy, (Faculty of Communications of the University of Havana) and the Technological Park (Universidad de Matanzas), is important.

Under a holistic approach to an integrative target for the indicator, the following advances are seen:

- infoGEO has developed a platform shared by actors in the SIA to exchange good practices, data models, news, and other documents. It is a common opinion that the interinstitutional integration is a key achievement of the Project.
- Data variables that feed environmental indicators in the two sectors (Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources) have been defined in two territories (Matanzas and Havana).

- With support from the Faculty of Communications of University of Havana, and partnerships with data providers of environmental water and soil indicators, a governable framework for the flow of data between the parties has been formalized. Although it has not been validated because the system deployment was not complete.
- Xetid Company has supported the development of an IT platform for integrated SIA management; an initiative to be developed in the Matanzas Technology Park for its sustainability. The indicator sheet with its metadata is in development, and the control boards that allow real-time monitoring are set. Reports with historical information have also been designed
- The telematics infrastructure has not been completed by CITMATEL, because the procurement process for the interconnection and hosting of the platform, scheduled for August-September 2021, is being completed.

Despite the satisfactory levels of interinstitutional integration, it is considered that the level of achievement towards the objective is not well expressed in the way the goal is set, since interinstitutional agreements are already, by law, the responsibility of the entities involved in the SIA.

In short, the achievement of the indicator is in process; and its compliance at the end of the project is conditioned to the acquisition of the remaining equipment, scheduled for August-September 2021.

Indicator (2): *Better technical capabilities to incorporate environmental and global data, information, and knowledge*



With regard to the training goal, workshops have been developed, under the "Learning-by-Doing" approach, which have helped raise awareness in stakeholders about each other's role with respect to the SIA; in particular, for the incorporation of reliable environmental data and information integrated into sectoral planning.

More than 500 people representing stakeholders have been trained. This activity slowed down at the start of the pandemic, but measures were taken by the PMU that enhanced virtual workshops by leveraging free technologies easily accessible by stakeholders.

The services developed on the infoGEO collaborative platform and the analytical platform supported by the SIA follow best practices with the use of free software based on open standards.

It highlights the ability of the SIA management platform to integrate into e-government systems, providing value-added services such as citizen environmental surveillance.

This indicator is considered satisfactorily met in its two goals. Despite its compliance, the Project continues to develop a training plan that is more oriented to the stages of operation of the SIA than to its own design, as referred to in this indicator.

Indicator (3): Piloting the new interconnected information system**MU**

This indicator does not meet its two targets as it has been affected by the accumulated delays in the implementation of the Project, mainly because of COVID-19, which slowed down the already complex import process in the country.

The Project has worked on the subject and has partially tested, in the province of Matanzas, and to some extent in Pinar del Río, with some services already available from the support platform of the SIA. This has been possible the synergies developed by the PMU with other collaborative projects opened in UNDP environment folder.

The coupling of the SINBIOD Project Observatory with the monitoring information system was tested for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Program, validating instruments, quality of results and transmission to ECOVIDA's central server. This made it possible to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the SIA platform and technology in terms of information flows and environmental monitoring and management processes.

In order to formulate sectoral development plans using the SIA and piloting with key actors, it is necessary to have the modules of situational rooms, currently in the process of import; after which it is estimated that it would take 6 to 9 months to install equipment and train actors, as well as additional time for effective absorption of knowledge and skills.

Despite the management that the PMU, supported by the Steering Committee, has been displaying to complete the import of all necessary equipment in September 2021, it is highly unlikely that this deadline will be met, given the current state of conciliation-contracting.

On the other hand, the health crisis affecting the global supply chains maintains, which also affects the actions derived, making it unbearable to comply meet the targets and deadlines for the conclusion of the Project in January 2022.

Outcome 1:*National Environmental Information System***Indicator (4): Improved protocols and standards for collecting, analyzing, and storing data.****S**

The FCOM's information flow study was completed, identifying the SIA information gaps to keep track of the SDGs and The Rio Convention Objectives in accordance with the recommended United Nations Statistics Division and its basic set of environmental statistics series.

Information diagnostic and auditing tools were applied, supported by FCOM, in 7 WADA institutes and other local actors, data providers for water and soil indicators, in the two selected provinces. All this allowed the definition of new information flows to fill the gaps.

The content of the SIA was structured, including environmental indicators, scientific research, environmental assessments and reports, regulatory and geospatial information, with the participation of institutions (DMA, DOCIA, DPP, ONEI, INRH, MINAG and AMA).

Data collection was computerized on the platform that will support the SIA. To date, the company Xetid is completing the development of the indicator sheet with its metadata.

Indicators are supported in primary data variables, which makes the way they are constructed a more efficient one and allows the definition of new indicators from defined data variables.

Regarding data transaction costs, while the use of a data collection system suggests cost reduction and greater resource efficiency, there is no experimental evidence to reveal these costs. This aspect may be more due to the design of the indicator's goal than to the fulfilment of the objective itself.

Exchange protocols have been defined, and the computer tool makes use of them. There is a document generated in the Project that evaluates the data standards used.

For fail-safe SIA redundancy, it remains to finish hiring a backup on ETECSA servers, which complements the information protection policy in the CITMATEL Data Center

There is a good overall progress in activities directed towards end-of-project goals. The specific elements that are missing to meet the entire objectives of the indicator do not depend on circumstances or elements outside the Project, so it is estimated that they can be fulfilled before the end of the Project.

Indicator (5): *Development of manuals and guides on best practices for integrated global environmental and socio-economic planning.*

MS

Training on the elements of the SIA has advanced based on the guiding document prepared, and some others about the potentials of the IT platform in implementation for its support.

The development and dissemination of Good Practice Manuals for the use of the SIA is expected, based on experience in the areas of intervention and pilot sectors, which will only be completed after the implementation of the platform at the operating nodes of the system (scheduled for November 2021). The same goes for stakeholder training, based on the manuals and guides prepared (goal 2).

The compliance of the indicator, in its two objectives, is conditioned on the acquisitions, installation of the equipment, the training process and the subsequent experience that SIA users may have.

It is considered unlikely that this cycle of actions will be completed before January 2022, from the arrival in the country of equipment, whose most optimistic date is August-September 2021. This judgement is based on the threats to the project; the epidemiological situation with the pandemic and the US economic and financial blockade against Cuba, which may affect the process of importing the equipment and thus the pace of implementation of the remaining activities.

Indicator (6): *Improvement of the relevant legal and regulatory framework for the management of environmental information and knowledge.*

HS

Within the framework of the infoGEO Project the DMA developed the SIA's guiding document addressing key topics such as:

- Conceptual Framework,
- Users and nodes,

- Information providers,
- Flow of information and
- Environmental Indicators of the SIA.

This document serves as the basis for the development of the new Law Project, and the process of approval by the Council of Ministers. At the same time, it serves as an input for the development of Regulations of the Environmental Information System, which must be approved by the Minister of CITMA.

The target is evaluated as fulfilled, as this indicator proposes an improvement of the regulatory framework, and the document delivered to CITMA, is the contribution of the Project to such improvement. It is understood in this regard that the country regulatory framework, which involves a national policy, is not competence of a collaborative policy.

Outcome 2:

Strengthened technical capabilities for the implementation of the National Environmental Information System

Indicator (7): *Operational unit established to coordinate the National Environmental Information System*

S

The Coordination Unit of the SIA, created in the initial stage, remains in place, with the participation of WADA institutes, the main actors of the provinces of Pinar del Río and Matanzas, ONEI and FCOM.

The baseline was defined, with their respective appointments, with the headquarters of the Coordination Unit established in the IGT, which works in conjunction with the DMA, responsible for the national coordination of the SIA. Under the supervision of CITMA delegations in the two territories involved, a provincial coordinator and environmental monitoring coordinator were appointed, convening the rest of the local actors involved in the SIA. Similarly, the coordinators for the two MINAGRI and INRH sectors were defined. Key business players such as XETID have been invited to address topics such as the design and operation of the SIA and technological solutions.

The Technical Committee at the national level meets on a quarterly basis. In addition, more than 12 technical workshops have been organized at the provincial level.

These ad-hoc structures and measures taken have allowed to monitor and analyze the fulfillment of project activities and technical assistance, with the presence of research centers, academic institutions, business sector, government officials, producers, etc. If the work of the SIA Coordination Units is maintained, it is estimated that it is feasible to achieve the goals of this indicator before the end of the year.

Indicator (8): *Improving the interoperability of interconnected information system.*

S

Self-diagnosis tools applied to key national institutions and in the two selected provinces, conducted by the academy (FCOM-UH) revealed barriers to data interoperability.

The incorporation of Xetid, provider of the computer solutions, helped that the data model is based on open standards that guarantees interoperability according to the state of art, the Policy for the improvement of the computerization of society in Cuba, and decree-law No.370 regulated by the electronic government in the country. On the other hand, as Xetid has a national coverage, it would facilitate the extension in a second stage to the rest of the territories.

The participation of stakeholders in the workshops related to the design of the SIA, has generated a collective commitment to the information solutions on which it is based, including data exchange models and services. To this end, the adoption of the global protocol "Framework for the Development of Environmental Statistics" (MDEA), promoted in the region by ECLAC, has contributed to a flexible, multipurpose conceptual and statistical framework that allows and facilitates the compilation, surveying and production of environmental statistics.

At the design level the Project points towards an improvement in interoperability; however, the indicator cannot be met until the databases of variable suppliers that feed the SIA are effectively interconnected between the two sectors and the two selected provinces, which depends on the arrival in the country and subsequent installation of the equipment, so that the computer platform that supports the SIA networked with the institutions can be implemented.

Even with this barrier, it is estimated that the target (with the scope of the interoperable interconnection of databases) can be achieved for the closure of the Project, scheduled for January 2022.

Indicator (9): *Development of a resource mobilization strategy*

S

A strategy of mobilization of resources has been designed with main types of funds: (a) national funds; and, (b) international cooperation funds.

Regarding national funds (CUP), in addition to the PNCTI project declared co-financing, the Project has obtained three million CUP from the Non-Program-Associated Projects (PNAP) fund by 2022. Covering also the first year of sustainability of the Project, a fund of 1.8 million CUP has been awarded with INRH. The PMU has worked with CITMA's program and project area on a Sectoral Program to support the SIA over the next five years, and which will be the umbrella for at least two projects generated by the PMU and the actors participating in infoGEO, with a view to the continuity of infoGEO.

International cooperation funds have been recognized in the financing strategy as essential for sustainability, considering that the Project is only the seed of the SIA with a limited scope to environmental indicators in two sectors and in two territories. On the one hand, thanks to infoGEO's synergy with other collaboration projects in the UNDP environment folder (ECOVALOR, Connecting Landscapes, SINBIOD), the technological connectivity infrastructure and multipurpose data centers in other provinces could be covered with funding. However, to extend the Project at the national level, additional ICT equipment is needed from the international market. The new challenges that the SIA faces in the coming years will require international advice in other dimensions of SIA, and for the consolidation of the IT platform.

The target referred to by this indicator is achievable if the new Sector Program under development by the PMU is secured and launched in June 2021, with a scope of five years; that would contribute to the sustainability of the SIA in that period.

In order to consolidate the results and extend the SIA to the other provinces plus the special municipality of Isla de la Juventud, and to broaden the scope of its environmental indicators to other dimensions, considering global good practices, further work is needed on the mobilization of international cooperation funds.

Outcome 3:

Early implementation of the Environmental Information System.

Indicator (10): Timelier environmentally amiable and sustainable development decisions**MU**

The PMU has pointed out that this goal indicator would not be achievable during the Project's timeframe, due to the initial delay with the processing of the Terms of Reference with MINCEX, and with the most significant ones that came due to COVID-19.

However, experimental operational tests have been made of the services released by the platform from its Balance Scorecard, in Matanzas province with the sectors involved - in particular with the MINAGRI forestry sector - indicating that it allows to make real-time decisions based on computerized SIA.

Independent peer reviews to assess sectoral plans are even less likely to be achieved during the Project, because they are equivalent to an evaluation with the operationally active system, which to be evaluated must be in operation for at least 1 to 2 months.

Whereas it is only possible to achieve both targets when the IT platform supported by the SIA is in operation, which in turn depends on overseas acquisitions, and on a chain of actions derived from it, this target is not expected to be achieved before the project closes in January 2022.

Indicator (11): Demonstration of good practices to incorporate global obligations into sectoral development**MU**

Foundations has been laid for projecting the 2021-2030 development plans of the two sectors involved (MINAG and INRH).

As an adaptive measure to the situation of accumulated arrears, and in close alignment with the Government Information System, defined environmental indicators of the INRH and MINAG sectoral development plans have been incorporated into the SIA los defined environmental indicators, in line with ONEI's Supplementary Statistics Information System (SIEC), which serves as the basis for sectoral planning in the environmental field. This clearly improves country reports to the three Rio Conventions.

This target indicator could be met before the conclusion of the Project, in the 2022 annual planning exercise, at the sectoral level through SIEC, and even if the IT platform is not working, which is expected to offer added value by facilitating the planning and decision-making process based on environmental indicators and in a cross-cutting way.

Indicator (12): Increased awareness and understanding of global environmental values**MU**

Particular attention has been paid to awareness-raising and communication issues among all stakeholders throughout the project, as was repeatedly expressed in interviews conducted by the evaluation team.

An illustrative example is the creation of the 'Observatory', which monitors the implementation of the objectives, targets and actions defined by the National Biodiversity Program in Pinar del Río, tracking implementation in the province, in line with the commitments established within the Convention on Biological Diversity.

As part of this, surveys are done, and information is collected that provides inputs to assess the state of assimilation and action for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity components.

The indicator for goals 3 and 4 does not seem achievable before the end of the Project on the original date of January 2022, because the survey to be done when all activities have been completed, which would only allow to evaluate the difference of knowledge of the actors with respect to the baseline regarding global environmental values.

4.2.3 Barriers to achieving the goal of the Project

The progress matrix presented in **Annex A** indicates which of the Project's targets have been achieved, are on track or are not expected to be achieved within the time limit set for implementation. The objectives whose compliance within the expected period is highly unlikely are those that depend on the operability of the data centers and consequently, are based on the availability - estimated for August or September 2021 - of the equipment necessary for their implementation. This is because the remaining time, estimated at three months, would not be sufficient to carry out the following activities required to achieve the corresponding targets considering also the time required for the installation of the equipment on the nodes. This and other barriers that the Project has faced at different times of its implementation are described below.

- a. Delay in the procedures required by the government of Cuba for the approval of international cooperation projects, finally concentered in the signing of the national ToRs, caused a delay of approximately one year at the effective start of the Project. During this period, the PMU sought to advance certain diagnostic activities, however, progress was below planned due to the inability to receive disbursements.
- b. Delay in the acquisition of equipment due to the administrative complexities inherent in import processes due to the U.S. economic, political, and financial blockade against Cuba, aggravated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the country's commercial activities.
- c. The harmonization of interests and the paradigm shift of institutional attitude towards a collaborative perspective for a common purpose required intensive effort by the PMU at the beginning of the Project, implemented through workshops, bilateral meetings, among other conciliation mechanisms and continues to be a challenge for the integration of current and future actors, and for the full understanding of the respective responsibilities in relation to the SIA.
- d. Reticence against the replacement of conventional management methods by using technological tools for the optimization of processes of collection, analysis, and storage of useful information for decision making. The PMU has promoted this paradigm shift through workshops and face-to-face and virtual training sessions, achieving good results.
- e. Travel restrictions adopted in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic that prevented for about a year from carrying out face-to-face training events and limited visits to the prioritized territories and their different municipalities. Most activities have been adapted to the virtual sphere; however, the impact is not equivalent to face-to-face interactions.

The measures described in points c., d. and e. have proven their effectiveness in overcoming the corresponding barriers and currently allow the performance of the Project's

activities. The efforts made have not prevented the negative effects mentioned in points (a) from occurring. and b. because they are external circumstances beyond the control of the implementing team.

Considering the importance of scaling the Project territorially and in a sectoral way, as well as the need to incorporate other projects and actors that exchange information with the infoGEO platform, good integration practices should be continued and strengthened.

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

4.3.1 Management Arrangements

The management organization of the Project outlined in the ProDoc has been maintained, expanding with the joining to the CDN of the FCOM, the UMA of Matanzas and Pinar del Río and the suppliers CITMATEL, Xetid and the Matanzas Technology Park. At the last meeting of the CDN it was established to include INRH and MINAGRI as permanent guests, a decision judged to be correct, considering the dilation produced in the establishment of agreements with these institutions representing the prioritized sectors. The current organization is shown in the following figure.



The perceptions gathered from the interviews conducted reveal a high level of commitment from the PMU, reflected in the diligence to seek ways of solution to the adverse situations faced. The implementing team has an eminently technical profile and has the experience of managing the platform preceding the current infoGEO. This quality is perceived in a positive way; however, it has required to be complemented by the expertise of other actors in the administrative, financial and communicative fields, the latter being relevant to good interinstitutional relations and adequate coordination mechanisms, internal training and external dissemination.

UNDP's participation, whose relationship with the PMU is efficient, has been valuable in strengthening implementation capacities related to the above-mentioned aspects. Specifically, UNDP has contributed to the preparation of reports, promoting communication among the members of the Steering Committee, the joint search for unforeseen solutions, the mainstreaming of the gender approach, among other activities related to its previous experience in accompanying environmental projects.

It can be said that a stable and balanced team – which transcends the PMU – in terms of capabilities and gender has been established. The balance of women's participation, both

in the coordination of the Project and in the workshops and technical meetings organized, is positive and gender balanced.

4.3.2 Work planning

Operational planning of activities has followed the logic of the results framework and is executed under the responsibility, capacity, and leadership of the Project Manager and those in charge of the three components or outcomes.

Initial planning of the Project was affected for several months until the signing of the Project Terms of Reference with MINCEX, which took longer than expected.

In 2019, the Project focused on institutional strengthening actions aimed at the national actors and the territories of Matanzas and Pinar del Río selected for the piloting of the Environmental Information System. Workshops and exchanges, mainly relating to Component 1, were held during this period and the PMU was recovered from the arrears in implementation. However, by September 2019, the Project faced another external unforeseen event, with a national impact on fuel that virtually stopped the country, caused by the economic, financial, and commercial blockade of the U.S. Government.

The Project reveals its increased adaptive management capacity in 2020, amid the health crisis associated with Covid-19. Lockdown and social distance measures made it difficult to carry out the activities of the Project, in particular the visits of the PMU to the two selected provinces. For this purpose, the Project moved part of its activities to virtual channels and created the 'Virtual Community' infoGEO', based on its own platform and other freely accessible online tools, such as *Jitsi Meet* and *Whatsapp*. In this period, the following activities have move forward:

- The design of the SIA was completed and made available as an input to a new national environmental policy, in preparation by CITMA.
- Information flows were established based on the interoperable information architecture defined for the SIA
- The platform infoGEO was linked to the 'Bienestar' platform of electronic government, which added value with new functionalities of citizen participation and a balanced scorecard for environmental indicators.
- The conditioning of the nodes for the data centers from which the SIA will be managed and the main decisions will be made.
- Validation tests are carried out on the first SIA modules in Matanzas province.

Despite these progress, the Project still exhibits significant arrears, mainly in components 2 and 3. An objective analysis in this regard reveals that the main bottlenecks are in the process of procurement of goods involving imports, particularly for the purchase of the technology modules for the six data centers to be established in Pinar del Río, Matanzas, CITMATEL, INSMET, INRH and MINAGRI. The inherent complexities of the import process in Cuba are added to those derived from the pandemic that hinder access to regular suppliers. The PMU, supported by the AMA and CITMA authorities, has progressively assessed the situation by taking measures, such as conciliation with other importing companies, Solintel (specializing in information and communications technologies) and Consumimport, MINCEX's main importer.

The operational planning of the Project for the year 2021 plans to recover these arrears in the current year. However, it does not seem realistic that all pending activities can be completed, in Component 3. The evaluation team of this MTR considers that the pending work

would require extending beyond the project closing date to complete the activities of the process of acquiring the data center modules. This process is essential to implement the piloting of the SIA in the two selected provinces and in the governing institutions of water and soil indicators, and to learn from experience with a view to scaling the system to the national level.

4.3.3 Finance and co-finance

The pace of financial implementation of the Project, for the reasons explained by the accumulated arrears, has behaved below expected, with only 50% compliance until 31 March 2021. The following table shows financial execution through March 2021.

	Total Expenditure at the end of the Project (USD) *	Disbursement until December 2020	Plan 2021	Disbursement until March 31, 2021	Budget 2022	%
Outcome 1:	213.752,45	213.752,45	0,00	0,00	0,00	100%
Outcome 2:	840.167,90	452.204,30	387.963,60	117,00	0,00	54%
Outcome 3:	294.662,17	56.143,55	238.518,62		0,00	19%
Project	134.990,48	25.982,48	79.008,00		30.000,00	19%
TOTAL	1.483.5730	748.082,78	705.490,22	117,00	30.000,00	50%

(*) The approved expenditure totals are assumed in the last budget review of the Project, approved for 2021.

While Outcome 1 has managed to meet 100% of the planned budget, there is low execution in the remaining two results. Of what remains to be implemented in 2021, an amount of USD 301,00 thousand is intended for the importation of goods; of which until 31 March 188.6 thousand USD were contracted, and the rest is expected to be contracted in May and July of this year.

This poses a moderate risk of compliance with the allocated budget, if the behavior that this procurement process has had throughout the life cycle of the Project is analyzed. However, the Steering Committee and the PMU have established a set of actions to support the acceleration of imports of the Project as much as possible, which is now the main bottleneck for both implementation and budgetary implementation.

The evaluation reveals that the UMP has implemented appropriate financial controls, including: collegiate action such as the purchase and procurement committee, reliable accounting procedures, payment and accounting requests and accounting control systems, and inventories. These controls, typical of the entity hosting the Project, are complemented by quarterly monitoring, control and supervision mechanisms for the financial execution and investments of the Project, implemented at the UMP level and supervised by AMA and CITMA, in line with MINCEX for cooperation projects. All this allows the management of the Project to make collegiate and informed decisions and facilitate the co-management and due diligence

of the funds. UNDP and CITMA make frequent updates on progress in procurement processes, which enables timely flow of funds and payments.

The co-financing situation of the Project indicates that a total of 85.31% of the original commitment to the GEF has been disbursed. UNDP offset funds show 100% implementation, whereas national government co-financing reaches 84.93%, remaining the execution of commitments for 2021 and 2022. The figures are shown in the following table and **Annex H**.

Sources of co-financing	Name of co-financer	Type of co-financing	Amount of co-financing confirmed in the CEO's endorsement (USD)	Actual amount contributed at the time of the mid-term review (USD) *	% of real expected amount
Funds (<i>Energy & Environment</i>)	PNUD	External	50.000,00	50.000,00	100,00
Environmental Agency - AMA	IGT	National (Government))	816.780,00	816.780,00	100,00
National Plan of Science, Technology, and Innovation (PNCTI)	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)	National (Government)	870.120,00	870.120,00	100,00
Program Not Associated to Project (PNAP)	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)	National (Government)	299.166,67	0,00	0,00
TOTAL			2.036.066,67	1.736.900,00	85,31

(*) Up to December 2020

The national project co-financing infoGEO at the PNCTI should last until 2022. As of 1st January of 2021, with the monetary and exchange rate order that occurred in the country, the rates varied and the performance of the CUP relative to USD decreases 24 times, so it is very likely that the actual amount of co-financing will not be able to approximate the amount initially planned at USD.

It is advisable, in this context, to adjust the co-financing originally foreseen or to analyze other measures that underlie this situation against the commitment made. In addition to the original co-financing of ProDoc, the PMU has managed new financing that begins to be implemented in the Second Quarter of 2021 and until 2022, with a view to supporting new IT developments and technical support by the Matanzas Science-Technological Park. The funds for this new co-financing come from national entities participating in infoGEO (INRH and IGT) and add up to USD 174,674.42.

4.3.4 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

Project-level monitoring and evaluation has been carried out in accordance with UNDP requirements, based on the results framework, and as established by the GEF, with the Capacity Development Scorecard.

The Project's director, as responsible for operational monitoring, in conjunction with the PMU, has generated a working system that includes monthly coordination meetings, quarterly narrative and financial reports, in accordance with current legislation established by MINCEX, and regular visits to the territories and institutions involved in the Project. In recent months, the frequency of virtual follow-up meetings has increased due to the lockdown established in the country in the face of the high number of Covid-19 contagions.

The PMU has developed computer tools, built into the infoGEO platform itself, which support the management of the Project and the monitoring of its results. An example is the development of the SPD WEB application, which systematizes the management processes of direct payment requests and national reports, integrating the data provided by the Atlas system reports used by UNDP, and to which \$4.75 thousand were allocated.

The UNDP/GEF infoGEO Project (PIMS 5727) will be subject to NIM Audits for the first time in 2021, because the requirement established to be eligible (financial amount executed above USD 300,000 per year) was not met with anticipation.

4.3.5 Stakeholder engagement

The Project has, from its design stage, the commitment and participation of strategic actors with defined responsibilities, including CITMA, with political leadership, through DOCIA, DRI, DMA (governor of the SIA) and its territorial delegations in Matanzas and Pinar del Río; WADA and IGT, with technical leadership, and ONEI, governor of the Government Information System. Subsequently, the FCOM of the University of Havana has been involved in the development of the flow of information required for the closure of gaps and IT service providers; CITMATEL, Xetid and the Matanzas Technology Park for the development of technological solutions. Recently, the access of INRH and MINAGRI, governing bodies in the prioritized water and soil sectors, was recently officialized. Through a harmonization process between these actors, the coordination unit of the SIA has been formed, whose consolidation is key and requires the involvement of all representatives of the nodes selected for the installation of data centers, including INSMET.

Early partnerships and synergies with the 'Eco Valor', 'Connecting Landscapes', 'OP-15' and 'SINBIOD' projects, implemented pre or post infoGEO, are relevant, which are aimed at collecting the information generated by these programs and optimizing resources for a joint impact.

For the participation of other actors, awareness-raising campaigns have been carried out in the territories and municipalities, including approaches to producers, cooperatives, and communities. As a result, the Project has convened the exemplary interest of the agroecological producer of the Tierra Brava farm, who, from his experience as a farmer and computer scientist, has contributed to the design of the infoGEO platform, highlighting the permanent need to involve multiple actors of academia, the private sector and civil society in general with the dual objective of enriching the SIA and extending its benefits.

4.3.6 Reporting

The best practices and lessons learned have been incorporated into the guidance and manual documents developed under the Project, which have been spread among stakeholders and enriched with the feedback received; including the SIA's guidance document for national socio-economic planning and the syllabus for green farm managers in order to guide the incorporation of multilateral agreements into decision-making processes. It is considered appropriate that this method continues to be applied to the manuals to be developed based on the tests carried out. In addition, annual lesson workshops have been held with extensive participation at the national level, to exhibit the project's progress in the design and implementation of the SIA.

The 2019 and 2020 PIRs have been effective mechanisms for monitoring indicators and targets of the logical results framework, with the supervision of both the PMU and UNDP. Risk analyses and recommendations in these reports have contributed to the adaptive capacity of the PMU before the internal and external situations that were presented. In this context, special attention was devoted during 2020 to the impact caused by Covid-19, and to measures to mitigate its impact.

The development of the sessions of the Project Steering Committee reveals a high level of commitment from leading institutions (AMA and CTIMA) and other national actors who, together with UNDP, have constituted a critical analysis space for the project's progress and barriers. Its role has been decisive in the face of critical situations such as the effect of the supply of the US economic and financial blockade against Cuba during the last quarter of 2019; and the impact on the pace of implementation of the Pandemic Project since March 2020. It has also been a matter of discussion in the Steering Committee, the issue of import processes, their complexity, and the importance they have for achieving the results.

4.3.7 Communications

The internal communication mechanisms described in section 4.3.2 promoted by the PMU and facilitated by MINCOM and FCOM have generally been effective in enabling permanent, direct, and timely coordination between the coordination unit, which brings together the main actors involved.

The Project has developed and follows up on a communication strategy that is oriented to: (i) and raise awareness levels in public actors, advocacy and influence, about information technologies and their relationship and impact on environmental management; (ii) to strengthen the communication system on environmental management, emphasizing sources, channels and depth in addressing the issues; and (iii) showcasing the work of the Project. In addition, a social media strategy has been formulated aimed at maintaining a community of interest, under the motto "by a computerized environment".

There is also a territorial projection towards the priority provinces and their municipalities, which have representation in the coordination unit through the CITMA delegations, whose officials have participated in the workshops organized by the Project.

The Project has active social networks on the main platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter¹⁰. It also has a website with relevant written and audiovisual information about the Project, from which one can access the repository and the infoGEO platform itself called

¹⁰ www.twitter.com/infoGEOcuba.

'noodle': However, it is necessary to strengthen the communication strategy towards the end of the Project with the aim of achieving greater dissemination of the SIA among civil society, focusing especially on the generation of accessible content on social networks that is shared by the official pages of the institutions involved.

4.3.8 Covid-19

Since the emerging pandemic Covid-19 in Cuba, in March 2020, there has been a direct impact on the pace of implementation and execution of the Project, slowing down the development of the planned activities, a situation that has remained constant for more than a year. According to the PIR 2020, 13% of the activities planned for the first half of 2020 were unable to carry out for this reason. From the end of 2020 to date, the range of contagion has grown to record of daily infected, which has prevented the PMU team from working directly in the provinces of Matanzas and Pinar del Río, therefore delaying activities that require face-to-face exchanges.

The impact of Covid-19 has not been greater due to the adaptive capacity of the Project Management Unit. During the social lockdown phase, telework was applied and the collaborative platform of infoGEO was empowered to facilitate digital exchanges.

The greatest impact has been evident in low financial execution, with only 50% implementation as of March 31, 2021; and in the procurement processes of goods and equipment, affected by the loss of suppliers and the delay of contracts, in the midst of the global health crisis and in combination with the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the U.S. government, which has been particularly harsh since September 2019.

The Project Steering Committee, in conjunction with UNDP and the PMU, has analyzed this situation, which has been closely monitored by the PMU. One of the measures taken was to manage the change of importing company, for the third time, to opt for the one with the most importing capacity in the country, Consumimport, attached to MINCEX.

However, considering that it is only nine months before the Project is officially concluded, and that acquisitions play a primary driving role in most pending processes, the evaluation team believes that the deadlines for arrival of equipment to the country, scheduled for August-September 2021, are unlikely to be met and that it will therefore be less likely that those results that depend on this phase will be achieved before the closure of the Project in January 2022.

4.3.9 Rating of implementation

Altogether, the implementation of the Project is classified as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**, considering that it is verified that some results remain uncertain in their possibility of being reached just nine months from the project's scheduled closing date.

This rating does not refer to the satisfactory quality of the work carried out and the achievements. It is noted that the Project does not consider the need for an increase in its budget for the achievement of its original objectives, which have not been modified, in their content, but which have been slowed down by external causes.

4.4 Sustainability

4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

The project's design includes strategic forecasts for its financial sustainability for at least five years, which would, if fully achieved, provide official support for the continuity of the SIA implementation activities.

Some of the necessary expenditure, beyond the closure of the Project, could be covered by different funding pathways, such as the science, technology and innovation funds of national, territorial and sectoral Programs, and resources of the participating institutions, as well as by funds for local development that are managed in municipalities. However, there is a risk in sustaining the technological capabilities demanded by the IT solution for the SIA, if - although not considered within the Project - it is intended to expand its impact to other provinces and municipalities. To address this risk, it is recommended that this line of action continue in UNDP's priority to mobilize new GEF funds or other donors, thereby enhancing the future development of the SIA as a cross-cutting information platform to other environmental projects and Programs.

4.4.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

Socio-economic risks lie in the loss of the economic value of the Project if it does not meet its objective despite the investment already made; complementary government efforts to establish the SIA; and in the loss of social value by the deprivation of information tools and data feedback to promote productive and service development and forecasting activities. The elimination of these risks should be a priority for both sectoral and territorial management, considering the government's computerization plan of Cuban society.

4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

The levels of appropriation of the Project by the participating institutions, as well as the existing legal environmental and information framework, promote the sustainability of their results in terms of institutional governance. The potential identified or, in its alignment with the implementation of the Computerization Policy of society in Cuba, is particularly important to position the SIA among the data platforms that offer prioritized digital services for decision-making within the framework of the Government Management System and encouraging the participation of the population in environmental decisions.

4.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

There are no environmental risks to the sustainability of the results of the Project, except the observance of the safeguarding of equipment in the event of hurricane-caused disaster hazards, which is included in the Civil Defense protocols in Cuba, which require institutions to create contingency plans for this purpose.

Consideration should be given to the medium and long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on modern society and its influence on information mechanisms for the fulfilment of international environmental commitments undertaken by the country. The Project has created a virtual community of infoGEO that should help mitigate this risk.

4.4.5 Sustainability rating

In short, and mainly due to the impact of implementation risks due to delays affecting the timely achievement of the main results, it is concluded that the sustainability of the Project's achievements, weighting the factors that make up it, is classified as **Moderately Likely**¹¹ (ML).

¹¹ The Table on Sustainability Qualification, according to the Guidance Mid-Term Review, refers to four levels of sustainability: Probable (**P**), moderately Probable (**MP**), moderately Unlikely (**me**), e Improbable (**I**); In English: *Likely, Moderately Likely, Moderately Unlikely, Unlikely*.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The conclusions presented below are derived from the examination of the documentation reached, and from the interviews conducted with the actors and participants in the Project, and analyzed in the light of the local and international experience of the members of the Evaluation Team. Some of the conclusions were presented to stakeholders during the Virtual End of Mission presentation meeting on 21 April 2021, and the comments received at that meeting have been considered.

On general aspects:

- In general, there is an accentuated consensus and convergent views among interviewees, both in the public sector and local governments and companies interviewed, in terms of the main situations faced, and of the visions and recommendations for action to drive the progress of the Project and overcome delays in relation to the original in relation to the original plan of the ProDoc.
- Delays in the implementation of the Project have been due to structural and external reasons for the implementation process, mainly due to the preparation of the internal reference terms document, as a governmental obligation whose extension was not foreseen; as for the impact of health measures from the unforeseen Covid 19 pandemic.

On the design of the Project:

- It has been evident throughout the interviews and review of documents that the design of the Project originates prior to its current formulation, while the need for a national environmental information system and preliminary actions aimed at this achievement were already present in the plans and concerns of official entities and their officials.
- The actors and beneficiaries of the Project have a positive view on the importance of the Project as it covers the need, established in the National Environment Strategy, to have an integrated Environmental Information System, as a tool for decision-making related to environmental management and vulnerability to climate change. It also responds to the political and regulatory processes occurring in the country, and that promote the computerization of society and electronic government.
- National commitments to the Rio Conventions have certainly driven this initiative, the need for response of which led to the request for funding to the GEF and the consequent allocation of funds for the Project. The actors recognize that the amount financed could have been higher, but perceive it is compensated - at least for the initial scope - with the contribution of national counterparty and by the value of synergies with other convergent and similar projects in their purpose of providing information for decision-making.

On the design and strategy of the Project

- Most actors agree that the design of the Project's strategy was a challenge due to the innovative and unusual nature of other projects implemented in the environmental field. As a result of this, and the external factors that affected their implementation, they recognize that adaptive measures have been necessary during implementation.
- A satisfactory level of concertation and alignment has been demonstrated during the design stage of the Project to reconcile the interests and perspectives of the different actors involved. This process has been especially relevant because it is a tool designed to be understood and used by a considerable number and diversity of actors.
- It is common for the actors interviewed to perceive the importance and significance of the project for the purposes of planning the country's development, consequently with the National Program for Economic and Social Development by 2030 (PNDES 2030) and the National Environmental Strategy.
- There is consensus between the actors and executors of the Project on the desirability of the initial selection of productive sectors for this initial stage (water and agriculture), and that of the initial territories of establishment of platforms and data centers (Matanzas and Pinar del Río), considering them representative of the needs that the Project meets, and for the priority they have in the country's development scheme.
- The evaluation process finds that within the structure of indicators for the results of the Project, there are some indicators that are not suitable in terms of the standard design recommendations (S-M-A-R-T) and require adjustments for a better consequence with the implicit theory of change in the Project and effective monitoring of progress.

On the management of participation and interinstitutional management

- The implementation of the Project has been facilitated by the level of convergence and concertation between the participating actors, and by the degree of proactive response to society's computerization policies, the country's environmental and climate strategies, and commitments at all levels of government. While this process has taken time to reach consensus on its mode of implementation, it has revealed its effectiveness subsequently by inducing work that is perceived to be fluid coordinated among the actors.
- The main barriers – mentioned by several of the actors – to achieve the harmonization of interests and the change of vision from an untarnished institutional perspective to a collaborative perspective for a common purpose, are often frequent in initiatives and Programs that require transverse actions and changing work habits. The Project, however, reveals progress in this effort, due to training and follow-up work by the PMU that is well seen by all actors.
- In terms of gender equity and women's participation, the very composition of the interviewees indicates that there is a majority participation of women in areas of management and implementation of actions in the Project, which coincides with other

positive indicators of the country in this regard, which exceed the average of other countries in the region.

- The evaluation highlights at this point the proactivity, positive attitude, and technical solvency in their respective activities and tasks, of the staff interviewed, at each level and position of responsibility in the execution of the Project. In this sense, the permanence in positions – in many cases since before the formulation of the Project – and the low turnover of the management staff, are conditions that contribute to this quality.

On the process and progress of implementation of the Project

- The implementation process of the Project has been affected by the aforementioned delay in its effective start due, first, to the delay in the formalities established by the national party for the approval of international cooperation projects; then by the ups and downs of the U.S. Government's economic, financial and trade blockade against Cuba, which particularly affected the last months of 2019 by reducing the country's socio-economic activity; and subsequently, because of the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent health measures.
- This affected the process of acquiring the required technological equipment, which is complex in the context of the country's access to international suppliers. Consequently, the fulfillment of tasks and the achievement of the planned objectives were adversely affected. However, the strategy of enhancing the virtual modality with the use of several communication channels, and the use of the collaborative platform infoGEO itself, has been an adaptive element that has allowed activities to continue during lockdown.
- The revised documentation and interviews conducted show that the Project already has positive results in terms of information management that is fueling the pilot system, and that it is already being applied to the demands of local users.

On mechanisms for managing, monitoring, and assessing impact on beneficiaries

- It has been found that some relevant actors in terms of information generation are already linked to the system and are providing data, including INRH and the projects with which synergies have been established.
- On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that territorial actors are already accessing the platform as an environmental management and citizen service tool. Interviewees have expressed their perception of the usefulness of the platform for monitoring environmental and climate variables as indicators of compliance with the country's multilateral agreements. In the case of Matanzas, as an example, infoGEO is linked to the platform '*Bienestar*', which allows the citizen to communicate complaints or concerns regarding the environmental characteristics of their environment. In the case of the productive sector, there is a first demonstrative experience of the usefulness of the platform for agro-ecological production.

On aspects of knowledge management: information, communication, education and support to social associations and organizations.

- This aspect is key, and core given the nature of the Project, which is focused on these issues. It is not possible at this stage of project implementation to have a complete perception of progress without sufficient progress in the aspects of equipment installation and consistency and scope testing. It can only be said that the prospects for a comprehensive development of the system are well on track and promising.
- Interviewees recognize the efforts made by the Project to publicize the platform and promote its understanding by the main users of the prioritized sectors and territories. There is a positive response to workshops and trainings, of provincial and municipal scope that included producers, cooperatives, and communities, considering that the platform seeks to enrich itself directly from the inputs generated by these actors and their collaboration.
- Convergence and partnership with infoGEO in the practice of information management by the 'Eco Valor', 'Connecting Landscapes', 'OP-15' and 'SINBIOD' projects is positive and relevant, having aligned and supplied criteria for homogenization and validation of protocols and data.

On the risks to sustainability of the actions promoted by the Project

- EI Project is supported by commitments and political responsibilities at all levels of government and, therefore, the actors interviewed have expectations that there will be a budget availability for the financing of actions after the end of the Project; and point out the importance of the fulfillment of national and territorial environmental strategies, as well as their harmony with the policies of computerization of society and electronic government of the country.
- On the other hand, there is concern from most actors about the need for a longer project implementation period to demonstrate the usefulness of the fully operational, functional, interconnected and supported platform with adequate technological infrastructure; so that its sustainability is essential and promoted by the users themselves.
- Project Outcome 2 includes a provision to secure financial resources for at least five years after project closure, which – in principle – seems feasible through the current public budget and the one facilitated by synergies with other convergent projects. However, the possibility of a second phase or the realization of an immediate project that scales up what has been achieved throughout the country should be considered as a desirable alternative or complement.

5.2 Recommendations

Key recommendation

It is urgent to take actions aimed at achieving an extension to the Project by exploring direct options before GEF-UNDP, and alternatives to a second phase or a new project based on scaling and replicating what has been achieved, based on good practices and progress in the process. In the meantime, the PMU should review the deadlines and possibilities of completing activities and prioritize the objective and goals where appropriate in case of difficulties in obtaining an extension.

A. On the Project Objective

1. Despite the difficulties, the goal remains achievable. This requires the acquisition of ICT equipment planned for 2021. The new challenges to extend the experience at the national level facing the SIA in the coming years will require international advice on other environmental dimensions of the SIA, and for the consolidation of the IT platform.
2. To consider intensifying training and dissemination activities, as well as preliminary coordination with other delegations territories in order of priority, and with other governmental sectors, in order to buy time and capitalize the interest of the actors, until the installation of the system with the equipment and facilities in process.
3. Review the logical framework and combine in a single goal, the level of maturity wanted to achieve with a SIA designed from multiple perspectives, in a future scenario to meet the goals, considering the theory of change implicit in the objective and the goals of the Project.

B. On Outcome 1

- B1. Continue and strengthen the actions of alignment to the dynamic process of normative and political order for economic and social development, and on the computerization of Cuban society, in anticipation of the stages of operation of the System.
- B2. Goals related to national policies and regulatory frameworks are beyond the scope and competencies of collaborative projects, so it is recommended to review and redefine indicators involving approval of national regulations and policies. The indicator stated as *"Improvement of the relevant legal and regulatory framework for information management and environmental knowledge"* should be amended, as it is not achievable by exceeding the competences of the participants in the Project. It is suggested to replace the terms *"improvement of the legal framework..."* by *"inputs to improve the legal framework..."*.
- B3. Modify the third goal of indicator 1, set as *"Data transaction costs are reduced"*, as it is ambiguous and not measurable in comparative or time form, thus limiting the scope of the actions necessary to obtain the Outcome.

C. On Outcome 2:

- C1. Explore the collaboration of international cooperation and exchange of experiences with other countries on the subject of environmental information, in order to seek innovative solutions of input and information management, and maintain the *momentum* achieved with training to local stakeholders and actors and the general interest in infoGEO.
- C2. Maintain systematicity and effective achievements in the Outcome for the system operation when teams arrive.

D. On Outcome 3:

- D1. Enrich the synergies created with other projects, and plan an articulated strategy for the future escalation of infoGEO towards other territories and other dimensions of environmental information, through the optimal use of the resources of all those collaboration projects that could support in the creation of technological conditions and infrastructures for their effective spread.

E. On Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

- E1. Keep track of capacities development, through the Capacities Development Scorecard, so that comments on the score reveal how the Project has influenced on capacity building and evidence of achievements. It is also suggested to identify the next actions anticipated by the Project to achieve the expected results, as the Balanced Scorecard does not currently indicate the next steps, strategies, and activities to address barriers or continue progress towards expected outcomes.
- E2. The co-financing scheme should be reviewed, and foreign exchange rates adjusted to reflect the new currency exchange situation.
- E3. Conclude the process of hiring a backup on ETECSA servers, which complements the information protection policy in the CITMATEL Data Center.

F. On sustainability

- F.1 Act in the Steering Committee to support the implementation of the SCTI sectoral Program for the computerization of the sector proposed by the Project to provide future sustainability of the environmental information system platform. UNDP should maintain the priority of mobilizing new GEF funds or other donors to scale the benefits and availability of SIA's technological capabilities.

6 Lessons learned

While the provision of technological infrastructure is a key component of this and other information management projects, it is not more important than the broad and complex approach that makes it possible to incorporate and understand the needs of stakeholders in a comprehensive way. To this end, it is important to involve and train users to respond fully to their needs and priorities, as well as the integration of actors from early stages of the implementation of the project.

Information integration can be achieved by raising awareness of the importance of sharing it in a value aggregation scheme, from multiple sources, and by strengthening inter-agency partnerships, to ensure the governance of information systems.

The future sustainability of Interinstitutional Projects should be part of the design and strategy from the beginning and be fueled by decisions throughout the implementation of the Project, both by estimating and promoting complementary or successive financing, and by incorporating them into the respective institutional budgets of the entities involved in the cooperative effort.

The comprehensiveness of the Project's activities and achievements, and the need to extend its long-term coverage to all subnational territories and the notion of landscape covering all ecosystem resources and services, should not be overlooked.

The natural resistance of actors to modify individual or specialized work behaviors and habits should be anticipated, through a collaborative and innovative challenge approach. To do this, iterative training mechanisms and multidisciplinary team set training, of the '*learning-by-doing*' type, are an important tool.

-----000-----

Mid-Term Review “Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)”

ANNEXES

A. Project Outcomes Logical Framework Evaluation Matrix

B. MTR Terms of Reference

C. MTR evaluation matrix

D. Interview Guide Questionnaire

E. Rating Scales

F. List of people interviewed

G. List of documents reviewed

H. Table of Financing and Co Financing

I. Signed UNEG Code of Conduct Form

J. MTR Final Report Clearance Form Signed



Project UNDP-PIMS No.5727 - GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Project Midterm Review (MTR):

Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

ANNEX A: Project Results Framework Assessment Matrix

**Consultants: Eduardo Durand
Tatiana Delgado**

Lima / La Habana, May 2021

ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Project Strategy – Objective: Strengthen environmental information and knowledge management to integrate the goals under multilateral environmental agreements into national planning and decision-making.						
Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	PIR level 2 - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Progress and Evaluation Level	Achievement rating	Justification of rating
1. Establishment of an interconnected environmental system	Information systems exist, but technology and management procedures are outdated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation agreements between partner agencies in the national environmental information system have been signed in month 12. In month 12, the National Environmental Information System was designed Partner agency databases and information systems have benefited from the new state of the art of technology 	<p>The main agencies involved are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CITMA territorial delegations in Matanzas and Pinar del Río. Territorial delegations of MINAGRI and the INRH in Matanzas and Pinar del Río. CITMA Environmental Agency and Environmental Direction Ministry of Communication and National Bureau of Statistics and Information The Communications faculty is developing the design of the information flow chart from interviews with agencies. Agencies' databases and information systems have not benefited from technology. The infoGEO virtual platform has three services implemented: programmatic information management system, digital repository, and digital library server for georeferenced information management. The delay in signing the national Terms of Reference document made it impossible to initiate the process of purchasing technology 	<p>Partnerships between data providers (INRH, MINAGRI), IT and telematics service providers (XETID and CITMATEL) and CITMA entities responsible for governing the SIA (DMA, and territorial delegations in Matanzas and Pinar del Río) have been consolidated; as well as ONEI for its guiding role in the Government Information System.</p> <p>Other agencies are committed to the development of SIA, such as AMA and IGT, with technical leadership. The alliance established with the academy, (Faculty of Communications of the University of Havana) and the Technological Park (Universidad de Matanzas), is important.</p> <p>Under a holistic approach to an integrative target for the indicator, the following advances are seen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> infoGEO has developed a platform shared by actors in the SIA to exchange good practices, data models, news, and other documents. It is a common opinion that the interinstitutional integration is a key achievement of the Project. Data variables that feed environmental indicators in the two sectors (Agriculture 	MS	<p>Despite the satisfactory levels of interinstitutional integration, it is considered that the level of achievement towards the objective is not well expressed in the way the goal is set, since interinstitutional agreements are already, by law, the responsibility of the entities involved in the SIA.</p> <p>In short, the achievement of the indicator is in process; and its compliance at the end of the project is conditioned to the acquisition of the remaining equipment, scheduled for August-September 2021.</p>

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

			<p>(information and communication infrastructure support) in 2018. In accordance with current national regulations, the signature of this document, to run the budget allocated by GEF, is mandatory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Management Unit is taking actions to recover from the delay in the procurement plan. It is planned to receive in 2019 the equipment needed to process the information at a basic level (mainly office automation equipment) amounting to \$290,000.00. 	<p>and Hydraulic Resources) have been defined in two territories (Matanzas and Havana).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With support from the Faculty of Communications of Havana, and partnerships with data providers of environmental water and soil indicators, a governable framework for the flow of data between the parties has been formalized. Although it has not been validated because the system deployment was not complete. • Xetid Company has supported the development of an IT platform for integrated SIA management; an initiative to be developed in the Matanzas Technology Park for its sustainability. The indicator sheet with its metadata is in development, and the control boards that allow real-time monitoring are set. Reports with historical information have also been designed • The telematics infrastructure has not been completed by CITMATEL, because the procurement process for the interconnection and hosting of the platform, scheduled for August-September 2021, is being completed. 		
<p>2. Better technical capabilities to incorporate environmental and global data, information, and knowledge</p>	<p>Sectoral approaches remain in the Business as Usual (BAU). The analytical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 500 stakeholders have participated in <i>learning by doing workshops</i> to create and incorporate the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops were developed to raise awareness of the actors involved in the implementation of the project at national and local levels. 	<p>With regard to the training goal, workshops have been developed, under the "Learning-by-Doing" approach, which have helped raise awareness in stakeholders about each other's role with respect to the SIA; in particular, for the incorporation of reliable</p>	S	<p>It highlights the ability of the SIA management platform to integrate into e-government systems, providing value-added services such as citizen environmental surveillance.</p>

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

	methods used are obsolete.	<p>best information available in sectoral development plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analytical methods and information collection and management tools from partner agencies are the most current available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National: Framework for the development of Environmental Statistics with the participation of the Ministries of Cuba Province: workshops in Matanzas and Pinar del Rio for the development of awareness about the need for reliable information to change the context of decision-making from a passive scheme to a proactive one in development planning. Municipal level: workshops to identify the type of information needed from the system at the municipal level, indicators are required to comply with the State Plan to address Climate Change and the Local CC Strategy. Information collection is not yet improved: fiber optics have been installed but not connected. There is no operating server at the moment. Agencies haven't benefited from technology yet. 	<p>environmental data and information integrated into sectoral planning.</p> <p>More than 500 people representing stakeholders have been trained. This activity slowed down at the start of the pandemic, but measures were taken by the UMP that enhanced virtual workshops by leveraging free technologies easily accessible by stakeholders.</p> <p>The services developed on the infoGEO collaborative platform and the analytical platform supported by the SIA follow best practices with the use of free software based on open standards.</p>		<p>This indicator is considered satisfactorily met in its two goals.</p> <p>Despite its compliance, the Project continues to develop a training plan that is more oriented to the stages of operation of the SIA than to its own design, as referred to in this indicator.</p>
	There are duplications and gaps in existing information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two sectoral development plans have been formulated or improved using the National Environmental Information System to incorporate global 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreements with MINAGRI and INRH are expected to be established as of December 2019 to improve development plans by integrating and incorporating environmental commitments as a result of access to the SNIA. There is a technical agreement between the agriculture and water 	<p>This indicator does not meet its two targets as it has been affected by the accumulated delays in the implementation of the Project, mainly because of COVID-19, which slowed down the already complex import process in the country.</p> <p>The Project has worked on the subject and has partially tested, in the province of Matanzas, and to some extent in Pinar del</p>	MU	<p>Despite the management that the UMP, supported by the Steering Committee, has been displaying to complete the import of all necessary equipment in September 2021, it is highly unlikely that this deadline will be met, given the</p>

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

3. Piloting the new interconnected information system		environmental obligations. The two integrated sectoral development plans have been piloted	management sectors in two provinces Pinar del Río and Matanzas to pilot the use of NEIS in the development plan design process.	<p>Río, with some services already available from the support platform of the SIA. This has been possible the synergies developed by the UMP with other collaborative projects opened in UNDP environment folder.</p> <p>The coupling of the observatory was tested with the monitoring information system to the implementation of the National Biodiversity Programme, validating instruments, quality of results and transmission to ECOVIDA's central server. This allowed to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the SIA platform and technology in terms of information flows and environmental monitoring and management processes.</p> <p>In order to formulate sectoral development plans using the SIA and piloting with key actors, it is necessary to have the modules of situational rooms, currently in the process of import; after which it is estimated that it would take 6 to 9 months to install equipment and train actors, as well as additional time for effective absorption of knowledge and skills.</p>		<p>current state of conciliation-contracting.</p> <p>On the other hand, the health crisis affecting the global supply chains maintains, which also affects the actions derived, making it unbearable to comply meet the targets and deadlines for the conclusion of the Project in January 2022.</p>
Project Strategy – Outcome 1 National Environmental Information System						
Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	PIR level 2 - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Progress and Evaluation Level	Achievement rating	Justification of rating
4. Improved data collection, analysis and storage protocols and standards	Collecting and exchanging inefficient information and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information gaps have been closed Information and data metrics are appropriate and standardized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FCOM's study of the flow of information is in progress and will identify information gaps in NEIS to keep track of the sustainable development goals and the Rio 	The FCOM's information flow study was completed, identifying the SIA information gaps to keep track of the SDGs and The Rio Convention Objectives in accordance with the recommended United Nations Statistics	S	There is a good overall progress in activities directed towards end-of-project goals.

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data transaction costs are reduced • Clear data information exchange protocols have been formulated. • An appropriate level of redundancy has been agreed between partner agencies 	<p>Convention in accordance with the UN Statistics Division and its basic package of statistical environmental series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adoption of FDE standards among major agencies and actors is being promoted. • MEA reports are obtained through workshops where specialists from relevant areas meet. The cost of this workshop is the baseline for evaluating cost reduction with NEIS. • Protocols depend on ICT service provision and there is no response from the CITMA connectivity provider. • It has not yet been considered a redundancy agreement. Providers have their own redundancy considerations that will be considered. 	<p>Division and its basic set of environmental statistics series.</p> <p>Information diagnostic and auditing tools were applied, supported by FCOM, in 7 WADA institutes and other local actors, data providers for water and soil indicators, in the two selected provinces. All this allowed the definition of new information flows to fill the gaps.</p> <p>The content of the SIA was structured, including environmental indicators, scientific research, environmental assessments and reports, regulatory and geospatial information, with the participation of institutions (DMA, DOCIA, DPP, ONEI, INRH, MINAG and AMA).</p> <p>Data collection was computerized on the platform that will support the SIA. To date, the company Xetid is completing the development of the indicator sheet with its metadata. Indicators are supported in primary data variables, which makes the way they are constructed a more efficient one and allows the definition of new indicators from defined data variables.</p> <p>Regarding data transaction costs, while the use of a data collection system suggests cost reduction and greater resource efficiency, there is no experimental evidence to reveal these costs. This aspect may be more due to the design of the indicator's goal than to the fulfilment of the objective itself.</p> <p>Exchange protocols have been defined, and the computer tool makes use of them. There is a document generated in the Project that evaluates the data standards used.</p>		<p>The specific elements that are missing to meet the entire objectives of the indicator do not depend on circumstances or elements outside the Project, so it is estimated that they can be fulfilled before the end of the Project.</p>
--	--	--	---	---	--	---

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

				For fail-safe SIA redundancy, it remains to finish hiring a backup on ETECSA servers, which complements the information protection policy in the CITMATEL Data Center.		
5. Development of manuals and guides on best practices for integrated global environmental and socio-economic planning.	Inadequate integration of environmental aspects into training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New manuals and guidelines have been formulated for the use of the National Environmental Information System. At least 500 stakeholders have received <i>learning by doing training</i> in the use of manuals and guides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> infoGEO is the technological platform (with an institutional scope) currently in use by the IGT and the project seeks to strengthen it to fulfill a broader role. Two draft manuals have been developed for Programmatic Information Management and for the infoGEO repository. It is expected to improve the manuals in 2021 based on NEIS pilots at the provincial level. The '<i>learning by doing</i>' training began with 30 people from AMA institutes in the first quarter of 2018 but the absence of connectivity services does not allow to continue. Initial training to 50 people on the Repository ended and is in use. The project prepared terminals in the IGT to promote the loading of data and information. 	<p>Training on the elements of the SIA has advanced based on the guiding document prepared, and some others about the potentials of the IT platform in implementation for its support.</p> <p>The development and dissemination of Good Practice Manuals for the use of the SIA is expected, based on experience in the areas of intervention and pilot sectors, which will only be completed after the implementation of the platform at the operating nodes of the system (scheduled for November 2021).</p> <p>The same goes for stakeholder training, based on the manuals and guides prepared (goal 2).</p> <p>The compliance of the indicator, in its two objectives, is conditioned on the acquisitions, installation of the equipment, the training process and the subsequent experience that SIA users may have.</p>	MS	<p>It is considered unlikely that this cycle of actions will be completed before January 2022, from the arrival in the country of equipment, whose most optimistic date is August-September 2021.</p> <p>This judgement is based on the threats to the project; the epidemiological situation with the pandemic and the US economic and financial blockade against Cuba, which may affect the process of importing the equipment and thus the pace of implementation of the remaining activities.</p>
6. Improvement of the relevant legal and regulatory framework for the management of environmental	The regulatory and legal framework does not adequately support the incorporation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first drafts of the regulation of the National Environmental Information System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft document on the legal regulation of NEIS was prepared as part of the revision of Law 81. Alternatives for proposing NEIS regulations in the country were 	<p>Within the framework of the infoGEO Project the DMA developed the SIA's guiding document addressing key topics such as:</p> <p>a.- Conceptual Framework,</p>	HS	The target is evaluated as fulfilled, as this indicator proposes an improvement of the regulatory framework, and the document delivered to CITMA, is

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

information and knowledge.	the environmental component.	and other amendments have been formulated and submitted for approval.	identified considering ECLAC's experiences for ESF and ONEI experience in SIEEs.	<p>b.- Users and nodes, c.- Information providers, d.- Flow of information and e.- Environmental Indicators of the SIA.</p> <p>This document serves as the basis for the development of the new Law Project, and the process of approval by the Council of Ministers. At the same time, it serves as an input for the development of Regulations of the Environmental Information System, which must be approved by the Minister of CITMA.</p>		the contribution of the Project to such improvement. It is understood in this regard that the country regulatory framework, which involves a national policy, is not competence of a collaborative policy.
-----------------------------------	------------------------------	---	--	--	--	--

Project Strategy – Outcome 2
Strengthened technical skills for the implementation of the National Environmental Information System.

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	PIR level 2 - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Progress and Evaluation Level	Achievement rating	Justification of rating
7. Operational unit established to coordinate the National Environmental Information System	Insufficient infrastructure and outdated technology for environmental monitoring and compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coordination unit of the National Environmental Information System has been established and is operational for month 6. The National Environmental Information System's technical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NEIS Coordination Unit was established in month 3. It is operational with WADA institutes and the main stakeholders of Matanzas and Pinar del Río and ONEI and FCOM, other members are less active. The baseline has not yet been defined. The contract to provide connectivity is in progress and the server has not yet been established. 	<p>The Coordination Unit of the SIA, created in the initial stage, remains in place, with the participation of WADA institutes, the main actors of the provinces of Pinar del Río and Matanzas, ONEI and FCOM.</p> <p>The baseline was defined, with their respective appointments, with the headquarters of the Coordination Unit established in the IGT, which works in conjunction with the DMA, responsible for the national coordination of the SIA. Under the supervision of CITMA delegations in the</p>	S	<p>These ad-hoc structures and measures taken have allowed to monitor and analyze the fulfillment of project activities and technical assistance, with the presence of research centers, academic institutions, business sector, government officials, producers, etc.</p> <p>If the work of the SIA Coordination Units is maintained, it is estimated that it is feasible to</p>

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

		committee meets every three months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info-communication solutions have been proposed for the access of participating entities to the system and for the working conditions of the Coordination Unit. • 6 technical committee meetings have been held at the national level. In addition, 10 technical workshops have been organized at the provincial level to facilitate coordination. 	<p>two territories involved, a provincial coordinator and environmental monitoring coordinator were appointed, convening the rest of the local actors involved in the SIA. Similarly, the coordinators for the two MINAGRI and INRH sectors were defined. Key business players such as XETID have been invited to address topics such as the design and operation of the SIA and technological solutions.</p> <p>The Technical Committee at the national level meets on a quarterly basis. In addition, more than 12 technical workshops have been organized at the provincial level.</p>		achieve the goals of this indicator before the end of the year.
8. Improving the interoperability of interconnected information systems	Existing databases and information systems are not connected. Lack of skills for monitoring and resilience of existing information systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The databases and information systems of partner agencies are technologically connected to the National Information System Environmental for month 24. • Actors from all partner agencies have actively participated in the 'learning by doing' administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A FCOM-led team prepared two tools to describe the flow of information required by potential users and suppliers at the national and provincial levels. • Actors from partner agencies have been involved in the design of the system. The inclusion of the SDF in meetings has improved the vision of system requirements. 	<p>Self-diagnosis tools applied to key national institutions and in the two selected provinces, conducted by the academy (FCOM-UH) revealed barriers to data interoperability.</p> <p>The incorporation of Xetid, provider of the computer solutions, helped that the data model is based on open standards that guarantees interoperability according to the state of art, the Policy for the improvement of the computerization of society in Cuba, and decree-law No.370 regulated by the electronic government in the country.</p> <p>The participation of stakeholders in the workshops related to the design of the SIA, has generated a collective commitment to the information solutions on which it is based, including data exchange models and services. To this end, the adoption of the global protocol "Framework for the Development of Environmental Statistics" (MDEA), promoted in the region by ECLAC,</p>	S	<p>At the design level the Project points towards an improvement in interoperability; however, the indicator cannot be met until the databases of variable suppliers that feed the SIA are effectively interconnected between the two sectors and the two selected provinces, which depends on the arrival in the country and subsequent installation of the equipment, so that the computer platform that supports the SIA networked with the institutions can be implemented.</p> <p>Even with this barrier, it is estimated that the target (with the scope of the interoperable interconnection of databases) can be achieved before the closure of the Project, scheduled for January 2022.</p>

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

				has contributed to a flexible, multipurpose conceptual and statistical framework that allows and facilitates the compilation, surveying and production of environmental statistics.		
9. Developing a resource mobilization strategy	Accessible sources of funding are inadequate to ensure the institutional sustainability of existing information systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New realistic financing alternatives have been identified. • Financial resources have been secured to ensure system administration for at least 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the same time, the CCCD UNDP-FMAM 'National Program for the Computerization of the Cuban Society' is being implemented, which is considered as the continuation of the development of State Service systems. • The amount of budget required to maintain the SNIA server is not known. As soon as it is known, the Project will be able to carry out a more realistic assessment of the needs to sustain the operational system and the development of the system. 	<p>A strategy of mobilization of resources has been designed with main types of funds: (a) national funds; and, (b) international cooperation funds.</p> <p>Regarding national funds (CUP), in addition to the PNCTI project declared co-financing, the Project has obtained three million CUP from the Non-Programme-Associated Projects (PNAP) fund by 2022. Covering also the first year of sustainability of the Project, a fund of 1.8 million CUP has been awarded with INRH. The UMP has worked with CITMA's program and project area on a Sectoral Programme to support the SIA over the next five years, and which will be the umbrella for at least two projects generated by the UMP and the actors participating in infoGEO, with a view to the continuity of infoGEO.</p> <p>International cooperation funds have been recognized in the financing strategy as essential for sustainability, considering that the Project is only the seed of the SIA with a limited scope to environmental indicators in two sectors and in two territories. On the</p>	S	<p>The target referred to by this indicator is achievable if the new Sector Programme under development by the UMP is secured and launched in June 2021, with a scope of five years; that would contribute to the sustainability of the SIA in that period.</p> <p>In order to consolidate the results and extend the SIA to the other provinces plus the special municipality of <i>Isla de la Juventud</i>, and to broaden the scope of its environmental indicators to other dimensions, considering global good practices, further work is needed on the mobilization of international cooperation funds.</p>

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

				one hand, thanks to infoGEO's synergy with other collaboration projects in the UNDP environment folder (ECOVALOR, <i>Conectando Paisajes</i> , SIMBIOD), the technological connectivity infrastructure and multipurpose data centers in other provinces could be covered with funding. However, to extend the Project at the national level, additional ICT equipment is needed from the international market. The new challenges that the SIA faces in the coming years will require international advice in other dimensions of SIA, and for the consolidation of the IT platform.		
Strategy of the Project – Outcome 3 Early implementation of the Environmental Information System.						
Indicator	Baseline	End of Project Target	PIR level 2 - 2020 (self-reported)	MTR Progress and Evaluation Level	Achievement rating	Justification of rating
10. Timelier environmentally friendly and sustainable development decisions	Decisions are based on incomplete and inadequate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global environmental obligations are more effectively integrated into sectoral development plans by month 44. Independent peer reviews give an average rating of 4 on the 5-point Scale of Likert to evaluate sectoral plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescheduled for month 50 	<p>The UMP has pointed out that this goal indicator would not be achievable during the Project's timeframe, due to the initial delay with the processing of the Terms of Reference with MINCEX, and with the most significant ones that came due to COVID-19.</p> <p>However, experimental operational tests have been made of the services released by the platform from its Balance Scorecard, in Matanzas province with the sectors involved - in particular with the MINAGRI forestry sector - indicating that it allows to make real-time decisions based on computerized SIA.</p> <p>Independent peer reviews to assess sectoral plans are even less likely to be achieved</p>	MU	Whereas it is only possible to achieve both targets when the IT platform supported by the SIA is in operation, which in turn depends on overseas acquisitions, and on a chain of actions derived from it, this target is not expected to be achieved before the project closes in January 2022.

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

				during the Project, because they are equivalent to an evaluation with the operationally active system, which to be evaluated must be in operation for at least 1 to 2 months.		
11. Demonstration of good practices to incorporate global obligations into sectoral development plans	Good practices are not accessible to pursue innovative approaches to incorporate environmental obligations into sectoral plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two sectoral development plans have been formulated or updated using the National Information System and based on good practices for month 24. The early implementation of these two sectoral plans demonstrates clear benefits in terms of the three Rio Conventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence of good practice in the agricultural and forestry sectors. Long-term statistical series are available with a clear data collection, traceability, and geographic disaggregation procedure. No contacts have been established in the water management area to get information on this topic. Development plans have not yet been updated. 	<p>Foundations has been laid for projecting the 2021-2030 development plans of the two sectors involved (MINAG and INRH).</p> <p>As an adaptive measure to the situation of accumulated arrears, and in close alignment with the Government Information System, the indicators of the SIA have been incorporated into the INRH into ONEI's Complementary Statistics Information System (SIEC), which serves as the basis for sectoral planning in the environmental field. This clearly improves country reports to the three Rio Conventions.</p>	MS	This target indicator could be met before the conclusion of the Project, in the 2022 annual planning exercise, at the sectoral level through SIEC, and even if the IT platform is not working, which is expected to offer added value by facilitating the planning and decision-making process based on environmental indicators and in a cross-cutting way.
12. Increased awareness and understanding of global environmental values	Decision-makers do not have knowledge and information in useful formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values of environmental awareness have been improved Decision-makers have been provided with information and knowledge has in useful formats A statistical analysis of the baseline and end of the project indicates that stakeholder knowledge and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interview guide tool designed by FCOM to estimate the baseline of the importance of multilateral environmental agreements in development planning and budget decision-making has been developed and approved. Results are expected to be presented at the annual lesson workshops learned. 4 audiovisual products were developed to support the infoGEO platform awareness process. 	<p>Particular attention has been paid to awareness-raising and communication issues among all stakeholders throughout the project, as was repeatedly expressed in interviews conducted by the evaluation team.</p> <p>An illustrative example is the creation of the 'Observatory', which monitors the implementation of the objectives, targets and actions defined by the National Biodiversity Programme in Pinar del Río, tracking implementation in the province, in line with the commitments established</p>	MU	The indicator for goals 3 and 4 does not seem achievable before the end of the Project on the original date of January 2022, because the survey to be done when all activities have been completed, which would only allow to evaluate the difference of knowledge of the actors with respect to the baseline regarding global environmental values.

Intermediate Evaluation of the "Integra Project Rio Convention's obligations in national priorities through strengthening management of the information and knowledge to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)"

		<p>relationship between global environmental conservation and sustainable socio-economic development has improved by at least 15%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 500 actors have been analyzed in baseline assessments and at the end of the project • The actors evaluated have participated in the activities of the project. 		<p>within the Convention on Biological Diversity</p> <p>As part of this, surveys are done, and information is collected that provides inputs to assess the state of assimilation and action for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity components.</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

Achievement Rating: Highly Satisfactory **HS** - Satisfactory **S** - Moderately Satisfactory **MS**
 Moderately Unsatisfactory **MU** – Unsatisfactory **U** – Highly Unsatisfactory **HU**

Indicator Assessment Key:

Green - Achieved	Yellow - On target to be achieved	Red - Not on target to be achieved
------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------



UNDP – PNUD–PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report (EMT):

Integrate the obligations of the Rio Convention into national priorities by strengthening information and knowledge management to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

ANNEX B: Terms of Reference of the Mid Term Review

Consultants: **Eduardo Durand**
 Tatiana Delgado

Lima / La Habana, abril 2021

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT TO CONDUCT THE MID-TERM REVIEW

UNDP/GEF Project “Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (INFOGEO)”, PIMS 5727

Country:	Cuba
ATLAS Project/Output:	94885/98959
PIMS Number:	5727
GEF Focal Area:	Cross-Cutting Capacity Development
GEF Strategic Objective:	GEF 6: CCCD2: Strengthen consultative and management structures and mechanism
GEF Budget (USD):	\$ 1,488,573
Co-Financing Budget (USD):	\$ 1,985,145
Project Document Signature date:	January 24 th , 2018
Date of first disbursement:	September 20 th , 2018
Original Planned Closing Date:	January 24 th , 2022
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) via Environment Agency AMA/IGT
Date of planned Project Closure	January, 2022

1. Introduction

These are the Terms of Reference (ToR) for an International Consultant to conduct the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR), to be undertaken in 2020, of the medium-sized project “Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (INFOGEO), PIMS 5727”, implemented by the Environmental Agency of Cuba (AMA). The project started on January 24th, 2018 and its end date is January 24th, 2022. The current is the third year of the project implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). These ToR set out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*.¹

2. Project Background Information

The goal of this project is to strengthen the national capacities to improve the mainstreaming of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) into environmental decision-making and planning, through improved information management capacities that will help improve environmental monitoring. The project’s strategy emphasizes a long-term approach to institutionalizing capacities to meet MEA obligations through a set of learning-by-doing activities that allow for effective decision-making and policy-making regarding global environmental benefits. Specifically, the project will establish a sustainable system for the collection, compilation, processing, storage and dissemination of information. The project will seek to improve and expand the scope of the existing information management systems that collect environmental information and knowledge relevant to the Rio Conventions and other MEAs, and pilot this new system in key sectors in a selected territory that will generate lessons useful to fine-tune environmental information management. Active participation of stakeholder representatives in the project cycle will facilitate the strategic adaptation of project activities in keeping with project objectives. Moreover, it will provide a platform addressed to knowledge management and relevant environmental information that benefit both the national planning and budgeting processes and the improvement of environmental management standards.

This project will be implemented in three linked components. The first component focuses largely on the technical aspects of the project, namely setting up the National Environmental Information System as a network of existing databases and information systems. This will include ensuring the sustainability of the system from a legal context and learning-by-doing training on the use of the NEIS to improve

¹ *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects. UNDP, 2014. 60 pp.*
http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20EN_2014.pdf

mainstreaming exercises and decision-making. The second component focuses largely on the operational aspects of the network. This includes the software protocols for the inter-connectivity of the databases and information systems as well as developing a resource mobilization strategy to cover long-term operating costs. The third component comprises that set of activities for the early implementation of the system. These activities are very important in order to test the system and ensure that it carries out the expected functions. The early implementation of the system will allow for adjustments in its structure and operation.

The three components are:

1. Establishment of a National Environmental Information System for improved planning and decision-making.
2. Strengthened capacities for implementing the National Environmental Information System.
3. Early implementation of the National Environmental Information System.

These activities will contribute to UNDP Strategic Plan Output 1.4.1: *“Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, including sustainable commodities and green and inclusive value chains”*. At the same time they contribute to Country Programme Document (CPD) Outcome 3: *“Institutions, production and service sectors, territorial governments and communities improve the protection and rational use of natural resources and ecosystems, resilience to climate change, and comprehensive disaster risk reduction management”*.

The project activities started on January, 2018, and the planned end date is January 2022. The total cost of the project is US\$ 3,473,718. This is financed through a GEF grant of US\$ 1,488,573, of which US\$ 1,935,145 is cash co-financing from the Government of Cuba and US\$ 50,000 of in-kind co-financing from UNDP/Cuba.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) provides consensus-based decisions, in particular when guidance is required by the Project Coordinator (PC) and has final authority on matters requiring official review and approval, including annual work plans, budgets, and key hires. The PSC actively seeks and takes account of the input of the Technical Advisory Committee that meets annually, with periodic consultation as needed throughout the year.

UNDP acts as the GEF Agency for this project. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, through its Environmental Agency (AMA), following UNDP's National Implementation Modality (NIM).

Since March 2020, the Government of Cuba has adopted very strict measures aimed at preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic: closing of borders and tele-commute working modality, among others, to ensure the social isolation). As of November 10th, 2020, a total of 7,429 cases were reported in the country, 4,831 of which were recovered and 130 deaths due to this disease.²

Some of the most relevant impacts caused by Covid-19 to the Project are:

- Delay in the execution of activities planned for the first semester of 2020. The activities postponed due to the Covid-19 are: technical workshops, Mid-term review, procurement process (with national co-financing) of the technical tasks under the Science and Technology Project (PCT) in Matanzas provinces which support INFOGEO implementation, identification of the technical requirements of the local where will be place the Situation Rooms in CITMA headquarters, programming of the main NEIS applications. PMU has reprogrammed these activities to 2021.
- Delay in the financial execution: Some procurement processes (of goods and equipment) have been delayed, impacting in the financial execution. The annual budget plan for 2020 was \$763,726; and, as of November, the disbursement is \$312,343, for a 41%. It is expected to conclude 2020 with a financial execution of 500,000 USD. The low financial execution in 2020 is a direct consequence of the impacts of the Covid-19.

² Ministry of Public Health in Cuba. Official website: salud.msp.gob.cu

3. Objectives of the MTR

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy, its risks to sustainability.

4. MTR Approach and methodology

The MTR must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR Evaluation Team (ET) will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Report (APR)/, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The ET will review the baseline GEF focal area Tracking Tool (the Capacity Development Scorecard) submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR begins.

The ET is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach³ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR⁴. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia and local government, etc.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The MTR team must use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

As agreed with the Cuban government, this MTR has been designed following an “on-line” modality. A field mission is not programmed, as a preventive measure due to the current global sanitary situation for SARS2/COVID-19. In this scenario, UNDP and CITMA, are committed to conduct an adequate evaluation process under this particular conditions. The virtual tools that have been identified to support the interviews are WhatsApp and JitsiMeet.

No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority. MTR process under COVID -19 circumstances will be detailed in MTR Inception Report and in final MTR report.

Taking into account that the MTR will be conducted through a on-line modality, an extended period for the documents review has been foreseen, in order to provide the ET with sufficient time to understand the progress in achieving the project objectives, to carry on virtual exchanges and, eventually, to allow the national consultant to visit the intervention areas.

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

5. Detailed scope of the MTR

³ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

⁴ For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

The MTR consultancy will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

- a. Revisión de documentos: Documento del Proyecto, Teoría del cambio y Marco de Resultados, informes de **Project Strategy**

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Log-frame:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s log-frame indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress towards Results

Progress towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red).

Table. Progress towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator ⁵	Baseline Level ⁶	Level in 1st PIR self-reported	Midterm Target ⁷	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁸	Achievement Rating ⁹	Justification for Rating
Objective:	Indicators 1-4							
Outcome 1:	Indicators 5-7							
Outcome 2:	Indicators 8-11							
Outcome 3:	Indicators 12-15							

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
-----------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse Capacity Development (CD) scorecards at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**Management Arrangements:**

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?

⁵ Populate with data from the Log-frame and scorecards

⁶ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁷ If available

⁸ Colour code this column only

⁹ Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on cofinancing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
		TOTAL			

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by UNDP/Cuba and Project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditures'. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP, and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.

- The identified types of risks¹⁰ (in the SESP).
- The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project’s design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP’s safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project’s approval.

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?).
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project’s progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

Covid-19:

- Describe the negative effects caused by Covid-19 to the technical and financial implementation.
- Refer the adaptive measures adopted to manage the risk associated to sanitary situation due to Covid-19. How these measures have prevented or not the negative effects to technical and financial implementation.

iv. Sustainability

Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why. In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project? Are

¹⁰ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR’s evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.¹¹

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. See the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for Capacity Development for Implementing Rio Conventions through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (INFOGEO)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

¹¹ Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report.

6. Timeframe

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 30 days, and shall not exceed four months from when the consultants are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows. Those dates are indicative. They could be adjusted according to the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic:

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
February 5, 2021	Application closes
February 26, 2021	Selection of the ET
March 12, 2021	Signature of the contract between UNDP/Cuba and consultants
March 15 – 16, 2021 (2 working days)	Preparation of the ET (handover of Project Documents)
March 17 – 23, 2021 (5 working days)	Documents review and preparation of the MTR Inception Report*
March 24 – 25, 2021 (1 working day)	Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report
March 26 – April 8, 2021 (10 working days)	Online information exchange (teleconference, survey by mail and others alternatives) with stakeholders, beneficiaries and other key actors.
April 8, 2021	Online presentation of the first conclusions.
April 9 – 19, 2021 (7 working days)	Preparation of the draft report.
April 20 – 27, 2021 (5 working days)	Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report
May 4, 2021 (1 week after receiving the Management Response)	Expected date of full MTR completion

* Options for online information exchange and topics to be developed, should be provided in the Inception Report. It should be presented in both English and Spanish languages.

7. Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing**	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	ET clarifies objectives and methods of MTR	No later than 1 week before the MTR interviews. March 25, 2021	ET submits to UNDP/Cuba for review. Also, reviewed by Project Management Unit
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR interviews. April 8, 2021	ET submits to UNDP/Cuba for review. Also reviewed by Project Management Unit
3	Draft Final Report	Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR interviews. April 18, 2021	ET submits to UNDP/Cuba for review. Also reviewed by RTA and Project Management Unit
4	Final Report***	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft. May 4, 2021	ET submits to UNDP/Cuba. UNDP/Cuba submits to Project Management Unit and GEF national focal point

**Those dates are indicative. They could be adjusted according to the behavior of the COVID-19 pandemic.

***The final MTR report must be presented in both in English and Spanish languages.

8. Team composition

The ET will be comprised of one **independent international consultant** and one independent national consultant. Both consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or

implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities.

Consultants will interact with one another remotely. The **international consultant** will act as the team leader. He/She will be responsible for the overall design of the MTR. He/She is responsible for the writing of the documents, according to the timeframe defined in this TdR, e.g. inception and final reports. The national consultant will be methodologically oriented by the team leader; he/she will assess the Project contribution to regulatory frameworks, the budget allocations and the capacity building. Eventually, in dependency of the national sanitary situation, the national consultant may visit the intervention areas.

International consultant (team leader) competences:

- A Master’s degree in Environmental Sciences, Communications Sciences, Informatics, or other closely related field;
- Working experience in environmental information management and statistics, environmental public politics or other closely related field;
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF;
- Working experience as an evaluator of UNDP/GEF projects; experience with results-based management evaluation methodologies, experience as team leader will be considered an asset;
- Experience with the GEF or GEF-evaluations in the Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) area, will be considered an asset;
- Familiarity with the International Conventions addressing Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Conservation;
- Understanding of issues related to gender equality and CCCD;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Communication skills (*fluent in Spanish and English*);
- Demonstrable analytical skills.
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.

National consultant (team member) competences:

- A Master’s degree in Environmental Sciences, Communications Sciences, Informatics, Social Sciences, or other closely related field;
- Working experience in environmental information management and statistics, environmental public politics or other closely related field;
- Demonstrable knowledge of the Cuban public politics, regulatory and institutional framework in the environmental sector;
- Experience with UNDP/GEF Project in Cuba will be considered an asset;
- Experience as project evaluator will be considered an asset;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Communication skills (*fluent in Spanish and English*);
- Demonstrable analytical skills.
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.

The team composition should be balanced to cover all the evaluation aspects (evaluation methods and technics) and horizontal issues.

The selection of both the **international consultant** and the national one will be through separated processes, launched at international and local level, respectively.

9. Arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the UNDP/Cuba Country Office. It will recruit the ET and ensure all necessary support throughout the process.

UNDP/Cuba is responsible for liaising with the Project Management Unit to provide all relevant documents and set up stakeholder and beneficiaries interviews. UNDP/Cuba will provide support (technical and logistical arrangements) to the virtual meetings and to an eventual field visit of the national consultant to Project intervention areas. A detailed list of stakeholder’s contacts will be provided

to the ET. These stakeholders will be duly appointed and confirmed according to the interviews schedule.

10. Payment modalities and specifications

%	Milestone
10%	upon approval of the final MTR Inception report
30%	upon submission of the draft MTR report
60%	upon finalization of the MTR report and approval by UNDP/Cuba and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

The Final Report will be considered finalized when the expectations of the evaluation are met and its quality meets the standards or requirements of UNDP/GEF. The UNDP Country Office and the UNDP Regional Office will sign the MTR Report Clearance Form (See Annex F), to confirm their acceptance of this Final Report.

In line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the Commissioning Unit and/or the consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the MTR, that deliverable or service will not be paid.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.

11. Application process

Presentation of Proposal:

- CV and a Personal History Form ([P11 form](#)¹²)
- Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability /Financial Proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template to the [Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability template](#). If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP
- Methodological and instrumental proposal that will support the evaluation (*up to 15 pages*)
- Schedule for the MTR
- Three (3) References

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposal: Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring.

Review of the documentation presented:	Met / Not Met
1. Proposal validity (60 days)	
2. Methodological and instrumental proposal that will support the evaluation	
3. Schedule for the MTR	
4. Curriculum Vitae	
5. Presentation of 3 references	
6. Full acceptance of UNDP's General Terms and Conditions	
7. Financial proposal	

	Evaluation of the Technical Proposal of the international consultant (Team leader)	Max. Score
A	Quality of the Methodological and instrumental proposal: -Consistency with the requested methodological approach (10 points)	30 points

¹² http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

	-The proposal demonstrates knowledge of UNDP/GEF project evaluation methods and techniques (20 points)	
B	Quality of the experience and competences: -A Master's degree in Environmental Sciences, Communications Sciences, Informatics, or other closely related field; (5 points) - At least 10 years of experience in environmental information management and statistics, environmental public politics or other closely related field; (20 points) -At least 5 years of work experience with the GEF or GEF-evaluations; (25 points) -Experience with the GEF or GEF-evaluations in the Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) area, will be considered an asset; (10 points) -At least 10 years of expertise in Environmental and adaptive Management, familiarity with the International Conventions addressing Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Conservation (10 points)	70 points
	Total	100 points

Technical offers exceeding 70 points will be technically qualified and their financial proposals will be considered based on the following evaluation criteria:

Technical Proposal Score (TP) = (Total score obtained by the offer / Maximum obtainable score by the TP) x 100

Financial Proposal Score (FP) = (Lowest priced offer / Price of the Offer Being Reviewed) x 100

Total Combined Score = TP x 70% + FP x 30%

The applicant receiving the Highest Total Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

12. Consultant ethics

Evaluation consultants will assume the highest ethical standards and must sign a Code of Conduct (See Annex D) when accepting the assignment. UNDP evaluations are carried out in accordance with the principles described in the “*Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*” of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>)

The MTR team must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

13. Annexes

ANNEX A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the Evaluation Team

ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report

ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template

ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants

ANNEX E: MTR Ratings

ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form

ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template



Project PNUD–PIMS N°5527 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Project

'Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)'

ANNEX C: MTR Evaluation Matrix

Consultants: **Eduardo Durand**
 Tatiana Delgado

Lima / La Habana, April 2021

Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Project – 'Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)'

ANNEX C: MTR EVALUATION MATRIX

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	SOURCES	METHODOLOGY
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to the country's priorities and the appropriation of the actors, and the best route to the expected results?			
Has the Project established new national policies? How has the Project contributed to the implementation of national policies?	# and quality of inputs generated in the Project that can contribute to national policies Level of interinstitutional conciliation of proposals Degree of alignment with national environmental and related policies	ProDoc, PIR, Cuba Environmental Policy, Capacity Development Dashboard	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents and interviews.
How has the Project met international environmental and sustainable development commitments?	Coincidences in achievements and official policies. Interviewees' opinions	International Agreement ProDoc	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Did the main beneficiaries and stakeholders participate in the design of the Project? Were their perspectives incorporated?	# of workshops, courses, invitations, communications. Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, interviews	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Have lessons learned from previous similar projects been incorporated into the design of the Project?	# of built-in previous experiences Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, interviews	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Does the strategy incorporate a gender approach or perspective?	Interviewees' opinions Degree of incorporation of the gender approach in the ProDoc.	ProDoc, Interviews, capacity building dashboard, socio-environmental screening procedure	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Are the indicators and targets of the project adequate?	Degree of relevance of indicators	ProDoc, Interviews	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Have new objectives or goals been adopted that should be incorporated into the logical framework of the Project?	# of new objectives incorporated in the ProDoc.	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	SOURCES	METHODOLOGY
Progress towards results: To what extent have the expected Outcomes and Project objectives been achieved?			
What is the progress of the Project towards achieving the results?	Estimated % progress in relation to targets and indicators	PIR, interviews, Website infoGEO, reports on the web	Comparative and consistency analysis of documents and interviews Quantitative/qualitative analysis of information.
Is the Project expected to achieve its goals before the planned closing date (January 2022)?	Level of complexity of activities/outstanding results Level of risks (low, medium, high) to achieve the results of the Project	ProDoc, PIR, POA, Meeting Minutes, Interviews	Development of a matrix of progress towards results Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
To what extent will the results and achievements of the Project influence the country's development process?	Coincidences in achievements and official policies. Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, summaries of working visits, Project deliverables	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
To what extent does the Project impact or determine the institutionalization and the regulatory framework of environmental and sustainable development of the country?	Coincidences in achievements and official policies. Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Strategies, plans and national regulations	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
How effective has the Project been in terms of preparing national and subnational actors to operate the National Environmental Information System?	# of workshops, courses, invitations, communications. Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Technical Workshop Proceedings, Summaries of Working Visits, Capacity Building Dashboard	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
What are the main barriers to be faced during the remaining period of the Project?	# of identified barriers Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Minutes of coordination meetings	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
¿Cómo se pueden fortalecer, escalar y replicar los casos de éxito experimentados por el Proyecto?	Opinión de entrevistados y juicio de evaluadores	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Minutes of coordination meetings	Openness to interviewees' suggestions and analysis based on documentation.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	SOURCES	METHODOLOGY
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the Project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and has been able to adapt to the changing conditions so far? To what extent do project-level monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems and Project communications support implementation?			
What changing conditions have occurred during the implementation of the Project? How has the Project adapted to these changing conditions? Could the project implement additional actions?	# of risks identified in the implementation of the project # measures proposed by the project team to mitigate risks barriers/drivers associated with changing conditions.	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Minutes of coordination meetings	Theory of change, Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
Have women benefited and been involved during the implementation of the Project? In what way? Is there gender equity in the implementing team and in the Steering Committee? What measures have been implemented to promote gender equity?	Degree of participation of women in the implementing team and Steering Committee Degree of participation of women in the project	ProDoc, PIR, Technical Workshop Proceedings, Capacity Building Dashboard, Summaries of Working Visits, Interviews	Analysis of the relative participation of women through reports of workshops, trainings, and similar events.
Have there been delays in the implementation of the Project? What factors influence these delays and what measures have been taken to mitigate them?	Timeliness in achieving results Informed support of delays	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Coordination Meeting Reports, CDP Reports, POAs, Project Deliverables	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents and interviews and relationship between what is planned and what is executed
How has the pace of implementation of the project budget performed?	% of project execution as of December 2020 % of budget contracted with suppliers as of December 2020	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, CDR, Semi-annual Implementation Reports, AOP	Financial analysis of reports and documentation through graphs, budget, and expenditure analysis
Have there been changes in budget allocation during implementation? What have been the causes of these? Have these changes been relevant?	Reported changes in budget allocation	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, CDR, Semi-annual Implementation Reports	Financial analysis of reports and documentation through graphs
Have adequate financial planning and control tools and mechanisms been used?	Reporting of cash flow problems	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, CDR, Semi-annual Implementation Reports	

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	SOURCES	METHODOLOGY
Has there been proper planning of the expense considering cash flow?			Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Has co-financing been used strategically to achieve the objectives of the Project? Has it been possible to leverage additional funds?	Amount of co-financed funds implemented and estimated leveraged funds	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, CDR, Half-yearly implementation reports, list of synergies with other projects	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews.
Are the monitoring and reporting broad and do you consider the involvement of the main partners? Have sufficient resources been used for monitoring and reporting?	% of budget designated to the MRE Interviewees' opinions	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews.	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
Have there been synergies with relevant actors and programmes?	# of actors and associated programs	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Meeting Minutes, list of synergies with other projects	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
To what extent do national and local actors support the objectives of the project and maintain an active role in the decision-making process that favors implementation?	Opinion of the interviewees Evident resolution level Level of participation in meetings, workshops, etc..	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Meeting Minutes, minutes of technical workshops, project deliverables.	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic and/or environmental risks for the long-term sustainable results of the Project?			
What risks exist for the financial sustainability of the Project once it is over? Has a financial strategy been considered to ensure the sustainability of the Project?	# of identified risks Opinion of the interviewees # measures taken to address these risks Availability of funding	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, Capacity Building Dashboard, CDP Minutes, Meeting and Coordination Minutes	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	SOURCES	METHODOLOGY
What social or political risks exist that threaten the sustainability of the Project's achievements? Is there proper knowledge management that allows for the institutionalization of capacities?	# de riesgos identificados Opinión de los entrevistados # medidas adoptadas para enfrentar estos riesgos Situación social del país	ProDoc, PIR, Entrevistas, cuadro de mando de desarrollo de capacidades, actas de CDP, actas de reuniones de coordinación.	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
What risks exist at the political level, and at the governmental level that threaten the sustainability of the benefits of the Project? Are there adequate mechanisms for transparency and technical knowledge at the institutional level?	# of identified risks Opinion of the interviewees # measures taken to address these risks Political situation of the country	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, capacity building dashboard, CDP minutes, minutes of coordination meetings	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
Are there environmental risks that threaten the sustainability of the project's results? Has a strategy been considered to address them?	# of identified risks Opinion of the interviewees # measures taken to address these risks	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, capacity building dashboard, CDP minutes, minutes of coordination meetings	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
Covid-19: To what extent is the project affected in its technical and operational implementation due to Covid-19? What adaptive management measures have been adopted and how effective have they been?			
To what extent is the project affected in its technical and operational implementation due to Covid-19?	# affected activities; % of affection to the fulfillment of the project	ProDoc, PIR, Interviews, minutes of coordination meetings	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews
What adaptive measures have been taken to manage the risk associated with the health situation due to Covid-19? Have they been effective?	# and nature of perceived risks of non-compliance with the objectives and financial execution of the project before January 2022.	Minutes of Coordination meetings, CDP Minutes, PIR, interviews, CMI of the project	Comparative and consistency analysis of reports, documents, and interviews



UNDP–PIMS Project N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Project Midterm Review (MTR):

Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

ANNEX D: Guiding Questionnaire for Interviews

Consultants: Eduardo Durand
Tatiana Delgado

Lima / Havana, April 2021

ANNEX D

- A. Questionnaire to UNDP officials linked to the project.
- B. Questionnaire to senior government officials and members of the Steering Committee.
- C. Questionnaire to the Project Management Unit and sectoral officials linked to the project implementation.
- D. Questionnaire on administrative and financial implementation issues.
- E. Questionnaire to direct and indirect suppliers and beneficiaries.

A	B	C	D	E	GUIDE QUESTIONS
					Introduction and general opening questions
					[Presentation of interviewers, acknowledgement for their willingness; purpose of the interview and evaluation; name, contact and position of the interviewee] [Confidentiality and processing of the information provided; authorization to take notes] [Duration of the interview and sequence of questions alternated by the interviewers, and beginning of the questions]
					How familiar are you with the Project and its objectives, how much do you know about its design, formulation, and implementation?
					What is your current relationship, or your role and functions, with respect to the execution of the Project?
					What is your general view on the importance of the Project to the country and to your own institution?
					About the strategy and design of the Project
					Were you involved in the design of the Project and the formulation of the implementation strategy?
					How aligned do you think the Project is with national and government policies?
					How aligned is the Project with the UNDP Country Programme and UNDAF?
					Do you generally believe that the Project's strategy is efficient in achieving its climate change goals?
					What are the main challenges that in your opinion has had the design and implementation process of the Project? What do you think are the main virtues and advantages of project design?
					Would you say that the Project has been designed on a participatory basis of the actors and beneficiaries involved? Have gender issues been considered in the design of the Project?
					Based on your experience, if the Project could be redesigned, what changes would you make or what forecasts would you include from your point of view for its best performance?
					Effectiveness in the implementation of the Project
					How effective do you think the Project is being in terms of its future goals and impact? What do you think is required to improve its impact and benefits?
					How effective is the Project being in terms of supporting the country's international commitments to climate change, biodiversity, and land management processes?
					How do you perceive the Project in terms of its actions and levels of participation in training and communication between government institutions and private sector entities and the population?

					Do you perceive that the Project is supporting the strengthening of participating institutions and actors in the private sector and population? To what extent and what do you feel needs to be done about it?
					Do you think the Project is convening and working with all relevant actors? Do you feel that this is a project that is understood and that arouses the interest of the actors?
					Efficiency in the execution of the Project
					How do you perceive the execution of the Project to date, in terms of meeting deadlines and plans to date (December 2020)?
					What do you think are the main barriers or bottlenecks to complying with the execution of the project's expenditure and activities?
					How do you think human and financial resources are being allocated in the implementation of the Project; do you consider the process to be efficient?
					How do you perceive the role of the National Steering Committee?
					How do you perceive the role and efficiency of managers and the Project Management Unit to date?
					Do you feel that UNDP support in the project implementation process has been efficient and timely?
					Have changes or amendments to PRODOC, operational plans and budgets been necessary to adapt to unforeseen situations? How fluid has this adaptive process been and how frequent has it been?
					What have been the main administrative and budget implementation challenges and how have they been addressed?
					How do you perceive the progress of the Project in terms of the deadlines and execution time that remains?
					What lessons learned do you think are derived from the implementation of the Project to date?
					Sustainability of the Project and its actions in the medium and long term
					How do you perceive the risks and sustainability of the Project in the future? What are the main ones for the continuity and stability of achievements?
					To what extent can the financial sustainability of the Project and its implementation actions be ensured?
					What legal or institutional changes or modifications do you think would be favorable to the sustainability of the Project, including forecasts on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic in the medium and long term?
					What other measures can you suggest to improve the current action and future sustainability of the Project?



UNDP – PNUD–PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report (EMT):

Integrate the obligations of the Rio Convention into national priorities by strengthening information and knowledge management to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

ANNEX E: Ratings

Consultants: Eduardo Durand
Tatiana Delgado

Lima / La Habana, abril 2021

ANEXO E

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained



UNDP – PNUD–PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report (EMT):

Integrate the obligations of the Rio Convention into national priorities by strengthening information and knowledge management to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

ANNEX F: List of people interviewed

Consultants: **Eduardo Durand**
 Tatiana Delgado

Lima / Havana, April 2021

APPENDIX F: List of people interviewed

Date	Activity
Mon 05 Apr	Interviews with UNDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gricel Acosta Nature, Climate and Energy Program Officer, UNDP Cuba • Yamilka Caraballo Nature, Climate and Energy Program Analyst, UNDP Cuba • Patricia Fernandez, Associate of the Nature, Climate and Energy Program, UNDP Cuba
Tue 06 Apr	Interviews with MINCEX and CITMA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beatriz Crespín Oviedo, Responsible for the UNDP environment and energy folder at DOEI MINCEX • Pedro Ruiz, Specialist of the International Relations Directorate of CITMA
Wed Apr 07	Interviews with CITMA and the Project Management Unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odalys Goicochea, General Director of the Environment of CITMA • Armed Jesús de la Colina, Outcome 1 Coordinator • Alejandro Carmenates Outcome 2 Coordinator • Douney Albella, Program Information System Specialist • Ramon Rodríguez, Outcome 3 Coordinator • Ileana Sabori, Specialist in Environmental Indicators of the CITMA Environment Directorate
Thu 08 Apr	Interviews with INRH, AMA, Parque Científico Tecnológico de Matanza, University of Havana and CITMATEL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jorge Jacinto Alva, Director of Direction of Information in the INRH • Maritza Garcia, President of the Agency for Environment • Diego Castilla, Director of the Science and Technology Park of Matanzas • Deborah Torres Ponjuan, Vice Dean of Information and Technological Development of the University of Havana • Guillermo Lastre Olazábal, Head of UEB Networks and Computation of CITMATEL
Fri 09 Apr	Interviews with CITMA Delegations in Matanzas and Pinar del Río, Finca Tierra Brava, and Allied Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idalia Lopez, Head of the Pinar del Río Environment Unit • Juana Daisy Anoyvega, Specialist of the CITMA Delegation in Matanzas • Onay Martínez Díaz, Head of Finca Tierra Brava • Aylem Hernandez, Ecovalor Project Manager • Lazara Sotolongo Head of Connecting Landscapes • Jorge Ferrero Days, SINBIOD Project Manager • Alfredo Martínez, Project Program Manager
Fri Apr 16	Interview with the director of the InfoGEO project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoel Cuzán, infoGEO Project Director



UNDP – PNUD–PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report (EMT):

Integrate the obligations of the Rio Convention into national priorities by strengthening information and knowledge management to improve planning and decision-making (infoGEO)

ANNEX G: Documents reviewed

Consultants: **Eduardo Durand**
 Tatiana Delgado

Lima / La Habana, abril 2021

➤ ***Formulation documents and progress reports***

- Project Identification Form (PIF)
- PRODOC
- Inception report
- Initiation Plan
- Progress Reports (PIR 2018 y 2019)
- Annual Oper. Plans 2019, 2020 y 2021
- QORs and CDR

➤ ***Reports of Board, meetings and workshops of PMU***

- Agendas and minutes of Boards meetings 2019 y 2020
- Field visits reports
- Technical workshops minutes 2018, 2019, 2020 y 2021
- Coordination meetings 2019, 2020 y 2021
- Online coordination meetings 2020

➤ ***Documents of technical products, finance and co-financing execution***

- Scientific and certification reports 2019 y 2020
- Capacities Development Scorecard
- Synergies with other projects
- Manuals of the system under designing

➤ ***Guidelines for MTR***

- Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
- CPD Cuba



Proyecto PNUD–PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Project

'Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)'

ANNEX H: Table of Cofinancing

Consultants: **Eduardo Durand**
 Tatiana Delgado

Lima / La Habana, abril 2021

ANEXO H: Table of Cofinancing

Sources of co-financing	Name of co-financer	Type of co-financing	Amount of co-financing confirmed in the CEO's endorsement (USD)	Actual amount contributed at the time of the mid-term review (USD) *	% of real expected amount
Funds (<i>Energy & Environment</i>)	PNUD	External	50.000,00	50.000,00	100,00
Environmental Agency - AMA	IGT	National (Government))	816.780,00	816.780,00	100,00
National Plan of Science, Technology, and Innovation (PNCTI)	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)	National (Government)	870.120,00	870.120,00	100,00
Program Not Associated to Project (PNAP)	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)	National (Government)	299.166,67	0,00	0,00
TOTAL			2.036.066,67	1.736.900,00	85,31

(*) Up to December 2020

Table of cofinancing (PNUD Template): See next page.

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS AT MTR AND TE STAGES

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financeir	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (\$)
GEF Agency	PNUD	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	50,000
Recipient Country Government	CITMA-IGT	Other	Recurrent expenditures	816,880
Recipient Country Government	CITMA - PNCTI 2019	Other	Recurrent expenditures	307,820
Recipient Country Government	CITMA - PNCTI 2020	Other	Recurrent expenditures	562,300
Recipient Country Government	PNAP - 2021	Other	Recurrent expenditures	152,775
Recipient Country Government	PNAP - 2022	Other	Recurrent expenditures	146,392
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select) +		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
(select)		(select)	(select)	
Total Co-financing				2,036,066



Project PNUD–PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANNEXES

To the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Project

'Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making (infoGEO)'

ANNEX I: Agreement to Abide to the Conduct Code UNEG

Consultants: **Eduardo Durand**
 Tatiana Delgado

Lima / La Habana, abril 2021

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: EDUARDO DURAND

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant):

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.



Signed at Lima, Peru, on March 15th, 2021 Signature:

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: TATIANA DELGADO

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant):

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.



Signed at La Habana, Cuba, on March 15th Signature:



Proyecto PNUD-PIMS N°5727 – GEF ID 9319
ATLAS No. 00094885

ANEXOS

Al Informe de la Evaluación de Medio Término (EMT) del Proyecto:

Integrar las obligaciones de la Convención de Río en las prioridades nacionales mediante el fortalecimiento de la gestión de la información y los conocimientos para mejorar la planificación y toma de decisiones (infoGEO)

ANEXO J: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNDP Country Office

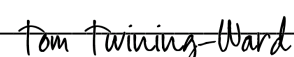
Name: Gricel Acosta Acosta / Programme Analyst NCE/UNDP, Cuba

Signature:  Date: 07-Jun-2021

UNDP GEF RTA

Tom Twining-ward

Name: _____

Signature:  Date: 14-Jun-2021