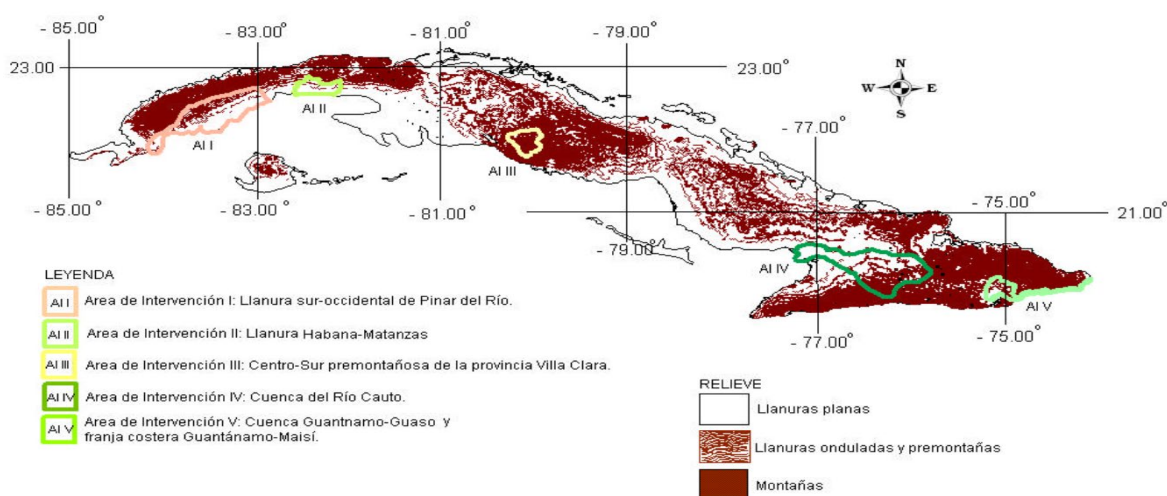


Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms/Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas in Cuba

GEF Medium-Sized Project – 2 steps

(PIMS 3807 – GEF ID 9301 - Atlas ID 00092843)

Country: Cuba
Region: Latin America & The Caribbean
Focal Area: Land Degradation – LD 3
GEF Implementing Agency: UNDP
Implementing Partner: Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment through National Implementation Modality (NIM)



Terminal Evaluation Final Report, February, 2023

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Acronyms

AMA	Environment Agency
ANAP	National Association of Small Producers
AZCUBA	Sugar Enterprise Group
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BASAL	Environmental Bases for Local Food Security
BCC	Central Bank of Cuba
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CITMA	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
CO	Country Office
COSUDE	Swiss Development Cooperation
CPP	Country Pilot Partnership
CUP	Cuban Peso
DFFFS	Forestry Flora and Fauna direction of MINAG
FMC	Federation of Cuban Women
FNMA	National Environment Fund (Fondo Nacional de Medioambiente)
FONADEF	National Forestry Development Fund (Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Forestal)
GEB	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GoC	Government of Cuba
INRH	National Institute for Hydrological Resources
IA	Implementation Agency
IP	Implementation Partner
IPF	Institute of Physical Planning
LD	Land Degradation
MEP	Ministry of Economy and Planning
MES	Ministry of Superior Education
MFP	Ministry of Finance and Prices
MINAG	Ministry of Agriculture
MINCEX	Ministry of External Cooperation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoMs	Minutes of Meetings
MSP	Medium Sized Project
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NSC	National Steering Committee
NPESD	National Plan for Economic and Social Development
ONAT	National Office for Tributary Administration
OP	Operational Programme
PC	Project Coordinator
PD	Project Director
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PNMCS	National Programme for Soil Improvement and Conservation
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PRF	Project Results Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SESP	Social and Environment Screening Procedure
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP/CO	United Nations Development Programme /Country Office
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USD	United States Dollars

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present Report constitutes the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms/Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas (Project 3) in Cuba, an initiative financed by GEF, executed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as Implementing Agency, under the National Implementation Modality (NIM), with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) that takes overall responsibility for implementation. The Project is part of the larger Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) programme which comprises five projects, of which this one is denominated Project 3.

The purpose of the review was to assess the achievement of project results against expectations and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP/GEF programming. The evaluation took place during January-February 2023, with the international consultant working remotely and the national consultant in the field; the Consultants believe that findings are relatively well substantiated, based on comprehensive documental review and extensive interviews conducted with stakeholders, both virtually and in-presence.

Table N.1 Project Information Table

Project Title:	Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms/Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	3807	PIF Approval Date:	Nov 10 th , 2005
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	9301	CEO Endorsement Date:	July 14 th , 2017
ATLAS Award ID:	00085072	Project Document Signature Date (date project began):	March, 26 th , 2019
ATLAS Output ID:	00092843	Date Project Coordinator hired:	2016 for CPP
Country(ies):	Cuba	Inception Workshop date:	May 8 th , 2019
Region:	LAC	Midterm Review date:	09/2021 mid-term exercise
Focal Area:	Land Degradation -	Planned closing date:	March 26 th , 2023
GEF 6 Focal Area Strategic Objectives and Programs:	LD 3 Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape)	If revised, proposed closing date:	N/A
Trust Fund:	GEF TF		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Agency):	UNDP Country Office – Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) with Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment		
Other execution partners:	N/A		
Financial Information			
PDF/PPG	At Approval (USD)	At PDF/PPG completion (USD)	
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project preparation	75,000	75,000	
Co-financing for project preparation	N/A	N/A	
Project Financing:	Expected at CEO endorsement (USD)	At TE (USD)	
[1] GEF financing:	1,425,000	1,425,000	
[2] UNDP contribution (TRAC resources):	50,000 (in-kind)	45,000 (in-kind)	
[3] Government: DGE-SSE	36,000,000 (in-kind)	27.858.650 (amount in CUP of 141.556.911 is higher than original pledges considering the modified CUP/USD exchange rate)	
[4] Other Partners: -	-	-	
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	36,050,000	27.903.650	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	37,475,000	29.328.650	

I Project Description

Project 3 is designed with the [objective](#) to strengthen national capacities to develop and apply sustainable financing mechanisms for Sustainable Land Management (SLM). At field level, it aims at introducing into the CPP the theme of forest ecosystems, specifically in dryland areas. The Project document was signed on March 26th, 2019 which is the starting date; the Project is due to end in March, 26th, 2023. The Project budget totals

US\$ 37,475,000 of which US\$ 1,475,000 provided by GEF (including the project preparation grant) and the remaining US\$ 36,050,000 (co-financing) from UNDP and the Government of Cuba (GoC). Activities fulfill real and identified needs at Project design (2005), being totally aligned with national and international requirements for SLM, environmental management and more recently food security.

II Project Progress Summary

The Project has already achieved and even overachieved most of its targets, before the End of Project (EoP), with a great level of effectiveness; it has been extremely well managed and executed, deserving a **Highly Satisfactory rating**, if not for the lack of revision of design at inception stage; implementation hindrances are to be imputed to impediments mostly outside management control (initial delays in Project approval, the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic and the USA blockage), which were well faced, through systematic and creative adaptive management.

Table N.2 Evaluation Ratings Table

1. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating ¹	Comment
M&E design at entry	S	The M&E plan is standardly designed, as per GEF and UNDP requirements under the NIM modality; M&E tools are set and a budget estimated. Assumptions and risks with mitigation/management measures are identified.
M&E Plan Implementation	HS	M&E is well implemented; it benefitted from: i) suggestions of a mid-term performance assessment exercise, which were not translated into a revision of planning but still guided implementation and, ii) the Cuban control system which fully involves municipal and provincial teams, requiring the preparation of annual and trimestral workplans and quarterly reporting; it produces data and information, feeding the assessment and reporting of indicators/targets. Monitoring tools used are traditional but adequate for tracking implementation and the Project Results Framework's (PRF) indicators. Considering that data serve both the purpose of Project 3 and of the CPP programme as a whole, the adoption of recent monitoring and reporting tools such as an online Smartsheet Platform could be considered to allow the production of immediate and accurate reports in different format for different uses and target. Reporting is essential in the PIR's tables but complemented with links to annexes and with exhaustive documents prepared in Spanish for internal government requirements. Global Environmental Benefits are monitored using the Tracking Tools system in place at the time of Project design; the Project has not yet adopted Core Indicators (now in use by GEF), which should be considered under the upcoming CPP Project 4. A proper gender analysis and Gender Action Plan have been only recently prepared and will be implemented under Project 4; management still keeps track of gender disaggregated data but the approach has not been as systematic as needed.
Overall Quality of M&E	S	The Project well adapted to external difficulties, mainly the COVID-19 pandemic and the USA blockage, consistently and creatively applying adaptive measures. Although the monitoring system uses basic and traditional tools, management is capable of well tracking performance and timely retrieve information. Access to financial incentives should be tracked by gender.
2. Implementing Agency (IA) Implementation & Executing Agency (EA) Execution	Rating	Comments
Quality of UNDP Execution/ Implementation/Oversight	S	The NIM modality is adequate and well implemented; management requires minimal UNDP operational support, basically during the last phases of payments to external providers. More guidance was necessary at inception to validate Project face to changing conditions of the political, regulatory and social environment, requiring an update of indicators and targets; the lengthy and complex GEF process required at the time to modify what would have been considered <i>major amendments</i> certainly prevented actions in this sense. Synergy and collaboration between UNDP at

¹ Rating is provided according to the TE Guidance for UNDP-supported GEF-financed Projects, version 2020. The rating scale for monitoring and implementation includes: HS: Highly Satisfactory; S: Satisfactory; MS: Moderately Satisfactory; MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory; U: Unsatisfactory; HU: Highly Unsatisfactory. The rating scale for Sustainability includes: L: Likely; ML: Moderately likely; MU: Moderately Unlikely; U: Unlikely.

		local/regional level and the President of the Environmental Agency (AMA) and the Project Director (PD) are solid.
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	HS	The quality of implementation is outstanding. The management team includes technical and financial professional staff, mostly with experience in previous CPP projects. AMA provides effective guidance, ensuring remarkable institutional and interinstitutional collaborations which greatly contribute to Project's success. NSC's meetings are annually held and are the occasion to discuss all CPP projects, thus ensuring synergy of activities, within the framework of the entire programme; commitments are taken for each project discussed and then monitored at the next meeting.
Overall Quality of Implementation/Execution	S	Management has been able to overcome difficulties and delays; produce outstanding results both at national and the intervention areas level, which find wide recognition during the interviews with all kind of stakeholders. The support of environmental and economic institutions at national, provincial and municipal level has been and it is paramount for the achievement and sustainability of results.
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating	Comments
Relevance	S	Project design was relevant and appropriate at design, aligned with strategies and objectives of the GEF-Land Degradation, UNDP and United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). If the strategy was already well aligned with national economic/environmental policies at design, at inception and during implementation, the Project became instrumental for the new Food Sovereignty and environmental strategies, aiming at reducing food and food items imports, increasing food production while maintaining the natural resources base. Unfortunately, design was never adjusted to the new conducive legal and policy framework, including a monetary readjustment of the exchange rate between the Cuban peso and the American dollar; as the original identified barriers were losing strength, more ambitious targets could have been established; notwithstanding, relevance is maintained throughout implementation.
Effectiveness	HS	At the time of the TE, the Project has already achieved and even overachieved most of its targets and indicators, with a high degree of quality. The approach is effective at all levels: i) the national and local intervention areas; ii) in the way economic and environmental institutions are brought together, uncommonly finding common objectives; iii) partnering with international/national projects/interventions, serving common aims and finding synergies which greatly helped overcoming the difficulties of the pandemic and of the shortage of fuels and materials consequent to the worsening of the USA blockage. Raising awareness, providing training, tailoring the regulations of existing and new financial mechanisms to needs, and practically demonstrating the soundness of SLM practices gradually and increasingly motivate producers to look for eligibility under one of the three SLM category and access SLM financial incentives.
Efficiency	HS	Face to the difficulties experienced with the pandemic and the USA blockage which reverted on increased prices and shortage of food and material, implementation is highly efficient, able to recuperate delays and find creative and sustainable solutions through the effective collaboration of government institutions, including the provincial and municipal level, and of international partners, which provided logistical and technical support. Certainly, a favorable and enabling environment is accountable for the extraordinary success of the Project but this does not diminish the capacity of management and of the AMA guidance to get things done and be rewarded with the trust of stakeholders. A clear sign of commitment and ownership comes from the higher than planned government co-financing, when considering the new monetary order which altered the CUP/USD exchange rate.
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S	The quality and effectiveness of management would deserve a highly satisfactory rating, if not for failure to adjust the Project to the new political and legal environment and to a farmers baseline which – at inception - was already larger than at design in terms of awareness of existing opportunities for financial incentives and SLM practices; this is quite conducive but also distortive with respect to the original identified barriers. If this does not diminish the outstanding quality of management and of the performance, more ambitious targets could have been established.
4. Sustainability	Rating	Comments
Financial sustainability	L	Financial sustainability is likely. The policy framework allows government allocations of funds through various mechanisms. Financial incentives are appreciated and produce savings so that credit is likely to be honored.
Socio-political sustainability	L	Socio-political sustainability is likely. Awareness raising, training and demonstration/replication activities motivate farmers, producers and forestry caretakers to implement SLM practices, utilizing wherever possible financial incentives, i.e. BANDEC with its reduced interest rates, FONADEF with its priority for farmers

		classified under the SLM categories; the REVERDESEN insurance product which is increasingly attractive as it covers a wide range of production and family issues; water and economic savings are demonstrated in the pilot Mayabeque site, with potential for replication. Under Project 4, continuous training, divulgation of information and raise of awareness on SLM practices and associated financial incentives is planned. More should be done to offer women equal opportunities for training, technical assistance and access to financial incentives. The Gender Action Plan and the overall procedure to screen social and environmental issues, including the stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) and grievance mechanism, were prepared too late in Project execution to be of any use and still lack quality checks. Further efforts are required to find ways for civil society to express its own interests, beyond the traditional Cuban cooperatives, and to empower community leaders as facilitators and technicians, enabling new leaderships to emerge, especially for women and the youth. The upcoming Project 4 – the last one of the CPP programme - provides further opportunities to strengthen these actions.
Institutional framework and governance sustainability	L	Institutional sustainability is likely. Risks are minimized by the presence of an enabling legal framework for food security and environmental sustainability, with all OP15 key areas of action well integrated in the GoC's environmental laws. A great degree of institutional commitment manifests from interviews conducted; various management groups specifically created are being institutionalized, recognizing their important coordination role in national processes. On paper, institutions including those of the economic and banking sector, gather around common objectives and are committed to continue improving the financial mechanisms, more as a contribution to the food security economy of the country than for their own institutional interest.
Environmental sustainability	L	Environmental sustainability is likely. Awareness raising and training activities are accompanied by demonstration/replication practices which strengthen chances for these to be adopted and sustained. As agricultural, livestock and forestry practices contribute to maintain ecosystem goods and services, SLM becomes the viable working model to preserve the health of the natural resources base.
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	L	Sustainability is likely at all levels; performance is translating into a <i>win-game</i> for everybody, the economy, the producer and the environment. Positive economic and environmental outcomes stem from activities initiated by environmental institutions, <i>AMA in primis</i> . This is a unique and extremely important achievement, sustained by the economic and productive ministries as well as by the banking system, thus setting the basis for activities to be sustainable.

II Concise Summary of Conclusions

The Project is part of the larger CPP programme and certainly responds to needs. The inception phase failed to validate and adjust design to the country's new political and regulatory reality and to consider actions already implemented under the CPP programme, including awareness raising about financial incentives for which there was already a high demand by local farmers at Project start. This does not invalidate the excellent performance and an outstanding management, capable of taking advantage of favorable conditions, gathering economic, productive and environmental institutions, including the banking sector, around common objectives and partnering with international actors.

Economic, productive and environmental institutions are fully cooperative, empowered and committed, led by a solid leadership. Achievements, strongly favored by the current economic, political and regulatory government policy, are relevant from both a quantity and quality point of view. Existing and new financial mechanisms have been systematized into guiding and information material which is used for training and awareness raising; their regulatory forms have been adapted to needs, new products have been created with characteristics that are innovative not only for the Cuban context but possibly also in the international arena (i.e. the combined REVERDESEN insurance).

Impact is already manifesting: there is an evident institutional and socio-economic uptake of the actions proposed as the number of farmers accessing financial mechanisms and applying SLM practices indicates; production (i.e. vegetables, fruits, milk) at farm level is increasing; the policy/regulatory framework influences and is being influenced by the operation of the CPP and of this Project 3; environmental parameters are improving, with 27.322,66 ha of land at national level (of which 12.763,42 ha in the demonstration and replication areas) under SLM and a decreasing erosion rate in the intervention areas;

and the state opens to greater decentralization. Overall, a **triple win situation** manifests, where everybody gains, making the process likely to be sustainable: i) the national economy as the Project contributes to reduce food and food items imports; ii) farmers able to increase production while obtaining savings and finally, iii) the environment as the health of the natural resources base and the ecosystem services are improving. This is not to say that barriers are not still present, that more needs to be done to spread awareness of the existing financial opportunities for SLM and to preserve the complex, delicate and interlinked functioning of ecosystem services.

IV Lessons Learnt and Recommendations Summary

The CPP Project 3 has generated in Cuba a number of lessons, many of which have been compiled into a Manual of Lessons Learnt developed for the entire CPP; lessons learnt are also identified in the final report of Project 3, in Spanish; therefore this chapter may be redundant and reference is made to these two comprehensive reports². Here below some of the key lessons are listed.

L1. Project design requires to be adjusted to the reality present at the time of its commencement, when a long period elapsed since its original construction. The excellent performance of the Project is partly explained by conditions at Project start which diminished the force of the barriers originally identified; targets could have been set in a more ambitious way and the baseline adjusted, should design be revisited and validated during the inception phase. The GEF involves lengthy and often discouraging processes for the revision of the PRF; however, if the strategy remains valid, setting up new and higher targets should be considered. Since 2021, the compilation of PIRs includes a “Minor Amendments” section, with guidance to undergo revisions of the log frame if changes are minor and do not restructure the goal of the project significantly. To date UNDP discourages such changes and expects more clarity from the GEF as to the process to conduct such minor adjustments.

L2 Changing approaches, attitudes and mindset takes time. The Project manifests impact because activities are implemented in a favorable regulatory and policy context and because they are framed within the CPP which overall has been implemented for at least 15 years. A usual 4-5-year project can set the basis for changes which can only be appreciated in larger period of time.

L3. SLM is a cross-cutting landscape approach, requiring a large consultative process at national and at local level, with an effective leadership. Impact is manifesting because AMA is fully appropriate of the actions proposed and effectively promotes a national dialogue across sectors, favored by the new policy for food sovereignty, which involves not only the economic, productive, and environmental institutions but also the banking and insurance sectors, greatly facilitating the promotion and application of financial incentives. In addition, all institutions are very well represented at territorial level, smoothing communication, training and the uptake from provincial and municipal entities which gather interdisciplinary teams. Overall, this permits a holistic analysis and approach.

L4. Information and awareness raising are key activities, the effect of which is amplified when demonstration and replication actions bring evidence to end users. The double approach of investing resources at national level for identifying and promoting financial incentives as well as at local productive level is key to gain the trust and collaboration of end-users, who are informed of financial opportunities and trained on their use but also exposed to the evidence that SLM practices revert into well-being of the entire family in terms of livelihoods, food security and nutritional quality.

L5 Collaboration with other projects is not only important for the synergies created but is part of the strategy to face hindrances (i.e. COVID 19 pandemic and USA blockage). Experience shows that effective collaboration with other projects/partners create synergies and amplify processes but can also be the way to overcome shortages of fuel, transport, food and implements, i.e. the GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP); BIOFIN, Connecting Landscapes, and PROSAM, among others.

² Lecciones Aprendidas. Reflexiones para la gestión de un proyecto internacional. Una mirada desde el Programa CPP OP15 de Cuba. Dra. C. Lourdes M. Mugica Valdés. July 2020.

INFORME FINAL, PROYECTO 3 "Fortalecimiento de Capacidades para los Mecanismos de Financiamiento Sostenible // Manejo Sostenible de Tierras en los Ecosistemas Forestales Secos y Áreas Ganaderas". La Habana, 2022

L.6 Management Plans at farm level are instrumental to the implementation of agricultural, livestock and forestry activities. Management Plans have been used to gather the commitment of parties, requiring a non-legal value signature which obliged everybody to well understand the proposals and stick to their implementation schedule.

The following recommendations are tailored to improve the sustainability of the actions of Project 3 and to share experiences to inform the design of similar projects. A number of specific and valid recommendations are provided in the Final Report of Project 3 in Spanish, to which the reader is referred.

Table N. 3 Recommendations summary table

N.	Recommendation	Responsible entity	Timeframe
A	Design - Monitoring & Evaluation		
A.1	Ensure that Project design reflects the reality of the policy framework and of the field at Project start. The Inception phase is there to ensure that design is validated not only in the strategy but also in the baseline and targets; if the GEF allows less complex and lengthy procedures for minor changes, management should always opt for adjusting the construction of the project.	GEF for guidance; UNDP CO Management	For future projects
A.2	Consider modernizing M&E tools for managing data: although internet connections are unstable in Cuba and management is able to store and retrieve information easily, considering the CPP as a whole much could be done to make data analysis and reporting more immediate and structured, i.e. using an online smart-sheet to allow systematic registration of performance data, uploading and generating documents and reports; data on project participants and beneficiaries would be quickly available and could include the careful monitoring of the Gender Action Plan and gender mainstreaming indicators which is carried over to Project 4. Gender-disaggregated data should be collected also for people accessing financial mechanism to ensure equal opportunities. Adopt Core Indicators versus Tracking Tools as currently required by GEF.	Management	Under Project 4
A.3	SESP, SEP and Grievance Mechanism to undergo quality checks. Sharing concerns expressed by the UNDP RTA, this TE subscribes to the need to ensure that SESP, SEP and Grievance Mechanism undergo the required quality checks, and that they are fully implemented, together with the Gender Action Plan under Project 4 which should be re-screened due to the lag in time, and to the potential addition of new project sites. The Grievance mechanisms should be integrated within the institutional structure of MINAG, as good practice, and accountability.	Management UNDP CO	Under Project 4
C	Sustainability		
C.1	Continue to train and increase awareness about SLM practices and financial mechanisms opportunities. Continue improving the normative documents of the financial incentives, implementing training and delivering information, ensuring they are highly accessible, i.e. REVERDESEN and the pilot experience of Mayabeque for water management, among others.	Management	Under Project 4 and the CPP as a whole
C.2	Continue investing in the categorization process of SLM for farmers and in the certification process of SLM practices. Categorizing farmers in the three steps of SLM has environmental value for the institutions and monetary value for farmers. SLM practices can be certified by an external certification company; management has already taken steps in this sense which should be further sustained.	Management	Under Project 4 and beyond

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Evaluation Purpose

This document is the Terminal Evaluation (TE) report of the Project [Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms/Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas](#) in Cuba; it is part of the larger [Country Pilot Partnership \(CPP\) Programme](#), including five projects of which this one is denominated Project 3; financing is provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), under the GEF Land Degradation focal area, Operational Programme (OP) 15- LD-3 Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, with co-financing by the Government of Cuba (GoC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP Country Office (CO) is the GEF Implementing Agency (IA), and through a [National Implementation Modality \(NIM\)](#), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) is the Implementing Partner (IP). As a Medium-Sized Project (MSP), it is subject to a TE under the GEF Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) policies and procedures.

2.2 Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of the TE is to assess the achievement of project results against the expected objectives and outcomes, establish the project's success or failure in meeting its goal and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of GEF and UNDP programming. The Project started operations on March 26th 2019, date of ProDoc signature and is expected to end in March 26th 2023.

2.3 Methodology

Conducted during the period January-February 2023 by the independent consultants Elena Laura Ferretti (international) and Orlidia Hechavarría Kindelán (national), the review has included both on site and long-distance interviews and site visits. The TE report was elaborated in accordance with UNDP and GEF guidance, rules and procedures, in particular the Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-financed Projects (version 2020) and the TORs ([Annex A](#)).

The TE aimed at collecting and analyzing data in, as much as possible, a systematic manner so as to ensure that findings, conclusions and recommendations are substantiated by evidence. As described in the Inception Report, delivered on July 10th, 2022, after the integration of comments, the approach developed in four phases: Preparation Phase; "Virtual/Onsite-Interviews-Field Visit" and Analysis Phase; Draft Reporting Phase; and Final Reporting Phase. The rationale of the Consultants' approach included:

- i) A qualitative evaluation based on the analysis of primarily secondary data, documents and information collected ([Annex B](#)), including the Project Results Framework (PRF), the M&E system, and interviews with stakeholders (the schedule & people/institutions interviewed is [Annex C](#));
- ii) An analysis based on the evaluation criteria described in the ToRs, in accordance with UNDP-GEF guidance and policies, and Evaluation Questions ([Annex D of the ToRs](#)) with findings articulated under: Project Design/Formulation; Progress Implementation; Project Results and Impacts; Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learnt, and with consideration for gender inclusion;
- iii) An evaluation based on in-presence and long-distance interviews (with both focus groups and individual sessions) with stakeholders, including field visits to farmers and beneficiaries; the number of interviews and the participation in focus groups discussions allowed stakeholders to express their perspective on how activities answer real needs and their perceptions about the long-term possibility for impact;

- iv) A well-prepared desk phase with sufficient days devoted to the preparation of interviews and study of documents to allow smoother interactions with stakeholders.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

As described above in the methodology, the TE is an evidence-based assessment, relying on data collected mainly through documents and information ([Annex B](#)) which were analyzed and triangulated with feedback obtained through interviews with people involved in the design and implementation of the Project. Evaluation Questions ([Annex D of ToR](#)) and the Inception Report refer sources of information and the methodology of analysis used.

2.5 Ethics

The evaluation is based on the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators; [Annex D](#) is the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement form duly signed. All information provided by stakeholders is kept confidential.

2.6 Limitations to the Evaluation

The process has been participatory, with a large number of people interviewed in Government and Non-Government agencies, both individually or as a focus group, and including representatives of key partners and government institutions, UNDP staff and government and non-government key informants involved in the development of specific Project's items as well as representative of the local farmer community. Information collected has largely been validated during a two-days site visit to demonstration and replication sites of the Project. The Project Director (PD) and the Project Coordinator (PC) facilitated contacts for meetings and interviews which developed without major constraints. Some critical elements to be considered in reading this report:

- Evaluations are undertaken in a limited time frame; field visits and interviews have been challenged by the severe energetic crisis faced by Cuba which strongly limits the availability of gasoline as well as by the precarious internet connection, even in the capital area. Clearly, the subtle interactions between stakeholders are definitely less easy to appreciate from a distance (for the international consultant); notwithstanding, with the support of UNDP, an effective division of tasks between the international and the national evaluator and utilizing a mixture of virtual and face-to-face interviews, the number of stakeholders contacted, either individually or through focus groups, and the triangulation of the information are satisfactory and provide a substantial picture of achievements; management made all efforts to ensure communication and an onsite visit for the national consultant; the possibility that some judgements are misled exists but all considered should be minimal;
- Respect of the deadlines was challenged by the fact that the contract for the evaluation was signed on the 23rd of December, just before the Christmas holidays and that the office of the Project remained closed until the 9th of January, without any possible interaction. In addition, interviewing institutional staff require previous approval in Cuba and interviews were all set for the third week of January, making them too concentrated in a limited time frame, especially considering that the international consultant worked home-based and with a six-hours' time difference. Furthermore, the National Director was also under evaluation for Project 2 of CPP Programme, therefore with an important charge of responsibilities. However, a well-prepared desk phase by the evaluators, prompt approval of the Inception Report and an efficient acquisition of the necessary official endorsement to interview government staff, allowed respect of the deadlines and an effective organization of the work, spreading the interviews over a longer period than the original planned single week;
- The number of stakeholders involved in Project activities is high but it has been possible to cover the great majority of them by splitting the tasks efficiently among the national and international evaluators, gathering them into focus groups when possible and using allowed digital tools when the internet

connection permitted (mainly WhatsApp as some of the widely used means for virtual interviews as Zoom or Teams are not allowed in Cuba as a consequence of the USA blockage) and keeping virtual meetings within limited time to avoid the virtual fatigue;

- While indicators proved to be adequately SMART, in line with the need of users and well tracked, they had to be assessed with a certain degree of flexibility and considering the indications provided by a mid-term assessment exercise which guided towards specific considerations for example for the number of farmers' baseline and for the percentage of women to be involved; also the modified exchange rate between the Cuban pesos (CUP) and the American dollar altered some targets but without disruption;
- The extent to which the Project is achieving impact or progressing towards the achievement of impact usually require some time before becoming manifest; although this is the case also for this Project for certain items (i.e. more time and in-depth assessment is required to appreciate the perceived friendliness of the tools and financial incentives offered to farmers), impact is already manifesting in many forms thanks to favorable conditions present at Project start which would have justified a revision of Project design, considering that between design (2005) and implementation (2019) over 15 years elapsed;
- Generally the analysis of effects/impact encounters difficulties of "attribution", considering the number of donors and partners contributing to the same objective, either in mere co-financing or also for implementation; in this case, the contribution of the Project to the objective is undeniable but it should be read within the larger context of the CPP Programme which certainly paved the way during a long period of implementation – almost 15 years; in addition, the Project has partnered with many other projects which helped overcoming some of the difficulties of implementation and contributed to success.

Overall, the collection and triangulation of data and information can be considered appropriate to sustain findings, thus providing reasonable evidence of progress towards objectives; stakeholders were collaborative and able to contribute to the analysis of the context, confirm data and information and discuss outcomes achieved. Focus groups discussions and open sessions served also as exchanges of opportunities for stakeholders to interact and learn from reciprocal experiences.

2.7 Structure of the Report

The TE draft report was submitted on February, 6th, 2023, following the format suggested by the UNDP-GEF TE guidelines, with a description of the methodology, a description of the Project and findings organized around: i) Project Design/Formulation; ii) Project Implementation; iii) Project Results and Impact. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learnt complete the report. Consistently with requirements, certain aspects of the Project are rated, according to the rating scale of the Guidelines. Co-financing information is presented in the chapter under financial management; and the updated Tracking Tools/Core Indicators file is in annex. Based on comments received on 03 February, 2023, the final report was completed and delivered on 07, 2023. Comments addressed have been documented in an Audit Trail, prepared as a separate annex to the TE Report.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Development context

The [National Environment Strategy](#) (developed since 2007, with the current one covering the period 2021-2025) identifies land degradation as one of Cuba's five main environmental problems, with 76.8% of productive land affected by processes leading to desertification; in 14% of the productive lands affected by desertification and drought, land degradation conditions are extreme. 1 million ha are affected by salinity (14% of all agricultural land); 2.9 million ha by medium to strong erosion (43%); 2.7 million ha by bad drainage (40%); 1.6 million ha by high levels of compaction (24%) 2.7million by high levels of acidity (40%); and 4.7 million ha by low organic material content (70%) (CITMA 2000). These processes affect mechanized and manual cultivation, irrigated and rain fed crops, permanent and shifting agriculture. As a consequence, the functional integrity of the ecosystems throughout the landscape as well as the livelihoods and quality of life of a large number of Cubans are under severe pressure. This is aggravated by worsening climate change conditions and frequent droughts that affect the country.

The [CPP Programming Framework](#) document on [Sustainable Land Management \(SLM\)](#) – approved by the GEF under OP15 – for a total amount of 10 million USD with a government co-financing of 80 million USD - constitutes of five complementary projects - which have been implemented since 2008, with various degrees of development, each with a national and a local operativity (in different sites of Cuba, depending on the single child project) and involving different institutional partners, depending on the specific focus of the single child project but all together contributing to reducing land degradation in the country. The five projects are complementary and one builds on the other(s), even if their implementation is not necessarily sequential. This program is a paramount support for the implementation of the [National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought](#), originally approved in 2000.

The main anthropic causes of land degradation in Cuba are well explained in the CPP document, overall making the country largely more vulnerable to the effects of extreme climatic events such as landslides resulting from the torrential rainfall typically associated with hurricanes. The situation impacts on globally important biodiversity affected in the Greater Antillean Marine ecoregion within which Cuba lies, due to sediment inputs from degraded areas. Equally important the livelihoods and the quality of life of a large number of Cubans is affected, as agricultural productivity reduces and hydrological flows are disrupted affecting drinking water supplies and irrigation.

3.2 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted

The specific problem addressed by this Project 3, as a complement to the other four projects that constitute the CPP as a whole, is addressing structural, procedural and capacity issues that limit the ability of farmers and other land managers in Cuba to access financial incentives and effectively apply them in support of SLM. In addition, at local level, two sites of relevance to dry land forest ecosystems and cattle ranching areas are identified for specifically addressing land degradation processes: i) [the Guamuha region](#) (including parts of the provinces of Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus and Villa Clara) and ii) [the Cauto river basin](#) (including parts of the provinces of Granma and Holguín). Annex J of the CPP Document identifies the following [threats](#):

Table N.4 Root Causes, Barriers/Solutions

Root causes	Management issues/key barriers	Solutions: GEF Interventions (Barrier Removal Activities)
1. Shifting agriculture on steep slopes with poor soil and vegetation management, leading to sheet and gully erosion, deforestation and landslides		
Inadequate awareness among producers of implications of effects of agriculture on steep slopes and on possible alternatives	Limited incorporation of effective SLM considerations related to steep land agriculture into extension and environmental education programs -There is an on-going extension program in Cuba but this does not include SLM -FAO is supporting the updating of extension in some areas but this has limited scope	-Outreach and awareness programs at local levels -Strengthening of extension capacities

Short financial time horizon of small producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited development of incentive systems which specifically favor SLM Existing mechanisms provide funding for resource users (such as FONADEF, FNMA) but producers are not well prepared to develop projects linked to SLM using these funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new SLM funding mechanisms and incorporate SLM principles and guidance into existing mechanisms. Provision of training and advice to producers to use these funds in support of SLM.
Actions of producers are not adequately controlled or directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak enforcement There are provincial level enforcement services but these are poorly trained and equipped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of attractive land use alternatives
2. Use of inappropriate machinery for mechanized agriculture, resulting in compaction and erosion of low lying agricultural land with high productive potential		
Inadequate access to appropriate machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic limitations at national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating of key machinery, develop new funding mechanisms Strengthening of extension capacities on adequate use of machinery: Testing and demonstration of alternative technologies less dependent on machinery
3. Inadequate and inappropriate nutrient management related to crop needs and soil characteristics, resulting in acidification of soils by fertilizer inputs, and crop failure when fertilizers are inadequate or inappropriate (leading to increased pressure on alternative areas)		
Limited availability of organic fertilizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High cost and logistical difficulties of production and distribution, despite massive production of organic fertilizer in response to the collapse of external support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of the production and use of organic fertilizers under different biogeographical and LD scenarios, ensure that extensionists disseminate best practices
Limited awareness among producers of alternatives, such as rotation, green manure and compost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited incorporation of SLM considerations related to nutrient management in extension and environmental education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of additional support for the baseline program extending it to cover wider biogeographical scenarios and putting in place replication mechanism
Threat 4. Use of fire for land clearance and pest control in pastures, resulting in removal of the vegetative protection of the soil against raindrop impact and cross-surface flow, and loss of soil carbon and nitrogen		
Limited access to human, physical and financial resources needed for land preparation through alternative means.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate scope of incentive programs in relation to SLM Institute of Pastures has provincial level branches but is not updated in SLM techniques and has an incentive system that does not include these. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporation of guidelines, norms and procedures for channeling existing incentives to SLM practices for appropriate for different scenarios
Ineffective regulation of burning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited financial and physical resources at some local levels of agencies responsible for regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of local capacities in enforcement through cooperation agreements in fire vulnerable areas
5. Inappropriate use of irrigation , including the use of practices with low water efficiency and high drop impact (such as aspersion, instead of drip irrigation and conservation of natural soil water through mulching), poor design of irrigation systems and drainage in relation to natural topography, the location of irrigated agriculture in zones with limited aquifer resources, and the use of poor quality (saline) water, resulting in salinization and erosion of soils, and the depletion of scarce aquifer resources		
Limited awareness among producers of technical aspects of alternative irrigation and water management methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited incorporation of SLM related to irrigation and water management into extension and environmental education programs and poor use of systems for harvest rain water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of national and local level capacities to apply SLM and additional practices to capture rain water Demonstrate of high irrigation efficiencies in severely degraded land
6. Inappropriate crop selection , related to soil productive potential, relief, water and nutrient availability and climatic patterns, resulting in degradation of soil nutrient status, increased pressure on scarce water resources and increased soil erosion on steep slopes due to the inadequacy of soil cover		
Limited awareness among producers of crop alternatives in relation to site characteristics, and of implications of poor crop selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited incorporation of SLM considerations related to species selection into extension and environmental education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of producers on SLM, with emphasis on land evaluation. Promotion of campaigns to raise awareness of the subject.
7. Poor livestock management , including the free range grazing of animals and the use of excessive stocking levels, resulting in degradation of vegetation resources and the compaction of soils, reducing rates of aquifer recharge through infiltration and increasing cross-surface runoff which causes erosion		
Limited awareness among producers of alternatives to extensive ranching (such as pasture improvement, stabling, cut-and-carry and fodder banks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited incorporation of SLM considerations related to appropriate livestock raising practices into extension and environmental education programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of producers on SLM, with emphasis on the regionalization of grazing systems, Promotion of campaigns to raise awareness of the subject.
Ineffective regulation of livestock raising practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited financial and physical resources on the part of Government agencies responsible for regulation Regulations are defined by the law 179 that deals with the use of the soil, but this requires updated to the new circumstances. Inadequate development of regulations on range management Existing regulations fails to give special attention to livestock and forest activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of financial sustainability in the intervention areas. Preparation of proposals for the improvement of the regulatory system in grazing areas
8. Excessive use of monocultures , such as sugar cane and single-species timber plantations, resulting in Excessive demands on available soil nutrient and water reserves, and increase of erosive processes due to crop structure		

Limited awareness on the part of producers of alternatives to monocultures such as agro forestry, intercropping and successional agriculture	Limited incorporation of SLM considerations related to alternatives to monocultures in extension and environmental education programmes - Specialization on monocultures is rooted in culture of many productive enterprises	- Training of producers on SLM, Promotion of campaigns to raise awareness of the subject
9. Timber extraction, including the inadequate construction and maintenance of extraction routes, resulting in degradation of vegetation cover and the compaction and erosion of soils through the use of heavy machinery and the disruption of drainage patterns		
-Ineffective regulation of timber extraction	- Limited financial and physical resources on the part of Government agencies responsible for regulation Limited financial resources to update obsolete machinery for timber extraction, which does not contribute to soil conservation	- Development of conservation procedures in the intervention areas linked with financial support such as PSA in order to maintain forestry plantations
Limited knowledge among producers about the process of land degradation that are taking place as a consequence of timber extraction	- Inadequate incorporation of technical aspects related to LD in extension and environmental education programs -Limited financial and physical resources on the part	-Training on SLM in forestry areas -Development of regional proposals derived from the intervention sites

Specific threats in the intervention areas include: pressures on Villa Clara forests through conversion to pasture and following soil erosion, poor pasture management and fire; and water management issues in Cauto; the excessive use of monocultures and inappropriate crops and livestock for local conditions bring high levels of salinity, poor water quality, unsuitable for irrigation. Problems of drought, access and economic limitations and ecosystem fragility affect both areas, as well as extreme climatic conditions which is a nationwide felt problem.

At Project design, the baseline of investments to address LD already included funding and subsidy mechanisms, such as the National Forestry Development Fund (FONADEF) and the National Environment Fund (FNMA) as well as price and market guarantees for crops. Under the National Program for Soil Improvement and Conservation (PNMCS), it was calculated an average USD 32,200,000 per year for soil degradation; USD 189,000,000 per year for forestry protection and management; and USD 258,400,000 per year for the management of hydrological resources. These figures were already projected to increase by 5% per year. While significant, these investments were considered insufficient to address the magnitude and nature of the Cuban LD processes to ensure landscape-wide SLM and the complex inter-sector and interdisciplinary issues inherent in LD. **Barriers** identified to an efficient and effective delivering of SLM benefits can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Limited development of financing and incentive mechanisms for SLM
- ✓ Limited capacities for the administration and application of financing and incentives mechanisms at local level
- ✓ Limited capacities for disseminating and applying SLM practices
- ✓ Producers not well prepared to develop projects in order to obtain credit or financial support for SLM
- ✓ Farmers do not have adequate technical capacities to apply SLM practices.

3.3 Objectives, Outcomes, Results and Project's Strategy

The CPP Project 3 is implemented over a period of four years from March 2019 to March 2023; its original budget totals US\$ 37,475,000 out of which US\$ 1,425,000 from GEF, and US\$ 36,000,000 and USD 50,000 respectively from the GoC and from UNDP as in-kind contributions.

The **long-term Goal of the CPP Project** is that *“Reduced land degradation will allow Cuba to achieve its goals for sustainable development and increased food security”*; the **CPP Project Purpose** is that *“Cuba has the capacities and conditions for managing land in a sustainable manner that contributes to maintaining ecosystem productivity and functions”*. As mentioned, the CPP Project includes five child projects which are complementary and interlinked; therefore, the strategy of a single project must be assessed and evaluated within the overall strategy of the five projects which are:

Project 1 (Years 1-5; 2008-2013): Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory Systems & Awareness Building/Sustainable Land Management in Severely Degraded Ecosystems (in *Guantanamo*, aiming to halt land degradation and rehabilitate salinized and eroded areas in dry lands and xeric scrub regions, and in *Pinar del Rio*, on monitoring of extreme climatic events such as droughts and hurricanes). *This project is now closed and has successfully implemented SLM practices over more than 12.400 ha, according to the CPP reports.*

Project 2 (Years 3-7; 2015-2023): Capacity Building for Information Coordination and Monitoring Systems/SLM in Areas with Water Resource Management Problems (in *Havana-Matanzas* focusing on sustainable use of ground water, in *Pinar del Rio* on strengthening resistance to drought and other extreme climatic events in agricultural lands, in *Guantanamo* on replicating demonstration activities, conserving rainwater and testing high efficient irrigation systems, and in *Cauto River Basin* on Sustainable management of water resources, drought prevention and management of water reserves for SLM). *This project is now under Terminal Evaluation; training and communication activities, awareness raising and technical assistance actions allowed to improve the knowledge of both institutional actors and producers over an integrated management of hydric resources.*

Project 3 (Years 5-8; 2019-2023): Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms / Sustainable Land Management in Dry land Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas (in *Guamuhaya* focusing on improved SLM techniques in a pre-mountainous ecosystem, with dry forest & livestock, and in *Cauto River Basin* on sustainable management of dry forest resources, integrated forest farms and water regulations). *This Project is the focus of the present Terminal Evaluation.*

Project 4 (Years 7-10): Validation of SLM Models at Landscape Scale (in *Cauto River Basin* focusing on replication of demonstration activities in micro watersheds, and in *Guantanamo Guaso Basin* focusing on soil management and irrigation in agricultural land). *This project is about to start.*

Project 5 (Years 1-10, 2008-present): Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of Cuba CPP. *This project has been closed and monitoring actions are undertaken within the ongoing projects.*



The CPP Programme intends to build the country's capacities for SLM, increasing both the resources available for effective investments in this area and the actors' knowledge and capacities, with field demonstration of SLM practices in different selected sites for each of the five projects. To that end, this [Project 3](#) focusing on

financial mechanisms and its **objective** - contributing to the purpose and goal of the CPP Project - is that *“Producers are making use of financial mechanisms in support of SLM”*. The Project envisages **three Components/Outcomes** expected to jointly deliver **11 Outputs** (described in the Project Results Framework -PRF- matrix, reporting progress of implementation):

Component/Outcome 1: Mechanisms and capacities for sustainable financing consolidated at national level.

It focuses on developing, consolidating and applying mechanisms and capacities at national level for the sustainable financing of SLM practices, including: i) guidance and strategy material for the development, administration and application of financial incentive mechanisms, ii) financial mechanisms to support SLM for diverse conditions and beneficiaries (including developing technical recommendations for the modification of the procedures of existing financing mechanisms in order to increase their accessibility and application); iii) improved regulatory and technical instruments for certifying compliance with conditions for incentive mechanisms developed and applied; iv) training, guidance, and awareness-raising programmes.

Component/Outcome 2: Sustainable funding mechanisms demonstrated and validated at local level.

It focuses on developing capacities and fine-tuning financial incentive mechanisms and procedures to be applied at local level in the target areas of Guamuhaya and Cauto; it includes developing training, guidance and awareness raising programmes for the application of financial incentives generated under outcome 1; setting up programmes for developing capacities and awareness among producers in target areas for obtaining and applying SLM incentives.

Component/Outcome 3: Producers in Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas with technical capacities to take advantage of financial support for applying SLM practices.

It focuses on ensuring that producers in the two target areas have the technical capacities necessary to apply SLM production systems using the envisaged financial mechanisms; it includes developing and applying programmes for training institutional actors and producers on SLM; developing spatial plans for pilot sites/farms by producers and their organizations; establishing and managing three nurseries in target municipalities; validating and systematizing a menu of SLM options in the target areas.

The **Theory of Change** is not developed in the ProDoc as such but the strategy is well delineated within the whole CPP Programme, with each successive project commencement being subject to the materialization of certain conditions having been created by the precedent projects; Project 3 builds on Project 1, 2 and 5 which started before, and more specifically on: i) the increased awareness of SLM issues among institutional actors involved in the development and implementation of sustainable financing mechanisms through Project 1 (i.e. implementation of 34 reference and demonstrative sites of water, soil and forest all around the country; substantial increase in budget received by the PNMCS; new projects implemented in SLM through FONADEF; average annual investment by AZCUBA of USD 5,000 million estimated for the coming years at Project design in sugar cane lands; SLM included in the strategy of Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG); ii) the development of favorable conditions in the regulatory and policy framework facilitating the development and introduction of sustainable financing mechanisms through Project 1 (i.e. inclusion of specific objectives in the National Plan for Economic and Social Development to 2030). Project 5 is an overarching M&E of the entire programme and of how each single child project contributes to achieving the Programme’s objectives.

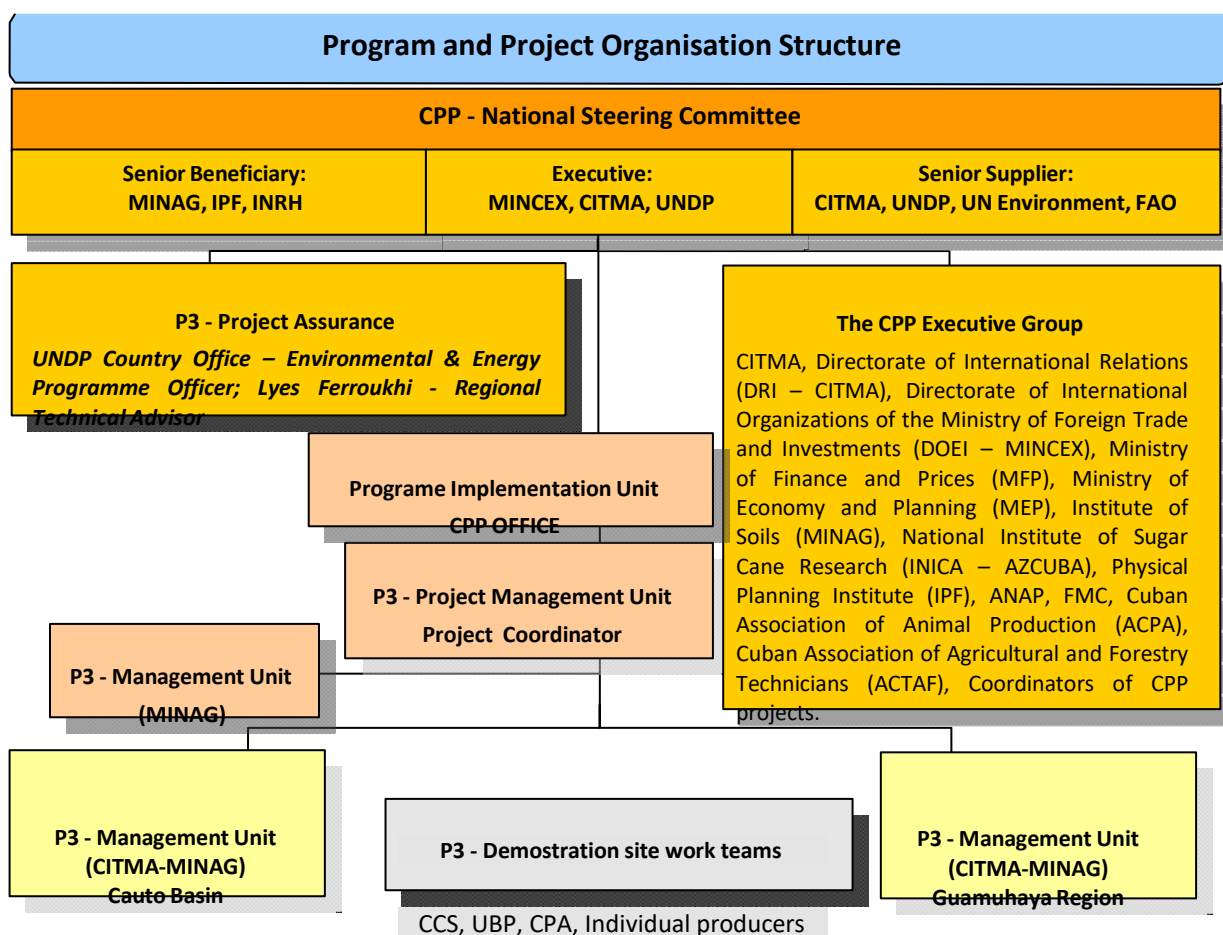
Overall the Theory of Change assumes that through the implementation of Project 3 institutions will increase their awareness, capacities and mechanisms to provide farmers with the financial, material and guidance support for SLM and that the modification of existing and the development of new financial mechanisms will favor the incorporation of sustainability considerations and an integrated landscape vision in SLM.

3.4 Project Key Partners and Implementation Arrangements

The Project is delivered through the **UNDP CO of Cuba** through the UNDP **NIM**, with **CITMA** being the **IP** and representing the GEF and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Focal Points in

Cuba. CITMA – through its [Environment Agency \(AMA\)](#) - is the National Coordinator of the GEF-CPP for all of its projects. The IP is responsible and accountable for managing this Project 3, including the M&E of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP resources. Also, the IP is responsible for: approving and signing the multiyear workplan; approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and, signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures. In terms of international collaboration, the Ministry of External Cooperation (MINCEX) represents the Government of Cuba.

UNDP is the [GEF IA](#) and is responsible for project oversight, including the achievement of project results, financial execution and the submission of reports according to UNDP and GEF requirements. As agreed on in the CPP Document (approved by the GEF Council in 2005), FAO acts as the technical cooperation agency for the CPP Project 3. The UNDP CO takes responsibility for standard GEF project cycle management services and oversight of project design and negotiation, for ensuring monitoring, periodic evaluations, troubleshooting, and proper use of UNDP/GEF funds and reporting to the GEF. UNDP provides high-level technical and managerial guidance and Quality Assurance through the [UNDP Regional Technical Advisor \(RTA\)](#), as needed and completely independently from the Project Management function. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing are carried out in compliance with established UNDP rules and procedures for NIM.



The project is located within the same [Project Implementation Unit \(PIU\)](#) constituted for the entire CPP, within AMA and is led by a [Project Director \(PD\)](#) who is contemporarily the director of the programme and of each single project; Project 5 establishes a coordination, M&E mechanism over the entire programme. A [Management Unit \(PMU\)](#) is established for daily management of project activities and is administered by a full time [Project Coordinator \(PC\)](#) directly responding to the PD. In addition to the original set up represented

in the above organigram which has never been updated, a technical organization has been nominated as coordinator for each of the three outcomes, specifically Outcome 1: BANDEC; Outcome 2: Ministry of Superior Education (MES); Outcome 3: the department of Forestry, Fauna and Flora (DFFFS) of MINAG; plus four Management Units have been constituted to facilitate national processes, that is 1) DFFFS; ii) Soil Unit of MINAG; iii) IAgri of MINAG; and iv) the National Institute of Water Resources (INRH). There are also sub-management units in each intervention areas, with a [Project Coordination Team](#) established, directed by a Province Coordinator, integrated by institutional representatives of provincial delegations of CITMA, MINAG, INRH, IPF, AZCUBA, as well as scientific and academic institutions, and entities representing the interests of local stakeholders such as the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), the Cuban Women's Federation, the Cuban Association of Animal Production and the Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians. Concrete actions at local level to promote SLM in the demonstration sites are carried out by Demonstration Site Work Teams, including local institutions and stakeholders such as community leaders, leader farmers, extension agents, researchers and local Government representatives. Additional mechanisms for ensuring the participation of specific local stakeholder groups are set up in each of the intervention areas.

Strategic guidance is provided by the [National Steering Committee \(NSC\)](#), which is the same entity for all the five child projects of the CPP Programme and which is jointly chaired by the Ministry for Foreign Trade and Investments (MINCEX), CITMA, UNDP and FAO. The NSC regularly meets once a year or more if required and is responsible for approving strategic interventions of the CPP and its projects, controlling the use of resources and approving reports and annual operational and financial plans. In addition, permanent guests of the NSC for this CPP Project 3 are the Ministry of Finance (MFP), the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), the Central Bank of Cuba (BCC), the National Statistic and Information Office, ANAP, FMC, technical coordinators of CPP projects, as well as other representatives of national or local entities as needed.

[The NSC contains three distinct roles:](#) i) The *Executive*: responsible for the Project and ensuring achievement of the project goal and objectives by overseeing the implementation progress and following UNDP/GEF Rules and Regulations; this role is assigned to UNDP CO; ii) The *Senior Supplier*: providing guidance regarding the technical feasibility of actions through CITMA, UNDP, UN Environment and FAO; iii) The *Senior Beneficiary*: representing the interests of those who will ultimately benefit from the project, it ensures the realization of results from the perspective of project beneficiaries; this role is assigned to the MINAG, IPF, INHR.

The **CPP Executive Group** is charged with supporting and advising the **NSC** in relation to the decisions to be adopted in the meetings; it is coordinated by CITMA and it is made up of technical representatives of MINCEX, MINAG, MFP, MES, AZCUBA, INRH, IPF, UNDP and FAO, as well of representatives of the ANAP and FMC. Its role is also to supervise the general progress of CPP and the projects within it; review periodic financial plans and activities and reports and present them to the NSC for approval; control and monitor financial and administrative implementation of the CPP and its projects and be responsible for ensuring that they take into account the interest and concerns of local levels.

3.5 Project timing and milestones

The Project Identification Form (PIF) was approved on Nov 10th, 2005; the Project document received the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) official endorsement on July 14th, 2017 and was signed on March 26th, 2019 which is the Project starting date. The Inception Workshop took place on May 8th, 2019, within the three months period since project's start, as required. The planned closing date is March 2023, after a 4-years period. Three Project Implementation Reports (PIR) have been prepared.

Most planned activities are covered and the Project is expected to complete operations within the deadline. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) was not required under GEF rules for medium-sized projects; notwithstanding a mid-term exercise has been implemented in September 2021 to assess performance towards the indicators and propose recommendations for eventual revisions. The TE is taking place in January-February 2023, with the International Consultant working remotely and the National Consultant in the field.

3.7 Main stakeholders: summary list

The Project supports the meaningful participation and inclusion of a large number of institutions, agencies and research centres, during the design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive collaborative management of activities. Management ensures that key stakeholders are involved early and throughout execution as partners for development. A large number of national and local government representatives is involved in recognition of the cross-cutting importance of LD and SLM within the landscape vision. Farmers and producers are directly involved at local level and as end beneficiaries of the promoted financial incentives. The academia, the non-government (NGOs) sector and the Media are also involved as appropriate and as partners in carrying out project activities or components thereof. This helps capitalize on stakeholders' comparative advantages, as well as to create synergies, strengthen a more accurate, holistic, and resilient construct of policy interventions, and improve legitimacy. These partnerships help ensure an equitable distribution of benefits and wide access to SLM incentives and benefits. This approach is consistent with the participation and inclusion of the human rights principle. The main stakeholders and partners are summarized in the table below (a more detailed list is provided in Annex 5 of the ProDoc):

Table N.5 Project Stakeholders and Partners

Type of Stakeholder	Role/Type of Collaboration
Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) including: -Directorate of Environment -Directorate of International Relations -National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP) -Institute of Meteorology (INSMET)	Responsible for directing, executing and controlling the policy of the State and Government in scientific and technological activities, environmental policies and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. CITMA is responsible for the national coordination of the CPP in all of its phases and projects and for supervising processes of environmental evaluation of each proposed investment. Through the Directorate of Environment , it controls the implementation of the SNAP, the National Strategy for Environmental Education and the National Monitoring System. Through the Directorate of International Relations , it maintains close links between the Conventions in Biological Diversity, Climate Change, CITES and Ramsar, in order to promote synergies between them. CNAP is a member of the PMU and contributes experience in SLM in PAs.
Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) including: -Institute of Soils (IS) - National Directorate of Flora and Fauna -IAgric	It directs and executes Government policies related to the use, conservation and improvement of soils; property and possession of agricultural and forestry lands; conservation, management and rational use of forest resources and wildlife; mechanization and irrigation of production programmes and generally agricultural production activities. MINAG, with its delegations at provincial and municipal levels, is a key implementation partner, in terms of local facilitation of access to actors, networks and resources, as well as the integration of new and improved instruments for sector planning during and after the project. Supervision and control of the execution of the Project in accordance with institutional roles. IS promotes sustainable agricultural practices and is responsible for M&E of soils and water quality for agriculture,
Environment Agency (AMA) in CITMA	Supervises and controls the execution of the Project in accordance with institutional roles, and is responsible for the facilitation of operational procedures with UNDP and co-financing sources. The Director presides the Project's NSC.
National Institute of Water Resources (INRH)	Responsible for the implementation of national water policy. It contributes to the coordination and implementation of the Project. Creation and strengthening of technical and professional capacities, for improved use and management of water resources and infrastructure. Strengthening of information and monitoring systems, dissemination, training of stakeholders, implementation of technologies for water harvesting.
Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investments (MINCEX)	It coordinates and advice on the instrumentation and coherence with policies of State and Government related to economic collaboration. Responsible for ensuring that the Project is implemented in accordance with Government approaches and policies.
Ministry of Finance and Prices (MFP)	It plays an important role in relation to decisions on the assignation of financial resources to SLM incentives, and the use of price and fiscal incentives. Emitted Resolution 217 of 31/5/2013 approving the provision of financing through transfer of current funds to State enterprises, Basic Units of Cooperative Production, Cooperatives of Agricultural Production and Cooperatives of Credit and Services. Oversight of financing mechanisms Member of the Coordination Board of the project.
Ministry of Economy and Planning	Member of the Coordination Board of the Project
Central Bank of Cuba (BCC) – Banco de Crédito y Comercio	It plays an important role in relation to decisions on the assignation of financial resources to SLM incentives, and the use of price and fiscal incentives.

Institute of Physical Planning (IPF)	IPF operates at national, provincial and municipal level for the planning of territorial zoning, approval of microzoning, production of tourism development plans. It contributes to adequate territorial planning taking into account SLM considerations as well as to the harmonization of development and land use plans.
Ministry of Superior Education (MES)	It leads and executes the education policy up to pre-university level; responsible for increasing capacities and knowledge on environmental conservation. In the project, it provides human resources for carrying out training activities in local communities.
Territorial delegations of CITMA and Environment Units (UMA), of MINAG, of INRH, IPF and AZCUBA as well as scientific and academic institutions	Involved as members of Local Coordination Teams, they coordinate Project activities with provincial actors and supervise and control the use of Project resources. They ensure the correct implementation and control of SLM actions related to the conservation and sustainable use in the Project areas; participate in the development of economic incentives related to the use of forest and agricultural goods and services; contribute to create technical SLM capacities.
Territorial delegations of MINAG	They participate in the development of economic incentives related to the use of forest goods and services, including coffee; contribute to the creation of technical capacities for SLM.
Provincial Governments	Support to Project actions, coordination and information to different provincial actors. Support to the process of decision-making. Consolidation and strengthening of integrated territorial management.
National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP)	It motivates the farming community to carry out conservation and preservation of natural resources and the implementation of SLM principles. Extension and use of its training centres for SLM.
Individual farmers in the two intervention areas	Typically, they are highly dependent on their own resources and have a direct relation with natural resources through the exploitation of soil, water and forests, participate in the conservation of biological diversity (fauna and flora) and also in actions related to water and air pollution.
Cooperative members present in the two intervention areas	They tend to depend on their own resources but are covered by State benefits such as credits, insurance, social security and (in the case of State farm workers) salaries. Their vulnerability is similar to that of individual farmers in relation to their conditions of territoriality and sensibility to the conditions of their surroundings; however they are more protected due to the social nature of their property and the actions of the State. They also have a direct relation with natural resources through the exploitation of soil, water and forests; participate in the conservation of biological diversity (fauna and flora) and in the industrial or semi-industrial processing of agricultural products which are directly related to water and air pollution.
Leader farmers	They are exposed to ecosystem vulnerability but however capable of proposing, applying and multiplying their own or received initiatives. They have a well-developed capacity to bring other stakeholders together and have technical credibility, despite having limited economic resources for the multiplication of their actions and being faced by conditions of difficult access (montane and premontane), extreme climatic conditions and natural resource degradation.
Community leaders	They tend to be highly exposed to ecosystem conditions in terms of access, climate and natural resource degradation. They have a well-developed capacity to bring other stakeholders together and have political credibility, despite having insufficient training to carry out certain technical roles. Their relationship with natural resources is indirect, as it affects the development of human and material resources for the appropriate exploitation of soils, water and forests and they are often faced with stakeholders with a limited capacity to understand impacts on natural resources.
Extension agents	They are vulnerable to ecosystem conditions in relation to access, climate and natural resource degradation. They have technical credibility and capacity to demonstrate technologies despite having limited economic resources and the fact that at times the people they deal with have inadequate capacity to assimilate new technologies. Their relations with natural resources are indirect, but they have a high degree of influence on farmers in relation to sustainable resource use.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Project Design/Formulation

Project design is relevant and appropriate; it focuses on developing and implementing financing mechanisms for SLM within the CPP Framework which includes five complementary projects, each one contributing to the objective and purpose of the CPP Programme; it takes a capacity development approach to strengthen awareness and capacities to access and implement financing mechanisms for SLM; as such, it represents a unique opportunity in the country to support the development of the agricultural economy, with the initiative stemming from the environmental sector and with the objective of being environmentally sustainable. Chapter 4.4.1.1. Relevance below documents the alignment of the Project with GEF, UNDP as well as with Government priorities and strategies. Building upon and linking with other initiatives, activities defined contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Financial incentives are designed and targeted in such a way as to optimize the generation of **Global Environmental Benefits (GEB)**, by responding specifically to the nature and magnitude of current flows of costs and benefits. Through modifications to design and eligibility criteria for incentives, and the harmonization of approaches and criteria between institutions and instruments, farmers and institutions will apply an ecosystem approach to SLM rather than considering soil, water and forest resources separately. At Project design, 20,407 ha were supposed to be subject of SLM in production systems, resulting in: i) 4% reduction in soil erosion rates (Indicator 3.4); ii) Reduced GHG emissions from crop and livestock activities; iii) Increased accumulation of soil organic matter; iv) Sequestration of carbon; v) Maintenance of habitats for biodiversity in the agricultural landscape.

4.1.1 Results Framework Analysis: project logic and strategy, indicators

The CPP lays out the drivers of land degradation in Cuba, the problem to be addressed and its root causes. The approach is solid and has maintained relevance over the years through the envisaged implementation of 5 mutually reinforcing and mutually complementing projects. The specific strategy for Project 3 is well aligned within the entire CPP and comprehensive envisaging actions at both national and local levels and through the involvement of a large number of government agencies and institutions, directly and indirectly involved in SLM within the comprehensive landscape vision. Project 3 is aligned with the GEF LD focal area LD-3: Integrated Landscapes: reduce pressure on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape and with the following Focal Area outcomes: **3.1** Support mechanisms for SLM in wider landscapes established; **3.2** Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities; **3.3** Increased investments in integrated landscape management.

The **PRF (see Annex E)** is clearly designed; it comprises three outcomes corresponding to three components, all contributing to the objective and purpose of the CPP Programme, overall expecting to deliver 11 outputs, reasonably well connected through logical linkages and designed to help Cuba take a coordinated approach to SLM through the development of financial incentives at national and local levels.

The **First Component/Outcome** aims at developing and consolidating mechanisms and capacities at national level for the sustainable financing of SLM practices. It includes well defined **Outputs** to: produce guidance and strategy materials for the development, administration and application of incentive mechanisms, i.e. a manual to be used for existing and dispersed financial mechanisms to be updated as necessary and as new instruments are developed; strategy documents to ensure the magnitude of the incentives are proportional to the scale and value of the environmental benefits generated both at national and global level, that resources are available to cover the payments and that the level of payments motivates and enable resource users to carry out management changes as desired (**output 1.1**); develop and apply financial mechanisms for SLM for diverse conditions and beneficiaries, which includes modified administrative provisions for existing financing mechanisms (i.e. FONADEF, PNMCS, FNMA) in favor of SLM but considering that they generally provide positive externalities for environmental sustainability and productivity but that may also represent

a cost to the producers adopting SLM practice and which merits recognition and compensation; at Project design it was also including: i) the National carbon finance mechanism as a new fund to which the Project was supposed to contribute to define administrative arrangements and its relation with the other funding mechanisms, and ii) the contribution to developing a scheme for Payment for Environmental Services (PES) – to be administered by INRH with funds to be provided by the FNMA (CITMA) to reward resource managers for improvements in water quality. In parallel, the Project was also to support MINAG, BANDEC and MFP in developing credit mechanisms directly aimed at producers applying SLM practices; support studies for identifying specific needs and opportunities for contributing to the attractiveness of SLM by reducing duty paid and key items of equipment and inputs as well as develop improved procedures and conditions for insurance of producers practicing SLM (**output 1.2**); develop and apply improved regulatory and technical instruments for certifying compliance with conditions for incentive mechanisms (**output 1.3**); develop and implement training, guidance and awareness-raising programs (**output 1.4**). **This outcome operates at national level and is a major contributor to the objective.**

The **Second Component/Outcome** focuses on: developing capacities in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas for the delivery and use of sustainable financing mechanism, including fine-tuning financial incentive mechanism and procedures for applying them at local level in target areas (**Output 2.1**); provide specific training and guidance and awareness-raising in the two target areas, under the supervision and coordination of the MES, hoping that capacity development will be institutionalized and survive Project’s end (**output 2.2**); develop capacities and awareness among producers in the target areas in applying for, administering and implementing the available incentives in the context of the specific LD in the target areas (**output 2.3**). **This component fine-tunes and adapts the national level operativity to the specific conditions of the local target areas at institutional level.**

The **Third Component/Outcome** focuses on: ensuring that producers in the intervention areas have the technical capacities necessary to apply SLM production systems that will be the object of the financial mechanisms (training, extension events, pilot site demonstrations, ground-testing of technologies); it involves developing and applying programmes for training and awareness-raising for institutional actors and producers on SLM to ensure sustainability and replication (**output 3.1**); supporting producers and their organizations in developing spatial plans for pilot sites/farms (**output 3.2**); establishing and managing three nurseries in target municipalities (**output 3.3**); validating and systematizing a menu of SLM options in the target areas (**output 3.4**). **This component focuses on creating and strengthening the capacities of farmers and producers to access and implement the financial mechanisms and to apply SLM practices.**



Two Projects sites are chosen as intervention areas in the agricultural and forestry sectors to develop and test SLM practices, including reforestation, both as **demonstrative and replication sites**: i) the *Cuenca del Cauto*, in the East of the country: including two provinces Granma (with 5 municipalities and 4 demonstrative sites) and Holguín (with 5 municipalities and one demonstrative site); and ii) the mountain *Macizo de Guamuhaya*, in the centre of the country: including the

provinces of Cienfuegos (one municipality and two demonstrative sites), Sancti Spíritus (three municipalities and two demonstrative sites) and Villa Clara (one municipality and three demonstrative sites). Overall these two areas involve a total of about 2.286 ha. (**Annex F** summarizes activities undertaken in these areas).

The Project objective and the three outcomes are clearly formulated. Outputs generally flow logically. Overall, **eighteen Indicators** are identified: two at objective level and the rest divided among the three outcomes; mid-term and final targets have been identified for almost all indicators. Most targets are

quantitative targets; rarely a qualitative indicator is expressed; therefore, interest focuses on assessing the level of budget channeled through existing or new financing mechanisms, the number of producers involved but there is no expression of indicators relative to the satisfaction of the beneficiaries; land degradation specific indicators are included in outcome three for the erosion rate of the two intervention areas and naturally to be assessed through the evaluation of the tracking tools. The [Inception Workshop](#) validated design, assuming responsibility for the establishment of the baseline of some of the indicators.

The [SMART analysis](#) (whether indicators are sufficiently Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) takes into account the findings of a mid-term assessment exercise undertaken in September 2021 which led to recommendations for the revision of the PRF; although these recommendations have never translated into a revision of the PRF for the complex and lengthy GEF procedure eventually required (resubmitting the ProDoc to the GEF Council as this would have been considered a major change to the PRF), they have been widely accepted by both UNDP and management and have guided the continuation of the implementation of the Project since that moment. It is understood that some of these recommendations would in fact not represent major changes but a needed adjustment to the reality of an economic, policy and regulatory environment which had importantly modified in the period between Project design and Project implementation. All considered, the SMART analysis reveals that:

- **Objective level: Indicator 1** expresses the number of beneficiaries at national level benefitting from at least one financing scheme and expresses a final target of at least 35% of them being women; the mid-term exercise evaluated that this target was overly ambitious considering that, according to the Cuban Yearly Demography only 20% of the rural population in the country is represented by women in working age; it proposed to reduce the gender target from 35% to 25%; this TE agrees to effectively consider this information in the final assessment of the performance towards the indicator. **Indicator 2** does not pose specific problems and the suggestion to increase the target does not appear necessary.
- **Outcome 1: Indicator 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3** are major contributors to the objective. The suggestion of the mid-term exercise to increase the target of indicator 1.1 appears not necessary; instead it is of outmost importance to address the problem of indicator 1.2 where there is a clear problem of design in having designated a target amount for FNMA in the order to 100 million instead of one million, considering that for all country it disposes of a yearly amount of 5.6 million USD/year; finally, indicator 1.3 expressed an unattainable target which included two new financial incentives which were not under the direct control of management (see further explanation in the section of effectiveness and in Annex E- PRF) but which creation and implementation depended on other institutions/projects; overall these three indicators appear to have been not enough ambitious at Project design or at a minimum that Project design should have been validated and adjusted during the Inception phase; Indicator **1.4** well specifies the desired level of awareness to be reached for national institutions about financial mechanisms in support of SLM; a target could have been included for gender representativity and roles.
- **Outcome 2: Indicators 2.1, 2.2. and 2.3** reflects the situation expressed under outcome 1 but at local level; Indicator **2.1** refers to the number of producers directly benefitting from at least one financing mechanism; the gender component is not expressed at planning but management records the data; calculations errors in the baseline, never been corrected in reports, are noted for both indicator 2.1 and 2.2. Indicator 2.1 does not include a gender target but management still correctly records the gender representativity; a gender target could have been included for the trainings and/or the number of women in charge in the various institutions for indicator 2.3.
- **Outcome 3: 9 indicators** are expressed under Outcome 3 focusing on the two intervention areas. **3.1** is not SMART as indicated by the mid-term exercise, as it assumed that the total number of producers would not change (which in any case was not expressed as a baseline data); assessing the percentage increase is inconsistent as it would not change proportionally in relation to the fluctuations of producers the number of whom greatly increased during development; this is a design mistake which expressed a percentage without expressing nor requesting to identify a baseline. The mid-term exercise recommended to increase the targets for **Indicator 3.2** – which this TE considers not necessary; instead, the TE agrees to adjust the gender requirement considering the rural reality, as already expressed for indicator 01. Some of the other

indicators appear to have been either wrongly designed or not enough ambitious, i.e. 3.3 considering the agricultural target; and 3.7 which considered for Guamuaya only the province of Villa Clara.

Overall, Project construction is solid and was valid at design stage; yet, the inception phase failed to validate and adjust design to the new reality of the country and considering actions already implemented under the CPP programme.

4.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

The [Risk Management section](#) of the Project Document well identifies risks, three of which are of an environmental nature and are included also in the original SESP; measures to minimize them are identified and successive analysis during implementation deleted or added risks as appropriate. As per standard UNDP requirements, risks have been updated and systematically recorded in the UNDP Atlas. [Assumptions within the PRF are identified](#): they are related with risks, are all pertinent but could have been defined in further detail to better serve as a guide to evaluate the capacity of the Project to produce effects and impacts.

The [Social and Environmental Screening Process \(SESP\)](#) was carried out for the entire CPP OP15 umbrella programme; the specific screening for this Project 3 was poorly done at Project start. Three types of environmental risks, with corresponding mitigation measures, are identified – all considered to be Low Risk except for the climate change which changed from the initial Low to Moderate Risk; these are:

Risk 1: Two pilot sites are located in the Natural Protected Landscape “Hanabanilla” (Protected Area), and the intervention areas of the project coincide with the buffer zones of several PAs (e.g. Natural Protected Landscape “Aguacate-Boca de Carreras” and Fauna Reserva “Delta del Cauto”). The Project could have potentially led to habitat fragmentation. **Mitigation:** actions have been conducted under the full supervision of the National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP) and in full conformity with the relative PA Management Plan and the site specific management plans.

Risk 2: The project involves plantation development and reforestation activities that could lead to the spread of invasive species. **Mitigation:** Management committed to use only native species and follow the management measures in place for each site. Species selection, management practices and location are in accordance with the protocols of the Forestry Directorate and in no cases will plantations be established in ecologically sensitive areas.

Risk 3: Cuba is in general highly exposed to climate change risks and these may in some cases exceed the coping range of the proposed production systems. **Mitigation:** The production practices promoted by the project and supported by the proposed financial mechanisms incorporate provisions for resilience to climate change, including the use of high tree densities in cropping and livestock systems, and diverse canopy structures.

As UNDP safeguard policy, assessments and management plans are mandatory for UNDP projects, the PIR 2021 recommended their development. In January 2022, management attended a workshop organized through a EU funded project in Cuba (“*Coastal Resilience*”), where staff were trained in the current UNDP SES 2021 Policy. Henceforth, the Project engaged the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (**FLACSO CUBA**) of the University of Havana to develop the required assessments and documents, which was completed in May 2022. The Project now has a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), a revised Gender Action Plan and developed a SESP template; among the new risks identified in the revised SESP, there is the Coronavirus which is also identified in PIR 2021, the limited access of women to benefits and opportunities and the increased consumption of water; for the purpose of this TE, they are included here below in a summarized risk table, with TE comment.

Table N.6 Project Risks and Management Measures

PROJECT RISKS					
Description	Type	Impact & Probability	Management Measures ³	Owner	Status & Comments from the TE
Decline in policy commitment to the use of economic incentives to support SLM	Political	P=2 I=4	Actions under Outcome 1 focus on raising and maintaining awareness of the potential of economic instruments to generate and internalize environmental benefits of national and global importance. Actions under Outcome 3 demonstrate to policy makers the effectiveness of incentives in supporting the generation of nationally-important environmental benefits.	CITMA, MEP	-Identified at Project start, the risk was minimized by the commitment expressed and maintained at highest political levels (P rated as 2); the contrary would have reverted quite negatively as economic incentives are central to the Project's logic, and decisions on their use highly dependent on central policy commitment (I rated as 4)
The availability of financial resources for incentives may be affected by variations in the budgets of individual institutions.	Financial	P=3 I: 3	Under Outcome 1, the Project ensures that a wide range of incentive models are available to producers in order to limit the implications of reductions in the availability of resources through any of them.	CITMA MEP	Identified at Project start, the risk was minimized (P rated as 3) as the bases for Government revenue streams have been increasingly diversified and buffered against external shocks. I rated as 3: the use of diversified incentive models, including private and public sources, provided flexibility and adaptation to fluctuations in individual sources.
Decree/Law 17 of Nov. 2020 readjusted the exchange rate to the dollar from 1 CUP to 1 USD to 24 CUP to 1 USD; this could affect the amount of national co-financing and the cost of local service providers to the Project.	Financial	P= I=	The Project is monitoring this closely, and no impacts have materialized so far.	CITMA MEP	Assessment indicates that no impact materialized; co-financing commitments are honored and the flows of financial incentives is higher than the target so that there is no issue of evidence.
The USA blockage in Cuba impacts on economic and commercial activity, causing a reduction in state budget and a rise in inputs prices, machinery, food, and agroforestry products. The energy crisis exacerbated by the Ukraine war leads to shut down of thermoelectric plants, and rise in international oil prices and goods, including increased costs of freight prices. Fuel is rationed, limiting movements to territories and to conduct oversight missions, even the TE	Financial and Operational	P= I= P= I=	-The measures taken to minimize this impact in areas of intervention is to make greater use of territories resources where intervention areas are located and promoting synergy between GEF-UNDP projects to carry out joint activities and equitable use of resources. -Project activities are revised to focus and prioritize on objectives that do not depend on transport and adjust schedules of operations.	CITMA MEP	Management response is creative and effective; notwithstanding difficulties, agreements with import companies allowed purchased of planned items; the full involvement of provincial and municipal teams allowed savings on fuel, still ensuring support to the producers and end beneficiaries. -The TE is organized with the international consultant operating home-based and the national consultant possibly visiting some of the project intervention areas.
Producers' receptivity to participate in economic incentive schemes may be constrained by concerns over difficulties with compliance and administration, and conflicts between env. And productive priorities	Operational	P=2 I: 4	Under Outcome 1, the Project invests in tailoring financial instruments to farmers' needs and conditions. Under Outcome 3, it develops farmer's awareness over the benefits of participating in incentive schemes, and the potential for compatibility between financial, productive and environmental benefits.	CITMA, MINAG	The probability of occurrence was rated 2 and Impact as 4. The risk was minimized by an active strategy of communication and awareness raising and tailoring financial investments to farmers' needs and conditions. No longer an issue

³ Changed from mitigate to manage. Projects cannot mitigate risks; they can only manage them.

PROJECT RISKS					
Description	Type	Impact & Probability	Management Measures ³	Owner	Status & Comments from the TE
The Coronavirus is identified as a critical health risk in PIR 2020. Delays of implementation are likely.	Operational/ Health		Social isolation measures implemented by the Government. Management response is to engage in tele and remote work; further involvement of territorial teams and efficient use of local resources; establishment of systematic call-conferences	CITMA Heath authority	-COVID 19 pandemic is identified as a risk in PIR 2020 and in the revised SESP conducted by FLACSO. Operational drawbacks are minimized by the use of video-conferences and a larger investment in the action of the territorial teams; other state institutions have been used to bring material to the territories. The instability of the internet connection remains challenging, even in the capital city.
If inadequately carried out, the location of some proposed activities within protected areas might result in increased pressure on PA values. <i>Risk is identified in original SESP as Risk 1 & revised SESP as Risk3 and 6).</i>	Environmental	P=2 I=4	The proposed actions will be carried in full conformity with the management plans of the PAs in question, and under the close supervision of the National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP)	CITMA, MINAG	-Some project activities are located in PAs with the possibility of an adverse environmental impact (I=4) on global important biodiversity which is however minimized (P=2) by the active involvement of the relevant institutions and conformity of activities with management plans for the PAs.
The project will involve Plantation development and reforestation , with the potential to displace natural ecosystems and contribute to the spread of invasive species (<i>original SESP Risk 2 and revised SESP Risk 4</i>)	Environmental	P=2 I=4)	Native species will be used for plantation development and reforestation. Species selection, management practices and location will be in accordance with the protocols of the Forestry Directorate and in no cases will plantations be established in ecologically sensitive areas.	CITMA, MINAG	-Plantation and reforestation were planned and occurred but the risk of an environmental impact (I=4) of the spread of invasive species was contained by the careful use of native and selected species.
Climate change related droughts may cause losses of crops and herds, low yields and productivity, a negative effect on soil and biodiversity, and on its conservation. This directly impacts the economy of the farmer and of the country.	Environmental	P= I=	Project has proposed following measures to mitigate this impact: i) Use of early warning system for decision making; ii) Increase of structural measures for soil conservation and improvement; iii) Use of animal and plant species resistant to extreme conditions; iv) Implement more efficient irrigation systems; v) Reforestation of watersheds and water recharge areas.	CITMA MINAG	Climate change remains a high risk. Measures taken to minimize impact are effective. The use of the Early Warning System includes the organization of a WhatsApp system to directly advise the producer.
Limited access of women to Project's benefits and opportunities. sustainable land management, financing producers, climate change and local development with social equity.	Social		The risk is managed through specialized events, and publications to share and train on gender issues/ equality, including financing goals for rural women producers and their equitable participation in training and decision-making.	CITMA Provincial teams	A Gender Action Plan has been prepared too late in Project implementation. Gender equality is not an issue at national level or in management but it remains a subject to be considered at rural level.
Increased water consumption. during the implementation of the last project of the program P4, planned to start in 2023.			A Water Savings plan will be prepared for each implementation site and based on the experiences of Project 2 focused on water management (training, rainwater harvesting systems, wastewater reuse, installation of timed valves and other technological solutions for efficient irrigation		Water Saving measures are included in the Management Plans developed for each demonstrative and replication areas. Sustainable solutions are included, with water balance, installation of counter meter where possible, training and TA. A Financial Incentive to promote water saving has been implemented in Mayabeque and is ready to be replicated throughout the country.

4.1.3 Planned stakeholder participation and Gender responsiveness of Project design

Project design promotes a significant [participation of diverse stakeholders](#) in all phases of the project's cycle, including capacity development activities, training, design of outputs as well as in validating proposed actions, encouraging an enabling environment for active engagement in environmental and natural resources management. CITMA and other key governmental bodies (MINAG, INRH and MINCEX) are members of the NSC of the CPP, and thereby also have the opportunity to approve its strategic interventions, control the use of resources and approve reports and annual operational and financial plans. More technical entities of the Government (e.g. Directorate of International Collaboration, Directorate of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investments, Institute of Soils of MINAG, National Institute of Sugar Cane Research of AZCUBA Enterprise Group (formerly Ministry of Sugar MINAZ), Center of Hygiene and Water Quality of INRH and Physical Planning Institute are able to provide technical inputs through their participation in the Executive Group, whose role is also to supervise the general progress of CPP and the projects within it; review periodic financial plans and activities and reports and present them to the NSC for approval; control and monitor financial and administrative implementation of the CPP and its projects and be responsible for ensuring that they take into account the interest and concerns of local levels. At the local level, the principal actors in the two intervention areas are the provincial delegations of CITMA, MINAG, INRH, IPF and AZCUBA, as well as scientific and academic institutions.

The long list of institutions detailed in the ProDoc clearly shows the transversality of actions meant to reduce land degradation and the importance given to interinstitutional collaboration; this is reconfirmed at Inception with a long list of participants in the national level workshop and the two local level inception workshops. Interviews with MINCEX confirms this institution takes responsibility for ensuring that appointed institutions meaningfully participate. Decision-making is structured in a way to ensure inclusiveness and that all stakeholders receive satisfactory levels of benefits and equity, which is not only respectful of human rights but also a critical element of sustainability.

GEF-financed projects require [gender equality](#) to be integrated in project design and implementation (2014 report on Gender Mainstreaming in GEF). UNDP has translated the GEF commitment on gender integration and mainstreaming in its own UNDP Gender Strategy 2014-2017, which provides guidance on how to integrate gender in all UNDP supported activities. The UNDP Gender Marker for this Project was originally rated as GEN2: *Gender equality as significant objective*. At design, it was noted that the country has favorable conditions for [gender mainstreaming](#), i.e. women substantially participate in social and productive areas, making up 50% of the labor force and 60% of technical personnel, including in the agricultural sector; in some areas, such as urban agriculture, women even predominate; and they have a particularly relevant participation in the forestry nurseries. Still, the Project aimed at enhancing women's participation in forest and cattle farms in the pilot sites and intervention areas, especially engaging poor women and any who may be insufficiently included in resource management and in the distribution of corresponding benefits. The Project intended to be gender responsive, with actions and the SLM models complying with the provisions of the [Forestry Sector Gender Strategy](#) and ensuring the continued high level participation of women in productive activities and decision-making roles. The ProDoc does not include a gender analysis and plan but establishes requirements to prepare them and draft mandatory Annual Project Reports to track the UNDP Gender Marker as well as to monitor other gender indicators.

4.1.4 Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

Linkages with other projects and activities is a main objective of this project and of the CPP as a whole. MINCEX and AMA play an important role in ensuring interinstitutional collaboration at national and international levels. Established collaborative links have not only reinforced interinstitutional collaboration and strengthened their SLM actions but in many cases have allowed to overcome some of the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions with different types of support.

Table N.7 Linked projects and initiatives

Project Title	Status	Source	Project Summary
BASAL Project	Closed	EU & COSUDE	Implemented by UNDP and funded by European Union and Swiss Development Cooperation (COSUDE). BASAL demonstrative sites got the SLM category and could access financial mechanisms managed by Project 3. Synergetic activities for consultancies, workshops and environmental education activities, particularly for sustainable agriculture and use of satellite imagery to improve irrigation efficiency.
ECOVALOR “Incorporating Multiple Environmental Considerations and their Economic Implications into Management of Landscapes Forests and Production Sectors in Cuba	Ongoing	GEF	Started in December 2018, it aims at generating environmental benefits, identifying financial mechanisms for ecosystem services and demonstrating sustainable productive practices. Implemented in areas of interest of the CPP and Project 3 (Pinar del Río, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Las Tunas, Holguín and 30 coastal municipalities), it is relevant for its common focus on financial instruments, training and visibility. It contributed to achieve that the economic value of ecosystem services was included in the environmental legal framework, especially the Natural Resources and Environment Law and related laws. Participated in exchange of knowledge events.
BIOFIN	Ongoing	GEF/UNDP	A world collaborative Alliance to mobilize resources for biodiversity conservation. Led by CITMA, with collaboration of ONEI, MEP and Central Bank, Cuba joined in 2016, it has prepared the National Programme for Biodiversity 2016-2020 also in support of the National Plan to Combat Climate Change and to achieve the SDGs. The two projects interchanged knowledge and experience.
A Landscape Approach to the Conservation of Threatened Mountain Ecosystems (Linking Landscapes)	Closed	UNDP/GEF	Common interest in biodiversity conservation of natural ecosystems as well as anthropic ecosystems (agro-ecosystem). Project 3 targets areas which were jointly selected as demonstration or replication sites, specifically for Guamuhaya and which are complementary for linking landscapes. Exchange of information, experiences and lessons learnt; management /production systems are coordinated to maximize complementarity and optimize flows of environmental services and other benefits in the common areas; interactions with local/regional institutions are coordinated to maximize cost-effectiveness and consistency. Logistical support offered in Villa Clara.
GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP)	Ongoing	GEF	Chayote” Park in Cumanayagua, Cienfuegos y La Esperanza farm de Trinidad, Sancti Spiritus work together with Project 3 to inform about environmental subjects, i.e support with audio-visual and digital media granted by Project 3 to “las Margaritas” farm, in Chayote area.
WWF ZAZA Project	Ongoing	WWF	Shared territorial coordination, facilitating synergy. WWF project donated inputs to La Esperanza farm, de Trinidad and demonstrative site of Project 3 to water harvesting, and facilitated transport.
Priority co-financing of PNMCS and FONADEF to Project 3 in Granma Province.	Ongoing	PNMCS – FONADEF	In Granma province, PNMCS facilitated 150,000 CUP for La Victoria farm and La Laguna (UBPC 14 of July in Jiguani) for water channels cleaning. FONADEF facilitated 104,892 CUP for the Fuente de Salvacion farm, Jiguani for forestry activities. PNMCS facilitated 800,000 CUP for Bufalina de Cauto Cristo farm to improve the use of water efficiency.
In Granma Province: channeling financial resources for SLM activities	Ongoing		Support /collaboration for Estévez Ruz farm (649 CUP); rent of machineries for UBPC “14 de junio” (17,249 CUP); for erosion calculation with the forestry services (120,000.45 CUP); facilitated arrival of an electrical water pump for demonstrative sites (3.549,64 CUP); purchase of material for UBPC “14 de Julio” (13,564.79 CUP)
In Holguín Province, FONADEF priority co-financing	Ongoing		Co-financing of 644.380 CUP for fire control, silviculture, promotion, visibility, training in demonstrative and replication sites of Project3.
In Sancti Spiritus Province: channeling financial resources for SLM activities	Ongoing		Machinery renting for land preparation through the Agroforestry firm of the province (1.199.387,31 CUP)
In Villa Clara Province: channeling financial resources for SLM activities			UEB Agroforestal Jibacoa for path maintenance towards “El Llano” farm(1.673.50 CUP); CCS Domingo Lara: agricultural machinery renting for land preparation on a demonstrative site for cooperative members (34,764.52 CUP) and then for collective land (28,436.45 CUP); silviculture management unit seeds campaign (17,456.38 CUP)
In Cienfuegos Province: channeling financial resources for SLM activities	Ongoing		UEB Agroforestry Cumanayagua to move material for construction (1,337.55 CUP); UEB Pecuria “Camilo Cienfuegos”: inputs and housing construction (126,000 CUP)
In Guantanamo Province: channeling financial resources for SLM activities	Ongoing		CCS Mariana Grajales: water canal cleaning (86,884.19 CUP)
ESEN financing to train for REVERDESEN			ESEN channeled resources and Project 3 complemented to conduct training on REVERDESEN in SLM recognized sites (23,885 CUP)
Financial support by the National Biodiversity Programme and by FONADEF			Financial support for monitoring activities of Project 3 which combined with Project resources allowed to recuperate delays in implementing activities due to COVID 19 (23,200 CUP)

4.2 Project Implementation

4.2.1 Adaptive Management

The implementation of the Project started soon after the signature of the ProDoc in March 2019 and the Inception workshop was conducted in May, followed in June and July by two inception workshops at local levels, in each of the intervention areas. The quick start of implementation is the result of a management team which was partially already constituted, as the PD is at the same time the Director of the CPP and is assisted by a team of technical and financial staff managing the five CPP projects. The PC assigned to Project 3 was already in the CPP team and therefore familiar with the main elements of the Project and the provincial teams have soon been constituted as a multidisciplinary group. Various elements concurred to slow down implementation but adaptive management has been applied consistently to ensure minimum disruption:

-the **occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic** and its associated restrictions in international and national travels and in holding face-to-face meetings, workshops and trainings (social distancing, closure of localities) was faced through the use of the phone, organizations of monthly virtual meetings (video-conferences at the BANDEC headquarters with territorial teams to understand challenges and find possible solutions) although further complicated by an unstable internet connection, even in the capital city. Territorial teams were engaged not only in coordination but also in monitoring actions and in training's activities, wherever possible and functional; they have been appropriately supported with logistical assistance (vehicle rental) to carry out training, monitoring and follow-up actions); interprovincial transportation (rental of harrows and trucks) to distribute supplies and equipment acquired by the Project; delivery of material to provinces helped by state institutions; and computer packages to guarantee communication with the national team and farmers;

-the **USA blockage** which intensified and reverted importantly on the economic and commercial activity, causing a reduction in the state budget and a rise in input prices, machinery, food and products for agroforestry. Fuel availability was rationed, limiting movements towards the intervention areas and also slowing down the arrival of goods purchased. Adaptive management included promotion of synergy with other GEF-UNDP projects; reprogramming affected actions where necessary; an effective and equitable use of resources in the intervention areas; close monitoring of the procurement process and close contact with the importing company EMIDICT. In the intervention areas, several productive units linked to the Project supported with food hospitals, maternity homes, schools, polyclinics and vulnerable groups (elderly).

Overall, delays were recuperated with minor impact on outputs except for i.e. the assessment of the erosion rate (output 3.4) in the Guamuhaya area as it implied a training which could only be led by national experts as well as the preparation of management plans at demonstrative and replication sites.

As a MSP, a Mid-Term review was not mandatory; yet, a consultancy to validate the PRF and assess performance was undertaken in September 2021 which led to a series of recommendations to adapt the targets of the indicators to the reality of the field and to a political and economic context which was already changing at Project start. Recommendations mainly focused on the potential for increasing the final targets of some indicators; however, in order to avoid the lengthy GEF process of revision - even if mostly entailing "minor changes", the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) suggested to refrain from officially modifying the PRF as the Project was in any case already overperforming and instead to use recommendations as a guide to design the rest of the Project's activities and interventions.

4.3.2 Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

The Project has received an extremely good support from Government stakeholders, with AMA and MINCEX playing an important institutional and interinstitutional coordination role. [Interviews confirm](#) strong relationships built at both government and producers' levels, keen interest about implementing SLM activities, and recognition of the importance of strengthening capacities for combating land degradation, including promoting and adopting financial incentives for SLM. The national level Inception Workshop Report documents the presence of 75 participants (45 women), with 12 national government institutions (CITMA, MINAG IPF, MEP, MFP, BANDEC, CGB, MES, INHR, ONEI among others) as well as their representatives from



provincial and municipal territorial offices. The non-government sector is underrepresented in Cuba while the academia and research centers integrate the territorial teams. In each of the two intervention areas, an Inception Workshop at local level was implemented with the participation of 60 and 75 people respectively, from government organizations both at national and local level. Management has fully involved stakeholders in the implementation of each of the three outcomes, in each case nominating a coordinator from a different organization, namely Outcome 1: BANDEC; Outcome 2: MSE; and Outcome

3: DFFFS as well as constituting teams of government specialists within four management units to facilitate national processes. The approach is fully collaborative and is set to develop an environment conducive to the active engagement of stakeholders in SLM. Clearly, already established links and associations of national and international stakeholders under the CPP favored consultations and participation in all implementation phases. Generally, both managerial and technical staff is stable in post, greatly facilitating synergy, institutional memory and decision-making. AMA - which is part of CITMA - guided implementation through an extensive and effective collaboration with its own departments (i.e. Soil Management Unit), MINAG and its departments (i.e. DFFFS, the livestock entrepreneurial group (GEGAN), the government livestock department, Forest guard corps) as well as economic entities (MFP, MEP, BANDEC) and research centers. Collaborative agreements were signed for the first time, strengthening institutional ties, i.e. AMA with the National Insurance Company ESEN; the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology; DFFFS and FLACSO.

The participation at provincial and municipal level is outstanding, with a key role played to overcome the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 restrictions for implementing training, technical assistance and monitoring activities. The specific participation of women is documented in other sections of this report but should be improved, especially at rural level. Similarly, the non-government entities participation is underrepresented in Cuba.

4.3.3 Project Finance and Co-Finance

The Project budget totals US\$ 37,475,000 of which US\$ 1,425,000 was provided by GEF and the remaining US\$ 36,050,000 is in-kind co-financing from the Government and UNDP. UNDP-CO is responsible for ensuring quality assurance for the execution of GEF resources; through the NIM, it provides Direct Project Services, according to UNDP policies on GEF funded projects; associated operational and administrative costs are covered in the budget as Project Management Costs. The GEF amount approved by the GEF Council is fixed and management cannot exceed it. As per UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP POPP, the **NSC** may allow expenditures up to the tolerance level beyond the approved budget amount for the year, without requiring a revision. Budget revisions are allowed within a tolerance level which: i) should not exceed a budget re-allocation among component of 10% or more of the total project grant; and ii) should not introduce new budget items/components exceeding 5% of the original GEF allocation; if this happens, UNDP/GEF approval is required as these are considered major amendments. Any over expenditure incurred beyond the available GEF grant amount has to be absorbed by non-GEF resources (e.g., UNDP TRAC or cash co-financing). Budget revisions occurred, all within allowed limits, and obtained required approvals and signatures.

Project implementation and expenditures are done in accordance with the annual workplan; financial reporting is done utilizing UNDP templates and procedures under the UNDP's NIM. The Programme started in March 2019 although was approved in 2005 and endorsed by CEO in 2017; at Project start, the CPP was already implementing Project 1 and Project 5; therefore, there was already an experience which informed Project 3 and allowed a smooth and rapid execution until the COVID 19 came to partly halt field activities.

The budget is managed by Component/Outcome, with Project management listed under a separate budget line. Table 5 below provides summaries of expenditures per component:

Table N.8 GEF Budget allocations and expenditures per Component/Outcome (USD)

Budget line/Amounts	GEF allocation	GEF Expenses June 2020	GEF expenses June 2021	GEF expenses June 2022	Cumulative expenses	Balance
Outcome 1	95,220	46.807,64	14.916,86	13.334,98	75.059,48	20.160,52
Outcome 2	94,900	20.345,97	35.541,30	18.136,20	74.023,47	20.876,53
Outcome 3	1,117,220	492.874,33	247.235,43	201.992,09	942.101,85	175.118,15
Project Management	117,660	10.611,28	17.473,27	25.533,90	53.618,45	64.041,55
Total (% of annual approved budget)	1,425,000.00	570.639,22 (40,04%)	315.166,86 (22,12%)	258.997,17 (18,18%)	1.144.803,25 (80,34%)	280.196,75 (19,66%)
Total cumulative %		40,04%	62,16%	80,34%	80,34%	

At June 2020 a moderately satisfactory cumulative disbursement of 40.04% is reported which increases to 62,16% at June 2021 and to 80,34% at June 2022 of the total GEF approved budget. Although in 2022 disbursement did not grow to expectations, reflecting difficulties with COVID-19, a few months from EoP, the Project is expected to be able to spend the entire amount.

The CCP envisaged the co-financing ratio for its five projects to increase progressively. The ProDoc indicates that the GoC commits for Project 3 to an in-kind co-financing of 36 million USD; and UNDP Cuba to an in-kind co-financing of 50.000 USD. Table 9 and 10 reports confirmed sources of co-financing as of January 2023.

Table N.9 Co-Financing Table

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP financing (USD m)		Government (USD m)		Total (USD m)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
In-Kind	50.000	45.000	36.000.000	27.858.650	36.050.000	27.903.650
Cash	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	50.000	45.000	36.000.000	27.858.650	36.050.000	27.903.650

The co-financing contribution of UNDP reflects track funds spent and regularly provided; full commitment is expected by EoP. The GoC co-financing contribution can be considered fully honored, and even higher than the original pledges considering the new monetary exchange rate implemented by the Central Bank at the beginning of 2021 from 1CUP=1USD to 24 CUP=1USD. As a result co-financing is calculated: i) for 2020 at 1CUP=1USD rate; ii) for 2021 and 2022 at 24CUP=1USD except for the first semester of 2021 and only for MINAG which considers 4CUP=1USD. The following table reports co-financing amounts in CUP, thus explaining and justifying the final amounts expressed in USD.

Table N.10 Government Co-Financing in CUP Table

Co-financing institution	Budget	Real 2020 (CUP)	Real 2021 (CUP)	Real 2022 (CUP)	Total
MINAG-Soil Direction	12.000.000,00	362.963,69	43.232.343,35	56.255.648,38	99.850.955,42
MINAG Forestry Direction	24.000.000,00	20.821.166,93	9.371.353,00	4.667.522,23	34.860.042,16
Other institutions (AMA/INRH/MES/CITMA provincial delegations of Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, Holguín)		1.800.512,67	1.799.445,11	3.245.956,21	6.845.913,99
Total	36.000.000,00	22.984.643,29	54.403.141,46	64.169.126,82	141.556.911,57

Table N.11 Confirmed sources of co-financing at TE stage (Jan 2023)

Sources of Co-Financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-Financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (US\$ m)
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditure	45000
Recipient Country Government	Government	In-kind	Recurrent expenditure	27.858.650
Total Co-Financing				27.903.650

4.3.4 M&E: design at entry, implementation, overall assessment of M&E

Monitoring & Evaluation	Rating
M&E design at entry	Satisfactory
M&E Plan Implementation	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Quality of M&E	Satisfactory

For the purpose of design, the monitoring plan is satisfactory. The ProDoc includes a detailed standard M&E Plan with an estimated total cost of USD 122,000 as GEF budget, plus an additional CUP 102,000 as co-financing; items to be monitored are identified, individually costed and with proper identification of responsibilities and time frame. The TE is costed separately (medium-sized GEF projects do not require a MTR but the NSC could eventually decide otherwise if needed).

Monitoring is undertaken in compliance with UNDP and GEF policies and procedures requirements. Cuba UNDP CO ensures that UNDP M&E and GEF requirements meet high quality standards in a timely fashion (PIRs, Evaluations); supports the PD and PC as needed; provides Quality Assurance Assessments (completely independent from management, given the NIM modality); and ensures compilation of the ATLAS risk log. The UNDP RTA provides administrative support, troubleshooting and quality assurance. The GEF Operational Focal Point is located in CITMA and ensures consistency with GEF policies, synergies with other GEF projects in the country and utilization of the Tracking Tools, in place at the time of Project design then replaced by the GEF Core Indicators.

The Inception Report validated design without major changes and with commitment to identify the baseline for those indicators for which it was necessary; the M&E plan was also validated. GEF MSP usually do not require a MTR but during Project development, the NSC decided to undertake a mid-term exercise to validate the system of indicators and assess performance against it; this was conducted in September 2021 and provided useful inputs to guide the continuation of the implementation.

Daily management is the responsibility of the PC, assisted by the PD, and with the supervision of the UNDP CO and the RTA; guidance is provided by the NSC and the President of AMA who is fully involved in management and provide effective direction. Additional financial and technical support is provided by staff belonging to the CPP team as a whole. Monitoring concerns the overall performance as well as technical and organizational aspects of the implementation and makes use of simple tools: an excel sheet to track results which are later reported on a CPP platform to track records at programme level focusing on indicators, the PRF, the Monitoring Plan, the GEF Tracking Tools/Core Indicators, the Risk Management log, the SESP, the preparation of PIRs. PIRs are the main tools to inform higher management and key inputs for external evaluations. Three PIRs (2020, 2021 and 2022) have been prepared. Reporting is informative with mainly quantitative information in the PIR's table but with links to a library where justification documents are found for any of the quantitative result reported; in addition, a number of reports in Spanish for internal government requirement are prepared; these are exhaustive documents, especially the final report which is a little redundant but certainly full of key information. The TE is occurring during the period of January-February 2023. NSC meetings have been regularly held; MoMs are well drafted and informative, and summarize the main commitments taken which are later regularly monitored; participation is optimal from interested parties. Remarkably, these meetings are not specific for Project 3 but the occasion to discuss all ongoing CPP projects, thus ensuring synergies and complementarities. The CPP Project 5 focused on M&E; yet, it was closed before the end of the four projects, when Project 3 was still ongoing and Project 4 not yet started. This is not ideal but financial constraints dictated its closure and anyway monitoring activities are carried over within the projects under implementation.

At field level, monitoring is well structured with the involvement of both municipal and provincial teams which are requested to prepare annual and quarterly workplans and then to report quarterly to the national

team in terms of achievement of results in the demonstration and replication sites; the process is documented with photographs. The involvement of local teams has been of paramount importance, especially due to the COVID 19 restrictions which impeded the national team, experts and trainers to move to the territories as originally envisaged; their inputs are utilized to inform reporting against the overall PRF and to provide solutions for challenges identified. The use of videoconferences and telephones allowed to never lose contact and control. Monitoring is also ensured against the Monitoring Plans prepared at farm level in the replication and demonstration sites; these are key inputs for the classification of farms into a three-level SLM categorization system. Monitoring is certainly favored by the well-structured GoC monitoring system, allowing full appropriation of activities and determination to utilize at best international financing. Interviews confirm knowledge and understanding of the Logical Framework from all parties involved, that the system is time consuming but worthy for solving problems and identifying lessons.

At Project design Tracking Tools were used by the GEF to monitor **Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs)**; currently the system is replaced by the Core Indicators. The first Tracking Tool was attached to the ProDoc; the Project has prepared the Final tracking Tool, reporting mid-term value in the same file (see Annex G). Management informs that during the years of Project implementation, SLM practices have been applied in 27.322,66 ha at national level, 12.763,42 ha of which are in the demonstrative and replication sites of the intervention areas. SLM practices included measures for soil conservation and improvement, production diversification, genetic improvement, limitation of alien species and increase of native species among others; this contributed to: i) decrease erosion for a calculated **5.707.46 t/ha/year** in the demonstration and replication sites of the intervention areas, ii) increase or maintain biodiversity, and ecosystems services, iii) increase farmers production (i.e. in La Esperanza farm in Trinidad, in Las Margaritas farm in Cumanayagua, in La Victoria farm in Jiguani, Granmacorn, yuca, beans) and income; milk production has increased by 16.392.65 l/ha/year of which 11.154,6 l/ha/year in Cauto Basin and 5.238,05 l/ha/year in Guamuhaya. 20.829,36 ha. of forest have been restored of which 13.158.37 ha in Cauto and 7.670,99 ha in Guamuhaya. Project implementation benefitted from the new monetary order and the 63 measures for agriculture which led to a decrease of the cost of the Cuban peso. Cumulative progress also shows that the number of farmers who benefitted from at least one SLM financing mechanism in the country is 73.040, quite higher than expectations but lower than desired in terms of women access, 14.394 or 19.7%. Technically, an Integrated System of Information Management is established, linked to INGOGEO, the Network for the Management of Geographical and Environmental Information which allows to overcome the obsolescence of some of the monitoring systems and partly provide required information.

Overall, the monitoring system established is highly satisfactory: it utilizes usual and mandatory tools correctly within the structured GoC monitoring and with creative efforts to capture challenges requiring management attention and/or lessons learnt and opportunities for scaling up projects results; differently from many projects where the focus remains on management, critical thinking on land degradation and SLM takes place and well inform decision-making both at Government and UNDP CO level.

4.3.5 UNDP implementation/oversight; Implementing Partner execution and overall assessment of implementation/oversight and execution.

UNDP Execution/Oversight & Implementing Partner collaboration	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation /Oversight	Satisfactory
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Quality of Implementation /Oversight and Execution	Satisfactory

As part of UNDP’s institutional capacity development strategy for Cuba, the Project is implemented through the **UNDP’s NIM; UNDP acts as the IA**, providing technical guidance and support as management – which is entirely composed of Cuban officials and experts – is professional and totally in control of the

implementation; core management staff were already in place for previous CPP projects which facilitated the smooth and rapid implementation of Project 3. AMA is the IP and CITMA, which is the Senior Beneficiary, hosts the GEF and UNCCD focal point; it facilitates active stakeholder engagement and implementation of project activities. UNDP CO reports to strongly appreciate its leadership; the PD was previously involved in the management of a GEF project and was able to bring over experience and lessons learnt; he is rewarded with trust from all parties interviewed and considered a manager able to get things done qualitatively and quantitatively; the AMA President is fully involved in implementation and guarantees high level interinstitutional coordination and guidance. Technical and also managerial staff have been generally stable in their posts, guaranteeing continuity and institutional memory. The CPP PD has changed three times but during the development of Project 3 the same person remained in post. Relationships are sound and cooperative and have been built during years of collaboration with UNDP. The PSC is working as expected; as mentioned, it meets regularly and constitutes an effective guidance for management. The last meeting was in May 2022 and a final PSC meeting is expected in March 2023.

All GEF and most UNDP projects adopt the NIM, with the UNDP CO and UNDP RTA providing quality assurance and oversight services; turnover of UNDP staff has been minimal during implementation. As mentioned, Project 3 has required minimal operational support, much of which is focused towards facilitating the last phases of payments for the procurement of goods and services. Under the NIM modality, UNDP Quarterly Reports are not required; reportedly, the risk log in ATLAS has been systematically updated. Financial/disbursement problems are not reported; budget revisions are prepared under the guidance of the RTA. Synergy and collaboration prevail between UNDP and the CPP management, with reciprocal appreciation. Possibly, UNDP CO and the UNDP RTA could have requested a revision of Project design at Project start to make it more relevant to the field situation in 2019 with respect to 2005 when originally planned; certainly the lengthy process of revision that GEF would have entailed prevented such a request but somehow performance is distorted by an approach tackling barriers which were in many cases losing their strength by the time.

4.3.6 Risk Management and Social and Environmental Standards

The Social and Environmental Screening Process (SESP) developed at Project design concluded that the overall risk for the Project was Low; this was later revised to Moderate for the consistent risk of climate change. At the request of the UNDP RTA, the SESP which was judged of poor quality, was revised but only in May 2022, too late in Project implementation to be of real use; the SESP process remains incomplete as it requires consultation with stakeholders, disclosure, and quality assessment by the HQ SES team; due to this being a long procedure, requiring dedicated resources, it has been decided to conduct it for the CPP Project 4 which builds on CPP Project 3. The first steps of a grievance and redress mechanism have been drafted but the process remains to be completed and integrated in the institutional structure of MINAG, as good practice, and accountability vis a vis stakeholders. The 2021 revision of the SESP identified new risks which were in the process to be merged in the Atlas Registry.

4.4 Project Results and Impacts

4.4.1 Progress towards objective and expected outcome

The Project is approaching its end and has already achieved and in many cases overachieved its outcomes and objective. The analysis of PIRs and extensive Project's reports to the national authorities which provide exhaustive and valuable information is generally confirmed through interviews with relevant stakeholders, (Project management team, UNDP staff, government and non-government representatives - often in quite high positions of AMA, CITMA, INHR, BANDEC, ESEN as well as members of the provincial teams and end users/beneficiaries) indicate not only that the Project is overachieving results with respect to planned targets but that these results are highly appreciated, being of high relevance for all parties involved. Progress towards outcomes is registered in Annex E, in the results framework matrix, with achievements, comments and rating. Implementation challenges have been well faced; the Satisfactory rating which characterizes implementation finds justification in the following chapters.

The consultancy undertaken at mid-term to revise achievements with relation to the PRF evidenced that in June 2021, 7 of the 16 indicators were already achieved and even beyond some of the established targets. A number of elements concur to explain this situation, including: i) the structure of the CPP Programme, made of five mutually reinforcing projects, allowed an overperforming dynamic compared to what would be possible with an isolated project, with impact manifesting even in the first phases of implementation; ii) a sound management of the difficulties linked with the pandemic (see above in the Adaptive Management chapter); iii) the adoption of interinstitutional agreements which accelerated the achievement of results and set the basis for sustainability; iv) the stability of the CPP and Project 3 staff but also of government officials in key positions; v) the establishment of Management Plans at the demonstration and replication sites with diagnostics and quarterly customized M&E by territorial teams in the intervention areas; vi) extremely effective synergies with other projects and institutions to jointly finance and/or undertake activities, with a resourceful use of resources (see Table 6 above).

If the above is certainly merit of management, two additional factors have been crucial for the uncommon performance observed: the fact that the number of producers with knowledge and capacities to access financial mechanisms was much larger than at Project design (with almost 15 years elapsing between design and implementation; and last but not least, a conducive political, legal and regulatory framework with the adoption by the government of measures to strengthen the focus on sustainable agricultural production and reinforce the strength of the Cuban peso.

Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Highly Satisfactory
Efficiency	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Project Outcome Rating	Satisfactory

4.4.1.1 Relevance

The relevance of the Project is **Satisfactory**. Undoubted relevance at design is maintained throughout execution, with changes in the political, economic, monetary and regulatory context towards reducing food and food inputs imports, increasing national production for food sovereignty and security, and strengthening the Cuban peso. This shaped an enabling environment for SLM activities, fully aligning the Project’s approach to the national policy context and to the OP 15 objective of reducing land degradation. Consultations were conducted during project design, and at inception with full involvement of diverse groups of stakeholders, especially at institutional level, including the local governments; the purpose was to validate Project design and its indicators of performance and further reinforce the awareness and understanding of the importance of SLM practices with its specific focus on the promotion of financial incentives. Although activities respond to real and recognized needs of the country, of the institutions charged with SLM and of end users, it may be argued that the field situation at design was extremely different than the one at the start of implementation and that design should have been adjusted accordingly, eventually setting more ambitious targets. Interviews generally confirm that environmental management ranks high in the country’s priorities.

Cuba is signatory of the three Rio Conventions, **UNCBD**, **UNFCCC** and **UNCCD**, this last one having been signed in 1994 and ratified in 1996. The Project is an answer to the **Cuba National Strategy to Combat Land Degradation** which assessed capacity requirements and constraints to SLM and created a National Group with twenty national institutions which elaborated the **National Action Plan**. Cuba adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the **SDGs** in September 2015. The CPP programme contributes to the achievement of eleven of the seventeen SDGs and Project 3 directly contributes to SDG N. 2 “Zero Hunger” and N. 15 Life on Land or “to promote the sustainable use of ecosystems, combat desertification, combat land degradation and reduce biological diversity”. The Project is consistent with the **national legal and policy framework as well as development priorities**, specifically:

- ✓ [Economic and Social Development Plan up to 2030](#) which represents Cuba leading strategy in economic, social and political terms; it includes six strategic lines of action with Project 3 directly contributing to specific objective 8, Natural Resources and Environment (“to halt soil degradation through the application of sustainable agriculture) and specific objective 12 (“to implement economic incentives to achieve financial sustainability in the use and conservation of natural resources”); the Government yearly provides resources in support of producers in terms of price and market guarantees as well as subsidies through programmes contributing to food security by promoting the rational use of natural resources, namely [FNMA](#), [PNMCS](#) and [FONADEF](#) (at design, calculations indicated channeled resources for an average of USD 32,200,000 per year through PNMCS; USD 189,000,000 per year through FONADEF and USD 258,400,000 per year for the management of hydrological resources)
- ✓ [National Environmental Strategy 2021-2025 \(and previous versions since 2007\)](#) which defines seven key environmental challenges with Project 3 directly contributing to address the scarcity and contamination of the water quality, degradation and contamination of soil and the loss of biodiversity
- ✓ [National Plan to Combat Land Degradation \(Tarea Vida\)](#): approved in 2017 and being a top priority for the environmental policy of the country and to face climate change challenges
- ✓ [Decree-Law 50 of Soil and Law on National Resources and Environment System](#): both key for SLM
- ✓ [Decree-Law of Food Sovereignty and Food Security \(67/2022\) and 63 measures for the agricultural sector](#) to reduce food and food production related items imports, increase agricultural and cattle production and ensure food security
- ✓ [Resolution 925/2018 and specific norm 11](#) establishing how to register environmental incomes/expenses
- ✓ [Law 81/1997 of the Environment](#) which is the basic regulation for natural resources management in Cuba and is complemented by other regulations such as [Decree 200 and 201 for Protected Areas](#); [Decree 179/1993](#) for protection, use and conservation of soil; [Decree 138/1993](#) to regulate the use, control and protection of terrestrial water; and other laws regulating the irrigation water price and the protection and rational use of hydric resources. A key law is [Decree 259/2008 modified in 2012](#) about idle lands in usufruct which contributes to increase agricultural production and the use of potentially productive land.

The Project objective is [closely aligned](#) with the programming directions and underlying mission of [GEF-OP15](#), specifically [Land Degradation -LD 3 Integrated Landscapes](#): Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape and with the following outcomes: **3.1** Support mechanisms for SLM in wider landscapes established; **3.2** Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities; **3.3** Increased investments in integrated landscape management. It directly responds to needs identified within the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification and UNCCD objectives.

The Project was a contribution to the 2015-2019 [UNDAF/Country Program Document \(CPD\)](#); “Productive and services sectors strengthen the integration of environmental considerations, including energy and adaptation to climate change, into their development plans”. Relevance is maintained under 2020-2024 Country Programme document for Cuba. The Project was linked to the following outputs of the [UNDP Strategic Plan](#): [Output 1.3](#). Solutions developed at national and sub-national levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste; and [Output 2.5](#): Investment expenditures in environmental protection by environmental area and productive sectors.

[4.4.1.2 Effectiveness](#)

[The Project’s effectiveness is Highly Satisfactory](#). At the time of the TE, the Project has already reached and even overreached most of its targets and objective.

The CCP 3 Project seeks to increase the availability and uptake of sustainable financing for SLM to incentivize integrated land management practices for the maintenance of essential ecosystem services. Recognizing that notwithstanding an enabling environment, producers do not widely have the awareness and knowledge about the existence and functioning of financial mechanisms and the capacities to formulate realistic and

convincing requests to access and then manage them efficiently, Project's outputs are delivered under three interlinked and complementary components, where the first one focuses on the national level, the second one on the local level and the third one on demonstrative and replication activities in two intervention areas, that is the mountain and pre-mountain area of Guamuhaya and the Cauto basin.

Project 3 started its implementation when the CPP Project 1, Project 2 and Project 5 were already ongoing; in parallel, the GoC had already adopted a series of policy, monetary and regulatory measures favoring the application of SLM practices. This created the fertile ground for Project 3 to be smoothly implemented from both a managerial point of view (the PSC, the PMU and some of the sub-management units which took responsibility for the Project outcomes were already in place) and a political point view, with an enabling regulatory environment and with positive SLM experiences in specific sites already manifesting results and even impact. The Project has achieved or is exceeding most end of project targets; while appreciating performance towards targets the following elements should be considered:

- ✓ where relevant, the Project reports progress towards the absolute number of participating or trained farmers (**Indicators 02 and 3.1**) instead than as a percentage to avoid misrepresenting progress achieved. Effectively, the number of beneficiary farmers baseline changed, with a larger number of farmers at Project start already aware of the possibilities to access agricultural inputs, technical assistance and financial incentives as a result of training and information activities implemented or under implementation of the CPP as well as the favorable national policy context;
- ✓ indicators referring to the **percentage of rural women** involved are assessed considering that according to the Cuban Yearly Demography only 20% of the rural population in the country is represented by women in working age; therefore, the mid-term exercise suggestion of a 25% target instead of the 35% is in line with the field reality;
- ✓ **end of Project's monetary targets** consider the variation occurred with Decree/Law 17 of November 2020 which modified the American dollar exchange rate versus the Cuban pesos from 1CUP=1USD at Project design to 24CUP=1USD;
- ✓ **Indicator 1.3** "Level of funding channeled from new direct financing mechanisms to SLM nationwide" is assessed excluding calculations for two financing mechanisms originally included: Payments for Carbon Capture and Water Quality Ecosystem Services, the development and implementation of which are not under the direct control of the Project, as suggested by the September 2021 mid-term exercise, which considered this indicator to have been poorly designed, with a high unattainable target for actions that are not under direct management capacities.

Interviews widely reveal that the PD and the PC, through the UNDP NIM, play an appreciated role in leading activities towards results; within the limitations imposed by the stringent USA blockage and by the restrictive measures linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, commendable institutional collaboration at all levels bring parties together to ensure that SLM practices are broadly applied and that financial incentives and technical assistance support is largely accessible and used. [Annex E](#) is the PRF which details results, achievement of indicators and targets and provides a summarized comment by the TE Consultants; complementary information is provided below on each outcome and some of the most important products.

C. 1. Sustainable financing mechanisms and capacities consolidated at the national level.

The implementation of this first component is overarching and implemented at national level; it registers outstanding results which are the product of an intense training, guidance and information activity developed by the Project to ensure institutions and end users have the required knowledge about the various financing options available in the country. The responsibility for this outcome has been assigned to BANDEC.

One of the first action of the Project was to design a compendium of the diverse existing financial mechanisms dispersed within various institutions which led to design the container *Financial Solutions for the Agricultural and Forestry Sector*: grouping existing financial incentives. A second container was designed called *New Financial Solutions for the Agricultural and Forestry sector* under which new financial incentives developed

under the Project are included. Producers can generally access financing mechanisms in different ways, according to their capacity to comply with the requisites of a SLM categorization articulated in three steps: initiated, advanced and full embracing SLM practices. Training and information material has been prepared and published for both of these containers and utilized in national training, and more specifically in the Project's intervention areas as a resource to develop a dialogue and strengthen the knowledge of decision-makers, managers and farmers on financial incentives (among others: "Resolution 7/2016 of the Central Bank of Cuba"; "Guarantee Fund Resolution 12/2020 of the Central Bank of Cuba", "Instructive guide for the implementation of financial mechanisms at the local level"; "Agricultural and forestry insurance for the National Insurance Company which is an important tool to train farmers on the benefits that the insurance can provide for their economy in extreme conditions; "Calculation of the Carbon captured by a mango plantation on a farm advanced in SLM"; "Green credits or credits that contribute to SLM"). This material is diffused at both national and regional level.

Under Outcome 1, **new financial incentives** have been formulated and implemented by the Project; producers can access them according to their SLM categorization; these are:

- i) **BANDEC diversified ratings:** developed in 2019, producers are offered a package of advantages plus, according to the SLM category they receive, a decrease of the interest rates for the loans granted, that is 1.5% for those initiating; 2% for those advanced and 3% for those fully adopting SLM practice; these interest rates have later been further diminished; since Project start, BANDEC has channeled about **USD 48,656** for green credits for soil conservation, promotion of sheep cattle and organic fertilizer;
- ii) under **MINAG**, the **PNMCS** had adopted the three steps categorization, prioritizing financing for classified farmers, channeling since Project start over **USD 731,000**;
- iii) in collaboration with BANDEC, the **National Insurance Company ESEN** developed an innovative financial mechanism - called **REVERDESEN**; this is a Combined Insurance, covering a wide range of risks such as protection of assets, life and family risks among others; it is a quite unique product, innovative not only for the country but also at international level, and under constant improvement by the developer; ESEN has prepared a methodology for its implementation which is automatically extended to all farmers recognized in the third step of the SLM category; to date, 2.225 USD of insurance are purchased;
- iv) in collaboration with **INHR**, an additional very innovative financial mechanism for water savings and its rational use has been developed with the **Hydraulic Development Company in Mayabeque** (belonging to INHR) to ensure that water resources incentives engage agricultural farmers involved in SLM; a procedure has been prepared and approved for its implementation and overall this generates an efficient and rational use of water in sites categorized for SLM practices. A water monitoring system - **Monitoring Network for the Quality of Water (REDCAL)** has been established. A survey has been conducted to acquire knowledge in nine SLM recognized sites about existing conditions for the possible future installation of water counter meters, possibly extending to all recognized SLM sites throughout Cuba. This incentive is the first of its kind in the country and contributes to achieve food security and sustainable agriculture.

While the first three incentives are automatically accessible to those producers at national level who - complying with established requisites – are categorized under SLM, the last one is implemented as a pilot in the **Province of Mayabeque** with plans to extend it at national level (see below under Outcome 3).

Existing financial mechanisms such as FONADEF and FNMA provide direct and non-reimbursable incentives and are applicable for SLM practices, generating positive impact in terms of environmental sustainability and productivity but they can represent a cost for the producer engaging with SLM practices which needs to be recognized and compensated. This awareness led the relevant ministry to propose modifications for some regulations of these programmes (i.e. for FONADEF with Project collaboration and support). The resolutions issued by CITMA and MFP (Resolutions 13/99, 60/2019 and 22/1014), reducing the rights paid on equipment and key supplies are summarized and compiled in a document to ensure wide spreading of information.

C.2. Sustainable financing mechanisms applied and validated at the local level.

The responsibility for the management of this outcome lies with MES. This component is transversal to the other two components and focused on strengthening the capacity of local institutions for allocating financial resources for SLM and improving the capacity of users of the country to access existing and new financial mechanisms; this has required the implementation of an intense and focalized programme of training to raise producers' awareness and knowledge of the existence of these mechanisms and of the ways to access them. The occurrence of COVID 19 has initially delayed the implementation schedule due to social distancing and restrictions in movements; however, activities resumed in the second half of 2021 and the first half of 2022, with management supporting and national experts training provincial teams so to enable them to carry on the local level training. The Guide for the Implementation of Financial Mechanisms was adjusted to target the areas of intervention of Project 3; based on identified needs, a Training Plan was prepared and distributed to the territorial teams; it included three training programs designed by BANDEC, FONADEF, PNMCS and targeting financial mechanisms as well as productive and environmental agricultural issues. The training benefitted from the innovative and successful communication experience already developed under Project 2 utilizing associates meetings and anniversaries, and interchanges between demonstrative sites as occasions to provide information. The Ministry of Superior Education played a key role in the supervision of the training program which allowed to motivate and instruct farmers and decision makers to access existing financial mechanisms in the country and increase the number of farmers benefited by them.

Specific training in the intervention areas have involved **6.332** farmers, of whom **1.871 are women** or 29,5%; training includes the functioning of the financial mechanisms as well as technical assistance for specific application of SLM practices. In the PRF, details of farmers involvement are given for each intervention area; to be noted that also in the areas of Mayabeque and Matanzas, which are areas of replication, training was widely provided. The Project has undertaken a survey to appreciate the effects of the training in the intervention areas; some of the main conclusions were that notwithstanding the COVID-19 limitations, territorial teams have been able to implement training and keeping up with planning thanks to an effective convening capacity and the support of MINAG and CITMA at local level. There has been a concentration of the training in the provinces of Holguín y Granma; interviewed beneficiaries largely confirm the positive impact of these activities for increasing the knowledge necessary to access financial mechanisms.

C.3. Farmers have the technical capacities to take advantage of the financial support required to apply SLM practices.

Outcome 3 is under the management responsibility of the INHR, MINAG. As mentioned, the financial mechanisms managed by the Project are implemented in sites able to be recognized in one of the tree categories of SLM; this process began under Project 2, continued with Project 3 and will be further applied with Project 4. A Manual for becoming a SLM certified farm has been prepared, detailing requisites according to the productive sector (i.e. livestock and forestry). In order to guarantee an holistic analysis of each site, its possibility for recovery and for accessing financial mechanisms, activities generally followed a common pattern where each targeted farm/producer in demonstration/replication sites (sometimes called *poligonos*) was required to prepare a **Management Plan** in four phases: i) diagnosis with support of the provincial team, ii) preparation of the plan with support of the national team; iii) discussion of the plan and preparation of a monitoring plan and schedule of implementation and iv) signature of the plans. Key sustainable forest and sustainable livestock actions were incorporated, envisaging capacity building, training and technical assistance, more rarely the provision of inputs. Signature of the Management Plan was a pre-condition for initiating training and monitoring activities; this caused delays associated with the pandemic especially in Guamuhaya where restrictions of movements were stronger; instead more could be accomplished in the Cauto Basin. [Annex F](#) summarizes main actions in each site and confirm that the sites included at design (annex 3 of the ProDoc pilot sites) have all been included. The PRF reports on the main achievements.

An [Early Warning System](#) for farmers has been implemented in demonstrative sites of Cienfuegos, Holguín, and Granma provinces where there was an already identified way to deliver meteorological information to farmers. Sustainable livestock activities have allowed an important increase in milk production. Biodiversity diagnoses were carried out in all demonstration sites. Articles and book on the sustainable use of biodiversity were published. The baseline for Indicators 3.5 and 3.7 were established.

Since the health authorities declared the normalization of the situation with relation to the pandemic, an intense work was done to calculate and report towards Indicator 3.4 for the intervention areas' erosion rates, involving soil specialists from the Guantánamo province and DFFFS. Soil forestry specialists, decision-makers and farmers from the five provinces involved in Project 3 participated. Demonstration and replication sites in the provinces of Granma and Holguín implemented appreciated soil conservation (dams and live barriers among others) measures. The methodology to calculate the erosion rate was explained in situ; training and visits around the provinces allowed clarifying doubts and answer questions about the correct procedure.

As a pilot, the water balance financial incentive has been applied in *La Finca El Mulato*, belonging to the Strengthened Cooperative of Credit and Services "*Orlando Cuellar*" in *San José de las Lajas* municipality; in 2018 a water counter meter was installed and the owner achieved optimal water performance and water balance using soil humidity, a SLM practice which allowed acquisition of the SLM category and financial savings as it is possible to appreciate from the table below:

Table 12 A Water Balance experience

Year	Total water volume assigned	Water volume consumed (measured)	Amount paid (\$)	Volume of Water saved	Amount saved (\$)	Observations
2018	96000	18469	5540,7	77531	23259,3	According to rate 421/2012
2019	127000	12518	3755,4	114482	34344,6	According to rate 421/2012
2020	90000	7550	2265,0	82450	24735,0	According to rate 421/2012 (meter not functioning for 3 months)
2021	90000	17398	139,18	72602	580,82	According to rate 83/2021
Total			11700,28		82919,72	Change of rate for decree since 2021

This positive experience is taken for replication and for the establishment of the relative financial incentive with a methodology envisaging a discount of 10% for those under the first SLM category; 12% for those in the second and 15% for those in the third category. A strict collaboration on the subject is done with IAgri, a key MINAG institution for establishing irrigation and sewer systems rules. The placement of counter meter represents an important investment and is generally used for large water consumers but it is currently considered for many complying with the full SLM category.

Interviews reveal a substantial involvement of provincial and municipal representatives, including academic centers, satisfaction with results, and a sound understanding of the overall Project planning and construction of the PRF. Production at certain farms have also been of support during the pandemic for hospitals, children, and maternity centers as for example at the "Tierra Brava" farm. Solutions to problems such as flour scarcity led to experiment bread production using a mixture of flours, including pumpkin flour allowing a healthy product, with no use of chemicals or fertilizers, sold for better prices. Additional interesting measures are planned such as the creation of island productive areas using photovoltaic panels so that an adverse meteorological event would not impact all production together. The "Tierra Brava" farm was recognized as a good example of resilient farm during the Climate Change Conference.

Overall Management Plans revealed to be a key tool to identify SLM actions and monitor change in the short, medium and long term; they were implemented and monitored, with a good level of compliance. Training activities have been implemented in agricultural, forestry, technical and financial topics to a quite larger number of farmers than originally planned. In demonstrative sites, agricultural supplies, clothing and protection items, computer modules and office supplies were delivered to farmers and agricultural inputs to three nurseries. Provincial and municipal teams played a superlative role not only in monitoring and follow up but also in the training that due to the pandemic limitations could not be implemented by national experts. Synergetic activities with other projects have produced great collaboration and results which were largely confirmed during interviews with government officials and also the visit to the demonstration site of "La Esperanza" in the Santi Spíritus province (Biofin, Linking Landscapes, GEF SGP among others).



Sitios demostrativos Tierra Brava, Los Palacios y La Esperanza, Santi Espíritus



Sitio de réplica en Pitajones, Santi Espíritus

Communication and knowledge management.

Making information about financial incentives accessible to national and local producers and institutions has been a main Project's objective, together with training them to be able to apply, become eligible and manage these mechanisms. In addition to the trainings reported through territorial and national teams, a large number of communication activities and publications were delivered, such as "Agricultural and forestry insurance" of the National Insurance Company; "Calculation of the Carbon captured by a mango plantation on a farm advanced in SLM"; "Experiences from training in SLM"; "Information Dossier on SLM, Agroecology, Conservation Agriculture and Traditional Agriculture". A publication is expected on the meteorological assessment made in Villa Clara which led, once identified the most stringent problems, to organize a WhatsApp group where users receive appropriate meteorological information in order to be able to organize appropriate solutions; this is a simple and effective alert system to bring scientific information directly to the producer in an accessible way; the gender perspective of climate change is also being considered, which is quite a new subject for Cuba.

The Project participated in a wide variety of workshops and conferences, transmitting knowledge and lessons learnt in national and international spaces by delivering doctoral thesis, papers and technical works; among them two Environment and Development Conventions, the International Congress University 2020, the XXIII Congress of Mesoamerican Society of Biodiversity and Conservation in 2019 in Guatemala. Overall these spaces allowed an interchange of experiences and knowledge about agricultural good practices for SLM with the academia and among producers applying them. The President (a woman) of the CCS Doming Lara, a demonstrative site and the owner of "Tierra Brava" farm, a replication site participated in the XIV International Conference of Cooperatives where interchanges among producers took place.

Project 3 does not have a web site. Communication has made large use of Social Networks and of the CPP SLM web site (<http://mst.ama.cu>) as a platform to promote, divulgate and conduct environmental education; in addition, the web pages of the delegations of CITMA and MINAG in Granma, Cienfuegos, Holguín, Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus were used; Villa Clara Citizen Portal <https://www.soyvillaclara.gob.cu/es/inf>; as well as digital media, radio and television. A Lessons Learned Workshop was held via WhatsApp; lessons were used to carry out a virtual meeting among territorial coordinators and a publication was prepared. Information is well organized and quickly accessible. Here below links or references are provided to appreciate the wide publications and media coverage of the Project:

- <http://sgiop15.geotech.cu/Login.po>
- <https://www.facebook.com/MSTinCUBA>
- <http://repositorio.geotech.cu/jspui/handle/1234/2042>
- <http://www.diariomayabeque.cu/new/1269>. Impact of delivery of agricultural implements in Mayabeque
- <http://www.granma.cu/cuba/2020-06-17/cuba-muestra-resultados-en-programa-contra-la-desertificacion-y-la-sequia-17-06-2020-10-06-09...>
- In Pages of: the University of Holguín (# UniversidadDeHolguín and #SomosContinuidad), CITMA (# CitmaDelegaciónHolguín).
- In Pages of the CITMA of Granma (# CitmaDelegaciónGranma).
- In Villa Clara CITMA Pages (# CitmaDelegaciónVilla Clara).
- In Pages of the CITMA of Cienfuegos (# CitmaSUD-DelegaciónCienfuegos).
- On the website of the OP 15 Program: <https://www.facebook.com/MSTenCUBA> - Villa Clara Citizen Portal: <https://www.soyvillaclara.gob.cu/es/inf>: "For love I became a rural woman in Villa Clara". October 14, 2020. Written by: Jesús Álvarez López

Digital media

- Digital newspaper September 5, Cienfuegos. December 8. Article "Environmental project benefits agroforestry and livestock farms in Cienfuegos."
- Cuban News Agency (2 publications). Article: "University of Holguín promotes projects related to agricultural development"; <http://www.acn.cu/economia/70421>. 23 September 2020. Journalist: Thalía Ruiz Desdín Article: "First Combined Policy developed in Cuba will encourage Sustainable Land Management". June 2nd. Journalist: Lorena Chávez Fernández
- NOW digital newspaper Article: "Against the Drought in Holguín. September 22, 2020. Journalist: Yeny Torres. Article: Sustainable management of fragile ecosystems advances in Holguín. November 22, 2020. Journalist: Ania Fernández.

Written press

- Now newspaper (Holguín). November 28 "Tierras La Esperanza" by the journalist Ania Fernández Torres.
- Granma newspaper. June 4th. Article: "They present a combined policy for agricultural insurance in Cuba. Page 5. Journalist: Maby Martínez Rodríguez Provincial

Television

- Two television programs with departure on Wednesdays at 5 pm in the RADAR technical scientific space of the Bayamo telecentre. They were held at the Jiguaní and Cauto Cristo demonstration sites in the Granma province. January 2021
- In Telecubanacán, Villa Clara telecentre, in the Noticentro space, on December 17, 2020 the audiovisual made in the CCS Domingo Lara on the impact of Project 3 of OP 15. This product "Application of financial tools for management sustainable land for livestock and forestry ", by Amalia Ramos Pérez (<http://www.cmhw.icrt.cu/ciencia-y-tecnica/32134-premian-concurso-de-periodismo-cientifico-en-villa-clara>) was chosen as "Alfredo Nieto Dopico" scientific journalistic award of the province.
- In Telecubanacán, Villa Clara telecentre, in the space At noon, on April 22, 2021 for Earth Day. The provincial coordinator and the soil specialist part of the territorial team of the Project were interviewed.
- Two television programs from the Yayabo telecentre in the Cultiarte space with departure on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm (May 25 and June 1). They were carried out at the demonstration sites of the Project in Trinidad in the province of Sancti Spíritus.
- Channel Cubavisión. Buenos Dias magazine, June 3, 2021. Report on the launch of the ReverdESEN product.

Radio

- Bayamo radio program "Hoy en las Noticias" with the collaboration of journalist Milena Céspedes, a work was presented on the impact of Project 3 on the demonstration sites in the province. January 2021.
- Provincial Radio Angulo Station. November 24, 2020. Journalist: Eduardo Aballe Osorio. Article: La Esperanza farm benefited with Country Association Program linked to UNDP (+ Audio)
- Provincial station CMHW Sistema Informativo, December 2020. The work of Project 3 of the OP 15 Program was disseminated in its demonstration sites specifically in the CCS Domingo Lara.
- Municipal radio station of Cumanayagua in the magazine Sintonía with a weekly frequency (Friday) and the newscast Cumanayagua a day. In these programs, the impact of the projects in the territory and their achievements are disclosed.

4.4.1.3 Efficiency

Management is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**, considering the way difficulties associated with the pandemic and the USA blockage - which reverted in delays in implementation and imports – have been faced. The delays associated with the commencement of this Project 3 - designed in 2005 within the all CPP package - cannot be imputed to management; it was planned for CEO endorsement in 2015 but was only signed and endorsed in 2017 and started in 2019. During this period, the national team did not wait to set the basis for its future implementation. The Project is managed by a government led national team and is a supported NIM project, this is usually the GEF modality in Cuba and widely used in most UNDP projects in the country; the UNDP CO mainly assists the IP with cash transfers.

Within the limitations mentioned, management was effective in finding creative and prompt ways to overcome difficulties and keeping pace with the schedule, greatly facilitated by a team already in place for other CPP projects, composed of professionals and politicians who have mostly been stable in their posts carrying on the institutional memory and experience gained. This being part of a larger programme allowing synergies and savings also ensure **cost-effectiveness** and the capacity to find alternatives to shortages of fuels and other items as well as to difficulties in importing material planned for purchase abroad.

Financial management – which benefits from a dedicated resource - has followed a regular disbursement pattern, amounting to about 40% of the total approved amount in the first year (at June 2020), with lower disbursement rates in 2021 and 2022 for the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed down programmed technical activities, visits to intervention areas and procurement processes; at June 2022, the disbursement rate reached 80.34%, with a cumulative delivery of 1.144.803,25 and expectations to reach the full amount for the end of Project. Financial approvals, budget revisions and procurement follow the regulations and are supported by the RTA. Reporting is regularly and accurately done).

4.4.2 Sustainability

Sustainability is partly built into Project design, adopting an integrated approach to SLM with five complementary projects being part of a coherent programme, each one setting the base for the commencement of the other. Another key element of sustainability is the envisaged involvement of a large number of institutions, that is a recognition that land degradation impacts on all sectors of a country's development and requires the combined action of technical and economic entities. Partners have been fully

integrated in the consultative process since Project start. As a result of a worsening international situation strongly impacting the Cuban economy, during Project development, the political, legal and regulatory framework became even more enabling and conducive, creating the conditions for sustainability to become a credible possibility at all levels.

Participants confirm interest and appreciation for the training and the technical assistance received, recognizing the importance of mainstreaming SLM practices into national planning. If processes are sustained, technical and institutional sustainability is certainly likely. Demonstration and replication sites are increasingly improving evidence-based effectiveness of the SLM practices proposed. Staff has been trained at all levels and the structure is there to continue the training ensuring coverage also when staff rotate.

Sustainability	Rating
Financial Resources	Likely
Socio-Political	Likely
Institutional Framework and governance	Likely
Environmental	Likely
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	Likely

4.4.2.1 Financial risks to sustainability

The Cuban's economy has been under international pressure since ever; the worsening conditions of the USA blockage, the arrival of the COVID 19 pandemic and finally the Ukrainian war led the GoC to shift from an economy based on imports to look for opportunities of self-sufficiency in food production. Within this framework, SLM became the key option to ensure agricultural practices are applied in ways to efficiently utilize inputs and financial resources, use as much as possible local resources and knowledge and therefore protect the natural resource base on which the economy grows. Challenges obliged management to be fully aware and fully able to take advantage of opportunities, partnering at national and international level with projects and entities acting in the same thematic and/or intervention areas. Expectantly, as local capacities are built and developed, awareness increased and a larger number of farmers access financial incentives, the need for external support and services may reduce.

The financial sustainability of the financial mechanisms developed is likely considering that a **triple win** situation is created, where everybody wins from the economy, to the producer and the environment and that financial mechanisms are or are likely to be institutionalized and recognized by the new environmental laws. BANDEC reports plans to create a Green Bank or green mechanisms for the banking system. ESEN reports to be committed to continue developing and improving the REVERDESEN financial insurance, making it more flexible and more adapted to the producer's needs. Interestingly, this very innovative product has been developed by the private sector but has gained government recognition. Water financial incentives are still in a pilot phase but have already demonstrated great possibility for impact and therefore for replication. There is clearly the need to continue training and increasing awareness as the major obstacles are linked with a lack of understanding of their functioning.

4.4.2.2 Socio-political risks to sustainability

The socio-political risk to sustainability can be considered minimal: farmers largely gain from the processes implemented, having access to credit improved conditions, financial mechanisms and opportunities which did not exist before and being able to appreciate through demonstration and replication activities that the application of SLM practices revert positively on their economy and production.

The financial mechanisms managed by the Project are implemented in sites which are being recognized in one of the tree categories of SLM. This process began under Project 2, continued with Project 3 and will be further applied with Project 4. Aware of the economic benefit that these mechanisms generate for producers and their families and the incentive they represent in increasing local production, the possibility exists that

the 22 management and service centers of AMA scattered throughout the island take full responsibility for extending access to financial incentives to all farmers complying with any of the SLM category.

Activities implemented under Project 3 and the CPP as a whole have gradually led to a change in attitudes and mindset in the farmers community as well as in the institutions, formidably increasing chances for socio-economic sustainability of the actions proposed. Proper information is part of human rights and a due activity in countries where the environment and the impact of climate change are so important for people's lives. The intense training and communication program implemented increased awareness about the existence of financial mechanisms and the benefits of applying SLM practices. All activities proposed and implemented answer local needs in terms of increasing production and producing economic savings; interviews largely confirm appreciation for the support received and eagerness to take part in the opportunities offered.

4.4.2.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

Institutional risks to sustainability are minimized by the existence of an appropriate legal framework for food security and environmental sustainability; all OP15 key areas are well integrated in the GoC environmental laws. Interviews reveal a great degree of institutional commitment, moving from environmental sustainability as a simple conscientization discourse to financial SLM incentives becoming an economic reality where everybody gain; stakeholders recognize that this is a great achievement for Cuba. Collaboration with MINAG allowed the modification of the PNCMS regulations, allowing SLM categorized farms to get priority in accessing financing. The Scientific Council or Council of Experts is integrated by key institutions for the implementation of SLM. Institutions as INRH appears really interested in regulating the use of the water resource in a way for the user to obtain savings more than to increase its income. On paper, even an insurance company as it is ESEN appears interested in the impact that its new REVERDESEN product may have on the life of the Cuban producer and on the environment more than on its economic return. The development and implementation of this combined insurance, which is the first of its kind in Cuba, has innovative elements which can be of interest even outside of the country.

The presence of MINCEX strengthens the links with the bilateral cooperation; it supported and facilitated exchanges of experience with nearby countries such as Panama, Dominican Republic or Costa Rica; a process to obtain certification of sound agricultural practices from the German Global Gab firm is under way and visits to the Dominican Republic allowed appreciation of farms with similar conditions already undergoing these processes. MINCEX also plays an important role in ensuring that the positive experience of projects is not lost when international financing ends: when a terminal evaluation concludes, a directive committee is convened to identify lessons learnt and establish a continuation and replication strategy.

The experience gained with the whole CPP is likely to be maintained and institutionalized; most Management Units created under the Project are likely to be institutionalized as their technical and coordination role are widely appreciated, i.e. the MINAG Soil Management Unit created under Project 1 is already institutionalized within the policy for soil development and sustainable agriculture in recognition of the irreplaceable role in soil, water and forest conservation; this soil system is well represented also at provincial and municipal level. SLM is part of the Food Security and Sovereignty Law and widely incorporated in environmental laws.

The NIM approach has reinforced capacities and management has full ownership of the CPP and its projects. Interinstitutional links were strengthened, with the signature of various collaborative agreements. At local level, government, research centres and branches of BANDEC and ESEN are increasingly aware and strengthened in their capacities. Territorial teams included the participation of experts from CITMA, the Soil Direction of MINAG, Government Forestry Service, academic and research institutions, BANDEC and ESEN representatives and civil society which in Cuba is represented by cooperatives. The MES played an important role in the supervision and coordination of the training, coordinated by provincial and municipal teams; this should minimize loss of the experience when staff rotate.

Links were also strengthened with universities, i.e. the University of Holguín, the University of Granma and other research centers in the territories. Exchanges of experiences among producers were largely facilitated, i.e. “Parque Chayote” in La Sierrita de Cumanayagua community; “Las Margaritas” farm, a demonstrative site; “La Esperanza” farm in another demonstrative site in Trinidad; “El Alacrán” farm in Camagüey province, a replication site. The establishment of these key alliances allowed the Project to dynamize results and reach over not only to national institutions but also establish collaboration with international partners, i.e. the GEF SGP, the BASAL project, the Linking Landscapes Project among others (see above Table 6).

4.4.2.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

All Project’s activities are tailored towards environmental sustainability. Management underlies the importance to have reached economic results with actions promoted from the environmental sector and by environmental institutions, AMA *in primis*. This is an extremely important achievement which having gained the recognition of the economic ministries and even the banking system well sets the basis for activities to continue manifesting the mentioned **triple win outcome** where the economy of the state, the economy of the farmer and the environment gain. Environmental sustainability is more likely when the economy gains.

As an example, the PNMCS - which is a program with a centralized budget and not a fund - has integrated sustainability concepts (i.e. the erosion rate) since the CPP is in place and the Hydrographic Commission became a priority; this policy is now well established and under implementation but clearly requires further training and information efforts to reach all producers. The Forestry Management Unit has taken full ownership of the soil and forestry conservation measures identified, including the concept of calculating the erosion rate, application of measures for fire control and the promotion of native versus alien invasive species; these measures are being included in the Forestry Programme up to 2030 with the objective to extend activities to all farms and continue addressing erosion issues, probably under Project 4.

Awareness raising activities are key for environmental sustainability; as these are accompanied by demonstration and replication activities, the adoption of SLM practices is likely. Further efforts should be made to target women and young people in training and awareness raising activities.

4.4.3 Country Ownership

Country ownership has been extensively described above describing alignment of the Project activities with national development policies and plans. The Project is a direct answer to the requirements of the UNCCD and OP 15 policies as well as to the latest food and environmental strategies of the GoC. AMA and CITMA have taken the lead for successfully implementing awareness raising, training and technical assistance activities, fully involving both environmental and economic ministries and departments at national and local level; remarkably, a strong and solid collaboration has been established also with the banking sector and with the National Insurance Company, with an overall country-wide recognition of the importance of the processes started. Government co-financing well above original pledges (with the considerations taken for the modification of the exchange rate between the American dollar and Cuban peso) is a clear sign of interest and commitment.

As women and men farmers and producers are both those most at risk from land and natural resources degradation and contributors to unsustainable land management practice, their involvement in training and demonstration activities is the key to sustainability and appropriation of the SLM practices proposed.

4.4.4 Gender equality and women’s empowerment

The Project is rated as GEN 2 or gender equality being as a significant objective, with activities tailored to reduce the gender gaps in access to and control over resources, improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance and targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women. The Gender Action Plan originally developed was of quite poor quality; the RTA and UNDP requested a proper gender analysis for a long period but an updated version was made only when FLACSO actualized

the SESP and developed the SEP in May 2022, too late to make implementation of all envisaged activities which are likely to be carried over to Project 4. The Gender Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture was the leading strategy. The gender component in the PRF is included for indicators 01; 2.1; and 3.1. On paper Cuba has the conditions for a substantial participation of women; the reality of the field has however showed that some indicators requesting a participation of women as a percentage of the total farmers involved was overestimating the overall presence of rural women in working age; this was one of the findings of the mid-term exercise which recommended to reduce those percentages.



Management has implemented actions to better involve women in the intervention areas, has established gender focal points at pilot sites and reported in PIRs life histories of rural women. At Project management level, there is a large number of participating women, including in the provincial teams, most of which are coordinated by ladies. Management reports that as a result of an increased participation in training (agroforestry, livestock, home gardens and medicinal plants among others) and as receptors of information and technical assistance, working and living conditions of women improved, with more employment opportunities offered to women.

Interviews with the provincial team of Villa Clara in Guamuhaya reveal that the Credit and Services Cooperative "Domingo Lara" in Manicaragua municipality, which is a demonstrative site, has established a mini-industry, with 19 women, that the association is led by a woman and that production is intended for the self-sufficiency of its members and surplus profits are equally distributed.



Reportedly, gender relations in the forestry sector are promoted and improved at all levels (i.e. joint actions with FMC and ANAP; three women heading forest brigades in the Trinidad Silviculture Company (Guamuhaya); the nursery of Pitajones in Santi Spíritus, totally managed by nine women- has been supported with inputs and was able to produce 198,000.00 timber and fruit tree stands for the Trinidad municipality and a part of Santi Spíritus province, with a larger production capacity). Women of demonstrative sites had opportunities to exchange experiences. FLACSO workshops for updating the gender action plan identified in specific situations the limitations that women and men have to access

financial incentives, with cultural beliefs still preventing women from an equal participation, i.e. in the Cauto intervention area, the "Estevez Ruz" farm. Positively, there has been cases where women involved in Project actions were able to become leaders, i.e. CCS Domingo Lara (a replication site) or to be assigned land in usufruct. Women were involved as much as possible in all training activities, have been given the opportunity for new sources of employment and to become extension agents for SLM practices.

The participation of women in the Project increased in absolute terms, and also in relation to the percentage of women farmers against men farmers but it remains low and require further attention. Although the political will exists to reduce the gaps in the participation of women (i.e. the national program *El Adelanto de la Mujer*), gender equity in the farming sector remains challenging: even considering the suggested revision of the mid-term exercise, the number of involved women farmers remains low in the target areas.

4.4.5 Cross-cutting issues

Project 3 directly contributes towards the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. During Project implementation, a number of legal and regulatory measures have been taken towards food security and sovereignty and the creation and implementation of financial incentives largely contributing to improve production, water savings and reduce the need to import food; therefore, there is a direct contribution towards the SDG of reducing hunger.

The large participation of institutions at national and local level, of producers and end users answers the specific human right to wide and equitable information and benefits. As mentioned, efforts should be made to ensure a larger participation of the rural women to ensure benefits are widely shared.

The Project is well integrated in the UNDP environment portfolio, generating added value to other projects and contributing to the national policy discussion on food security and sustainable land management but also to the larger economic and regulatory context which has recently evolved in a conducive way towards environmental management and sustainability.

The experience of Cuba is certainly relevant for other countries in the region and/or of other small islands states with similar priority needs; the implementation of new and innovative financial mechanisms should be shared as it may be of paramount importance for environmental governance and therefore in poverty alleviation. Some of the actions implemented have a strong innovation character certainly for Cuba but possibly also for other countries, i.e. the way the combined insurance REVERDESEN is drafted.

Sharing of experience, leveraging knowledge and skills for replication and upscaling is in line with UNDP's approach to support South-South and Triangular Cooperation in order to maximize the impact of development, hasten poverty eradication, and accelerate the achievement of SDGs. Cuba has engaged with other countries and actors in the region such as Dominican Republic, Panama and Costa Rica sharing and benefitting from experiences, including the possibility to get sound agricultural practices certified.

A certain level of international recognition is appreciated with the inclusion of the positive experience of the mentioned "Tierra Brava" farm in the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD COP as well as the presence of the GoC in Chile which obtained explicit recognition of the work achieved in SLM by the CEPAL.

4.4.6 GEF additionality

Certainly a revision of the design of Project 3 at inception would have created the possibility for the GEF to target barriers present in 2019 more than in 2005 as the situation had quite evolved by the time.



Notwithstanding, in terms of **GEF's additionality**, the CPP Project 3 definitely helps institutional and private stakeholders to approach a transformational change for SLM through a cross-cutting approach bringing both the environment and the economic sector on a plan of shared objectives. Sustainable environmental management results from increasing the capacities of diverse stakeholders to access financial incentives and apply SLM practices and promoting critical thinking at institutional level informing decision-making. Many of the actions designed are innovative for Cuba as they target significant drivers of land degradation and are designed to create

synergies within the government and with development partners.

4.4.7 Catalytic/Replication Effect

The design and implementation of financial mechanisms and of SLM practices strengthen the links between economic and environmental management and sustainable production, thus contributing both to food security and environmental sustainability. The catalytic and replication potential of the activities are likely:

- as development partners and others projects join efforts and continue collaborating and sharing opportunities, i.e. with other GEF-UNDP projects in Cuba such as the GEF SGP, BIOFIN, Connecting Landscapes, and the recently approved ECOVALOR project with the purpose to strengthen the activity of Project 3 to widely diffuse the concept and the implementation of new financial incentives in agricultural,

forestry and livestock sectors. The identification of synergetic collaboration with international partners and programmes has been a strategy of Project 3 management;

- as national institutions continue to collaborate and reinforce ties and collaborative agreements;
- as knowledge management, awareness raising and training activities reach out to all the country's farmers;
- as information is shared outside of Cuba through the GEF and UNDP channels to increase the possibilities for South-South cooperation; farmers exchanged experiences with their homologues in Panama and Dominican Republic, a unique opportunity for validating the soundness of the Cuban SLM experience and to learn from experiences in similar climatic and geographical conditions.

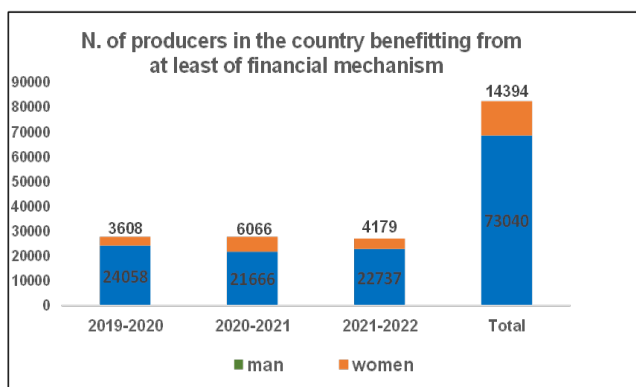


A collaboration agreement was signed between the Ministry of the Environment of Panama and the Environmental Agency of Cuba. Project 3 results were shared during the IX Interamerican International Convention of Cooperatives, with the participation of Cuban cooperatives members who were able to interchange experiences. A key event was the participation in the meeting to interchange experiences for the GLOBAL G.A.P certification process of sound agricultural practices and its impact on exporting firms; the possibility to undertake this process of

certification is under evaluation for farms categorized under SLM in Cuba. Exchanges occurred with the Dominican Republic about the conservation of ecosystems goods and services and environmental issues.

4.4.7 Progress to Impact

Impact is clearly manifesting. The main objective of the Project is to increase the number of producers receiving the benefits of the existing financial mechanisms and new ones proposed and managed by the Project. Management has taken an integrated approach, delivering information at all levels and about all financial mechanisms, implementing training on existing and new financial mechanisms as well as on SLM and sustainable agriculture practices, provided technical assistance, showed the benefits of SLM at demonstration sites and facilitating reproducing them at replication sites.



Training implemented and information delivered has allowed demonstration and replication activities and to have **73,040** farmers throughout Cuba able to access at least one financing mechanism during the years of Project implementation; **women** remain underrepresented, with only a **19.7%** of the total number and therefore being an area on which management is required to further invest; of this number, **19,368 farmers (11.5% women)** are in the intervention areas of Guamuhaya and Cauto Basin (see details in the PRF matrix

in [Annex E](#)). The most used financing schemes are FONADEF, PNMCS and credits granted by BANDEC both at national level and in the intervention areas. Training and information programmes allowed to increase the number of institutions at both national (9) at local level (25) aware of the existence of financial incentives for SLM and of their functioning so to be able to orient end users. At local level, these are mainly represented by the various branches of BANDEC and ESEN in the territories. Clearly the experience acquired in the intervention areas is facilitating the application of financial mechanisms in the rest of the country.

Project 3 found itself in the perfect conditions, with a management team already in place and experienced and an enabling political and regulatory context which certainly favored the early manifestation of impact, i.e. a national policy strongly prioritizing sustainable agriculture through the Food Sovereignty Policy and the 63 Measures, the National Plan to Combat Climate Change, the Environmental Strategy and associated

environmental laws not to mention the new monetary policy towards the American dollar. This shift of perspective from an economy based on imports of food and food production items to finding opportunities for improving self-sufficiency is compelled by the worsening USA blockage which affects all sectors of the economy, the occurrence of the COVID 19, and the more recent war in Ukraine with overall increases in price and shortages of fuels and energy dependent items; in this picture, the adoption of SLM measures becomes paramount. As mentioned in other section of this report, the manifestation of impact is eventually distorted by enabling conditions which were already present at Project start (2019) and which greatly modified the context on which Program/Project was originally designed (2005). The Project certainly did not lose relevance face to the government's call to increase agricultural and livestock production, reduce food and food items imports to achieve food sovereignty. Yet, the barriers present in 2005 were gradually losing strength and an actualization of design would have certainly led to setting more ambitious targets.

Notwithstanding, the Project can be presented as *a good practice* for: **the economy of the nation** as measures support the reduction of food imports and the increase of production; **the environment** as institutions leading natural resources and agricultural policies focus on SLM and strongly and effectively collaborate; and finally **producers** who are able to access financial mechanisms at favorable conditions and means to increase production while obtaining savings; financial incentives motivate farmers to change the business-as-usual way of operation to adopt SLM practices.

The Project is part of the larger CPP programme, implemented for over 15 years as a unique experience in the country, demonstrating that a change of attitudes and mentality are possible when actions are sustained over a long period and inspired through active training, delivery of information and technical assistance and demonstrations rather than somehow imposed; its contribution to the sustainability of the other CPP projects is undeniable. Demonstration and replication activities brought evidence-based changes which could be directly appreciated by producers in forestry, livestock and agriculture sectors.

Impact is manifesting concretely in the increase of the quantity of land under sustainable management and in production. The State becomes less involved in administering resources directly and moves towards a more regulatory role, with an increased emphasis on decentralization at provincial and municipal level and on individual and private forms of tenure and production. Remarkably and quite unique, the implementation of economic incentives stems from actions promoted by environmental institutions, *AMA in primis*; while environmental investments are reactivated, economic and financial incentives serve both the food security and sustainable environmental management objectives.

5. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The Project is **relevant** in relation to GEF OP15 strategies, aligned with UNDP policies and plans and instrumental for implementing national policies and legislation on food security and environmental management. The Project is part of the larger CPP programme and certainly responding to needs; the Project construction is solid and was valid at design stage; the inception phase failed to validate and adjust design to the country's political and regulatory reality and to consider actions already implemented under the CPP programme, including awareness about financial incentives for which there was already a high demand by local farmers at Project start. The evaluation of achievement requires these elements to be contemplated so that the excellent performance remains but it resizes to the context; substantially, more than a development problem with clear barriers, a certainly needed but already well-established policy has been financed.

The UNDP supported NIM chosen is appropriate; the Government management units set up are fully empowered and appropriate, with a strong leadership and vertical control, ensuring achievement of both quantitative and qualitative results. **Adaptive management** has been skillfully and systematically applied to counteract difficulties posed by the USA blockage and the COVID-19 pandemic which could have impeded achievement of results within the deadlines without the capacity of Cubans to face difficulties and find alternative solutions. The achievement and also overachievement of targets, many of which already reached at mid-term, stem from conducive policy and regulatory conditions, institutional and interinstitutional collaboration as well as management capabilities absent at Project design; overall, more ambitious targets could have been established. The result is that for the first time in the history of the country and – based on the evaluators' experience - rare also in the international context – economic outcomes manifest from actions promoted by the environmental and not by the economic sector; this is not to say that barriers are not still present and that more needs to be done to spread awareness of the existing financial opportunities for SLM and for the complex and interlinked functioning of ecosystem services. Therefore **implementation** is rated as **highly satisfactory** having been able to take advantage of the favorable **legal and policy framework**, a **collaborative institutional environment** and management capacities already in place within the ongoing CPP programme which is under implementation with its various projects since 2008. **Management** is effective in obtaining results, leading the strategies, bringing together environmental and economic ministries and institutions but also fully involving the banking and insurance sector, all of them with the common objective to contribute to the new Cuban food sovereignty policy which strongly requires finding alternatives for food self-sufficiency and therefore to preserve the natural resources base and the services of the ecosystem. Management has been **effective** at national and policy level as much as at local level, where training and demonstrative /replication activities were possible thanks to strong territorial links; local interdisciplinary teams played an even higher role than expected due to the limitations imposed by COVID 19 to movements of the national team. The wide network of BANDEC and ESEN branches beautifully complement CITMA, MINAG and other ministries local representation, not to say the academic sector. Civil society is mainly represented through cooperative associations; there is space for further opening to the interests of civil society, with larger investments in the participation of the non-government sector and of the rural woman.

The Project has reached and also overreached most of the targets of the indicators, especially considering that the indications of the mid-term exercise have guided the implementation strategy, even if they were not translated into a revision of planning which would have taken time and probably be too complex. Existing and new financial mechanism have been systematized into guiding and information material which is used for training and awareness raising; there is evidence that producers are increasingly accessing financial mechanisms; existing mechanisms have been revised in their regulatory forms when deemed necessary and new financial mechanisms have characteristics of innovation not only for the Cuban context but possibly also in the international one, i.e. the combined REVERDESEN insurance.

The quality of the outputs is generally outstanding with chances for **Sustainability** at all levels as rarely seen in development projects. The strategies implemented produce a **triple win situation**, where the national economy, the economy of the farmer and the environment gain, making the process likely to be sustainable: **institutionally** because government entities collaborate towards a common objective and the **consultative process** is effective with AMA playing a recognized leadership. Quite interestingly, various of the management units created under the CPP and this Project are being institutionalized for the coordination role they are playing in their specific area; **financially** because the policy framework allows allocations of funds and at production level savings are possible; **socio-economically** because awareness raising activities are well complemented by demonstrative and replication actions which overall motivate the producer towards the application of SLM practices and to access financial incentives allowing increased production and also economic savings; and finally **environmentally**, as agricultural, livestock and forestry practices contribute to maintain ecosystem goods and services, so that SLM becomes the viable working model to preserve the health of the natural resources base.

Impact can already be appreciated in the institutional and socio-economic uptake of the actions proposed, in the numbers indicating that financial incentives are being increasingly utilized and also in the increase in production (i.e. vegetables, fruits, milk) at farm level. A methodology for calculating the erosion rate is increasingly used, with results indicating an encouraging decrease. Definitely more needs to be done to ensure that knowledge and awareness reach all farmers of the country, especially in dry and more prone areas to the effects of climate change; it is also necessary to invest more in the participation of the rural woman, creating the conditions in the family for alleviating her from domestic tasks and being able to better involve in production activities; when this happens, it is not rare to appreciate how they embrace SLM practices and become leaders. It is also time for civil society to find expression beyond the traditional cooperatives to ensure empowerment of community leaders as facilitators and technicians in formation of new leaderships, especially for women and young leaders; the implementation of the CPP Project 4 provides further opportunities to strengthen and deepen actions.

5.2 Lessons Learnt

The CPP Project 3 has generated in Cuba a number of lessons, many of which have been compiled into a Manual of Lessons Learnt developed for the entire CPP; lessons learnt are also identified in the final report of Project 3, in Spanish; therefore this chapter may be redundant and reference is made to these two comprehensive reports (see note 2 in the executive summary). Here below some of the key lessons are listed.

L1. Project design requires to be adjusted to the reality present at the time of its commencement, when a long period elapsed since its original construction. The excellent performance of the Project is partly explained by conditions at Project start which diminished the force of the barriers originally identified; targets could have been set in a more ambitious way and the baseline adjusted, should design be revisited and validated during the inception phase. The GEF involves lengthy and often discouraging processes for the revision of the PRF; however, if the strategy remains valid, setting up new and higher targets should be considered. Since 2021, the compilation of PIRs includes a “Minor Amendments” section, with guidance to undergo revisions of the log frame if changes are minor and do not restructure the goal of the project significantly. To date UNDP discourages such changes and expects more clarity from the GEF as to the process to conduct such minor adjustments.

L2 Changing approaches, attitudes and mindset takes time. The Project manifests impact because activities are implemented in a favorable regulatory and policy context and because they are framed within the CPP which overall has been implemented for at least 15 years. A usual 4-5-year project can set the basis for changes which can only be appreciated in larger period of time.

L3. SLM is a cross-cutting landscape approach, requiring a large consultative process at national and at local level, with an effective leadership. Impact is manifesting because AMA is fully appropriate of the actions proposed and effectively promotes a national dialogue across sectors, favored by the new policy for food sovereignty, which involves not only the economic, productive, and environmental institutions but also the banking and insurance sectors, greatly

facilitating the promotion and application of financial incentives. In addition, all institutions are very well represented at territorial level, smoothing communication, training and the uptake from provincial and municipal entities which gather interdisciplinary teams. Overall, this permits a holistic analysis and approach.

L4. Information and awareness raising are key activities, the effect of which is amplified when demonstration and replication actions bring evidence to end users. The double approach of investing resources at national level for identifying and promoting financial incentives as well as at local productive level is key to gain the trust and collaboration of end-users, who are informed of financial opportunities and trained on their use but also exposed to the evidence that SLM practices revert into well-being of the entire family in terms of livelihoods, food security and nutritional quality.

L.5 Collaboration with other projects is not only important for the synergies created but is part of the strategy to face hindrances (i.e. COVID 19 pandemic and USA blockage). Experience shows that effective collaboration with other projects/partners create synergies and amplify processes but can also be the way to overcome shortages of fuel, transport, food and implements, i.e. the GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP); BIOFIN, Connecting Landscapes, and PROSAM, among others.

L.6 Management Plans at farm level are instrumental to the implementation of agricultural, livestock and forestry activities. Management Plans have been used to gather the commitment of parties, requiring a non-legal value signature which obliged everybody to well understand the proposals and stick to their implementation schedule.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are tailored to improve the sustainability of the actions of Project 3 and to share experiences to inform the design of similar projects. A number of specific and valid recommendations are provided in the Final Report of Project 3 in Spanish, to which the reader is referred.

Table N.13 Recommendations

N.	Recommendation	Responsible entity	Timeframe
A	Design - Monitoring & Evaluation		
A.1	Ensure that Project design reflects the reality of the policy framework and of the field at Project start. The Inception phase is there to ensure that design is validated not only in the strategy but also in the baseline and targets; if the GEF allows less complex and lengthy procedures for minor changes, management should always opt for adjusting the construction of the project.	GEF for guidance; UNDP CO Management	For future projects
A.2	Consider modernizing M&E tools for managing data: although internet connections are unstable in Cuba and management is able to store and retrieve information easily, considering the CPP as a whole much could be done to make data analysis and reporting more immediate and structured, i.e. using an online smart-sheet to allow systematic registration of performance data, uploading and generating documents and reports; data on project participants and beneficiaries would be quickly available and could include the careful monitoring of the Gender Action Plan and gender mainstreaming indicators which is carried over to Project 4. Gender-disaggregated data should be collected also for people accessing financial mechanism to ensure equal opportunities. Adopt Core Indicators versus Tracking Tools as currently required by GEF.	Management	Under Project 4
A.3	SESP, SEP and Grievance Mechanism to undergo quality checks. Sharing concerns expressed by the UNDP RTA, this TE subscribes to the need to ensure that SESP, SEP and Grievance Mechanism undergo the required quality checks, and that they are fully implemented, together with the Gender Action Plan under Project 4 which should be re-screened due to the lag in time, and to the potential addition of new project sites. The Grievance mechanisms should be integrated within the institutional structure of MINAG, as good practice, and accountability.	Management UNDP CO	Under Project 4
C	Sustainability		
C.1	Continue to train and increase awareness about SLM practices and financial mechanisms opportunities. Continue improving the normative documents of the financial incentives, implementing training and delivering information, ensuring they are highly accessible, i.e. REVERDESEN and the pilot experience of Mayabeque for water management, among others.	Management	Under Project 4 and the CPP as a whole

C.2	<p>Continue investing in the categorization process of SLM for farmers and in the certification process of SLM practices. Categorizing farmers in the three steps of SLM has environmental value for the institutions and monetary value for farmers. SLM practices can be certified by an external certification company; management has already taken steps in this sense which should be further sustained.</p>	Management	Under Project 4 and beyond
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Annex A – Terms of Reference,

In a separate file

Annex B – Documents consulted/available for consultation

General documents

- TORs for the Terminal Evaluation
- UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluation of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (2020 revision)
- Country Programme document for Cuba (2020-2024)
- Marco de Cooperación de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo Sostenible Cuba 2020-2024
- Cuba Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social hasta 2030 and brochure
- Cuba Estrategia Ambiental Nacional 2021-2025
- UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP)

Project documents

- Project Document: Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms/Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas, in Cuba UNDP/GEF, 2019
- CPP Programme Framework document
- GEF Project Identification Form (PIF)
- Project Inception Workshop Report, date May 2019 at National Level; and Inception Workshops reports in the Intervention Areas
- CEO Endorsement Request
- Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) & associated management plans (attached to ProDoc)
- SESP and Stakeholder Engagement Plan updated by FLACSO Cuba in 2022
- Project Steering Committee MoMs: July 2019, May 201; May 2022
- Various national and UNDP reports, including the Informe Final del Proyecto 3, 2022
- Report of the mid-term consultancy for the evaluation of the Logical Framework, Sept-Oct 2021
- Project, Project Implementation Reports, UNDP/GEF 2020, 2021 and 2022
- Lecciones Aprendidas, Manual, July 2020
- Annual Work Plans 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022
- Project Tracking Tools (Initial and Final)
- Original Gender Action Plan and Revision made by FLACSO in May 2022
- Audit Report NIM 2020 and Project Action Plan 85072 CPP P3
- Budget Revisions (various)
- Co-financing letters: from MINAG through FONADEF of July 2016; through the Dept of Soil of June 2016, from UNDP of June 2016
- Audit reports
- Co-financing report
- Communication and Knowledge Management material
- List of related projects/initiatives contributing to project objectives

Annex C – Itinerary, and Institutions/People interviewed: Jan-Febr. 2023

Task/Interview	Date – Time	Location	Contact
Preparation	First week of January	Home based	
Presentation of Inception Report	Draft delivered on 10/01/23	Home-based	
Interviews with the Implementing Agency UNDP and GEF staff			
-Gricel Acosta, Programme Officer, Nature, Climate and Energy, UNDP CO -Johan Navarro Padrón - Programme Analyst Nature, Climate & Energy, UNDP CO -Patricia Fernández – Programme Associate Nature, Climate and Energy, UNDP CO	20/01/2023	Focus Group Virtual	gricel.acosta@undp.org
			johan.navarro@undp.org
			patricia.fernandez@undp.org +53 5 2893767
Maria Cruz Gonzales, Regional Technical Adviser, UNDP-Panama	25/01/2023	Virtual	
Interviews with MINCEX and GEF Focal Point			
Beatriz Crespín Oviedo, Specialist, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment (MINCEX) - Pedro Ruiz, Punto Focal GEF	17/01/2023	Virtual	beatriz.crespin@mincex.gob.cu +53 5 3455803
Pedro Ruiz, Ministry of Science, Specialist, Technology and Environment (CITMA)	17/01/2023	Virtual	pedrojulio@cenai.inf.cu +53 5 3798345
Interviews with Implementing Partner: CITMA-Environmental Agency			
Alfredo Martínez – National Director CPP-OP15/CPP3	10/01/2023 11/01/2023 31/01/2023	Individual	+53 5 2790609 alfredo.martinez@ama.cu
-Ana A Socarràs Rivero, Coordinator CPP3	11/01/2023	Individual	+53 5 2118737 ana.america@ama.cu
-Martiza García García, President Environmental Agency (AMA) Agency, also presiding the PSC	23/01/2023	Individual	maritzagarcia@ama.cu
-Yamila Vigo, Coordinator, Soil Management Unity, MINAG	19/01/2023	Individual	suelosep@oc.minag.gob.cu
-Juan Herrero, Coordinator Result 3 and DFFFS Unity, MINAG	19/01/2023	Individual	juan.herrero.echevarria1949@gmail.com
-José Pérez Álvarez, representative GEGAM, MINAG	19/01/2023	Individual	jlperez.oc4@geg.cu
-Manuel Tejera, Director Agricultural Dept. BANDEC	24/01/2023	Individual	tejera@oc.bandec.cu
Fermin Mesa, Vice-President Superior Organism Entrepreneurial direction	18/01/2023	Individual	
-Tania Merino, MES, Coordinator Res. 2	16/01/2023	Individual	taniam@mes.gob.cu
-Gloria Gomez, Director, Environment and Natural Resources, CITMA	16/01/2023	Individual	gloriagp@citma.gob.cu
-Dulce Rodriguez, INHR, Mayabeque (EAHM)	16/01/2023	Individual	rodriguezlugodulcemaria@gmail.com
Provincial Coordinator en Holguín -Tania Aranda Ricardo	20/01/2023	Individual	taniaaranda1971@gmail.com
Provincial Coordinator in Villa Clara -Lourdes Castelo Valdés	18/01/2023		lourdes@citmavcl.gob.cu
-Felicita, Director Management Unit IAgriC	18/01/2023		
Interviews and visits in Guamuhaya			
Visit farm Tierra Brava, Los Palacios municipality -Onay Martínez, producer Tierra Brava -Director, BANDEC, Los Palacios -Municipality Representative -Agricultural delegate in the municipality -Bakery administrator and Selling Point and small-industry	25/01/2023	Focus Group Use of financial incentives	
Interviews and visits in Sancti Spiritus - Trinidad			
(National Evaluator with CPP 3 team and provincial coordinators Ernesto Pulido y Lucrecia Sánchez) -Forestry farm La Baria and nursery Pitajones -Cattle farm La Esperanza	27/01/2023	Focus Group	
Debriefing and final interviews			
-Debriefing end of interview phase	01/02/2023		

Annex D – UNEG Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Evaluator 1:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

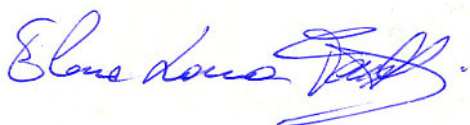
Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁴

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

Name of Consultant: Elena Laura Ferretti

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 in Florence, Italy on February 2023

Evaluator 2:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.

⁴ www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project's Mid-Term Review.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁵

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

Name of Consultant: Orlidia Hechevarria

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 in Cuba on February 2023

⁵ www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

Annex E – PRF Matrix with rating and comments

Coloring Legend

Green: Completed, indicator shows successful achievements	Yellow: Indicator shows expected completion by the EOP	Red: Indicator shows poor achievement – unlikely to be completed by project closure
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Objective: Increase availability and uptake of sustainable financing for SLM to incentivize integrated land management practices for the maintenance of essential ecosystem services.				
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	End of project target	Progress as of Jan 2023	Rating & Comment:
01. Number of producers throughout Cuba who have had direct benefit/support from at least one financing scheme.	-5.000 producers.	55,000 producers (at least 35% women), with a Mid-Term target of 20,000 producers The mid-term exercise (Sept 2021) suggested to: i) increase the end of target to 70.000 as the baseline had changed at Project start due to an overall increase of knowledge and awareness in the country about financing schemes; ii) and reduce the gender target from 35% to 25% as the 2020 Cuban Yearly Demography reports that only 20% of all rural population in the country are women in working age.	-Cumulative progress shows that the number of farmers who have benefited from at least one financing system in the country for SLM increased up to 73.040 (14,394 are women, or 19,7%) . -Most used financing schemes are: FONADEF; PNMCS; credits granted by BANDEC.	-Target achieved and overcome, even considering the suggested revision of the mid-term consultancy. -Impact started to manifest even in the first phases of project implementation, due to increased knowledge and access of producers to financing mechanisms for which at Project start the number of farmers aware of the existence of financial mechanisms was much higher; -The success of this indicator is partly the result of the implementation of Project 1 of the CPP, partly the national and international context which have led Cuba to give priority to food production with respect to the previously import-based food economy, and partly training and awareness activities continued during the development of Project 3 which have overall increased the number of producers being able to access financial mechanisms. -Although the end target is exceeded, women remain underrepresented, even considering the suggestion to reduce the target from 35% to 25%, being this a more realistic observation of women in the farming rural sector.

				-Information reported by management is well substantiated in PIRs/POAs, with links to annexes in a library, including among others MINAG Statistics from provincial delegations, provincial coordinators reports, data from FONADEF and BANDEC.
02. Budget allocation to SLM activities by local production entities throughout Cuba (cooperative farms, State Farms and Production Units)	10,000 USD.	12,500 USD (11.000 USD target at Mid-Term) The mid-term exercise suggested to increase the target to 80,000,000 CUP or 18,496 USD	-Local productive entities throughout Cuba increased their contributions to SLM by 1,309,013.67 CUP, that is 68,868 USD . -SLM actions supported by this financing include: -Water quality assessments -Identification and construction of wells - Awareness raising of local government, and the population in general in the sustainable use and conservation of water quality -TA to purchase motor pumps -Reconstruction of livestock facilities - Construction of houses and road rehabilitation and access to productive land units - Purchase of biofertilizers - Sustainable Agriculture land preparation -Investments in the structure for tube assembly for irrigation systems. -Logistics for training (workshops and courses).	-Target substantially overcome, even with relation to the suggested revision of the mid-term exercise, with spectacular increases in budget allocations to SLM as well as in the number of producers applying SLM practices, as a result of Government's efforts to increase agricultural production and combat the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. -The reasons of this rampant increase is mainly political due to the favorable policy and regulatory context created by the GoC to incentivize sustainable agriculture, in particular: i) monetary decree/order (Jan. 2021) which changed the exchange rate CUP/USD from 1=1 to 24=1, with an important impact in all aspects of the economic and social life of the country, including agriculture thus deeply increasing budget allocations for food production and for SLM; ii) support through the implementation of 63 measures to incentivize sustainable agriculture and forestry (via agroecological and conservation measures), to increase food production and guarantee food sovereignty and nutrition levels for the Cuban people while substituting food imports; iii) in consideration of the importance of the country's food security, in 2020, the National Plan of Food and Nutrition Sovereignty was adopted, in cooperation with FAO. -Information reported by management is well substantiated in PIRs/POAs, with links to annexes in a library,

				including among others MINAG Statistics from provincial delegations, provincial coordinators reports, data from FONADEF and BANDEC.
Outcome N. 1: Mechanisms and capacities for sustainable financing consolidated at national level.				
Total GEF budget: US\$ 95.220				
Output 1.1 Guidance and strategy materials for the development, administration and application of incentive mechanisms.				
Output 1.2 Financial mechanisms to support SLM developed and applied for diverse conditions and beneficiaries.				
Output 1.3 Improved regulatory and technical instruments for certifying compliance with conditions for incentive mechanisms developed and applied.				
Output 1.4 Training, guidance and awareness-raising programmes developed and implemented.				
Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	End of project target level	Progress as of Jan 2023	Comment & Rating:
1.1 Level of budget allocated nationwide to SLM activities	-MINAG 40,000,000 -AZCUBA 8,000,000 -INRH 1,800,000 Total 49,800,000	-MINAG 48,000,000 -AZCUBA 10,000,000 -INRH 2,000,000 Total 60,000,000 The mid-term exercise suggested to revise targets as follow: MINAG: 70,811,983 USD AZCUBA: 13,733,748 USD INRH: 4,446,930 Total: 88,992,661 USD	-MINAG: 193,491,180 CUP/ 73,249,116 USD -AZCUBA: 13,824,397 CUP/ 13,734,764 USD -INRH: 4,597,041 CUP/ 4,446,806 USD Total: 211,912,619 CUP/91,426,685 USD -End of target is strongly higher than planned targets. Evidence of achievements is provided in PIRs, annexing the management expenses of the different entities.	-Outstanding performance results, largely overcoming original planned targets and even reaching those suggested by the mid-term exercise; this can be explained by: i) the intense training and educational programmes implemented by the CPP and this Project 3 that raised institutions' awareness about supporting SLM practices; ii) the changes of the monetary policy which changed the relation CUP/USD with a consequent increased impact of budget allocations to SLM. -The institutional asset with various management units in various ministries/agencies which allowed involvement and empowerment of officials and commitment of their institutions, ensuring a wide application of financial incentives and adoption of SLM practices with a synergetic effect towards the performance of Project 3.
1.2 Level of funding (USD) channeled from existing financing mechanisms to SLM nationwide	-FONADEF 144,000,000 -FNMA 375,600 Total 144,375,600	-FONADEF 200,000,000 -FNMA 100,000,000 Total 300,000,000 The mid-term exercise suggested to revise the FNMA target, wrongly determined at Project start: it	-FONADEF: 1,061,880,160 CUP / 227,294,915 USD -FNMA: 1,470,702 CUP/ 739,973 USD Total: 1,063,350,862 CUP/228,034,888 USD	-The target is achieved for both funds considering that the amount targeted for FNMA was wrongly determined as FNMA disposes of 5-6 million per year for the overall country. -As for all indicators, reporting is well substantiated by evidence annexed to

		should have been in order of 1 M and not of 100 M, as FNMA disposes of a total of 5-6 million/year for all the country.		PIIRs/POAs with data collected from different sources.
1.3 Level of funding (USD) channeled from <u>new</u> direct financing mechanisms to SLM nationwide	-	<p>USD 24,000,000</p> <p>The mid-term exercise suggested to reorient this indicator to only consider new financing mechanism under the responsibility of the Project and discard those depending on other institutions/projects. The recommended target is 2,200,000.00 CUP* (707,540.80USD)</p>	<p>-Cumulative progress of amount of money utilized from new financial incentives at specific sites for SLM is:</p> <p>-Combined Insurance REVERDESEN: 53,410 CUP/2,225 USD</p> <p>-Gradients of the Credit and Commerce Bank (BANDEC): 84,361 CUP/48,656 USD. This is a new incentive which came into force at the end of 2019: producers, according to the SLM category they holds, receive a package of general advantages in addition to the decrease in the interest rate of the loans granted.</p> <p>-Priorities of the National Program for Conservation and Improvement of Soil (PNMCS): 2,625,373 CUP/680,122 USD -Total: 2,763,144 CUP/731,004 USD). This is an incentive of the Ministry of Agriculture: producers categorized for SLM have priority in been granted financing for this programme.</p> <p>-Project managed and implemented two new financial incentives, one with the Bank of Credit and Commerce of Cuba and another with the National Program for the Improvement and Conservation of Soil, which are providing financing to farmers who have received some recognition in SLM. These two initiatives constitute a rearrangement of budgeted financing assigned to these institutions, without creating new funds or economic structures.</p>	<p>-Initially, the Logframe included two payments for environmental services promoted but not operated by Project 3, that is Payments for Carbon Capture (under MINAG responsibility) and Water Quality Ecosystem Services (under INHR responsibility). It was not possible to perform towards these targets as in both cases, the institutions responsible for their operation did not dispose of these funds. The management response, agreed with UNDP, was to consider only the financial mechanisms directly depending on the Project in terms of performance and to reorient this task towards creating awareness and dialogue to strengthen knowledge of decision-makers, managers and farmers on these issues.</p> <p>-Overall, this was an extremely high unattainable target, wrongly determined during Project design as not under direct management control. With this consideration, the target can be considered achieved.</p> <p>-Management explains that in its restructured form, this indicator related to the pilot areas where any of the SLM categories are found to be applied by farmers. Consequently, the amount of funding will increase progressively with the identification of new SLM sites.</p>
1.4 Levels of awareness in institutions at national level of the existence,	4 Institutions (as measured at project start as per ProDoc instructions):	Increase by 4 Institutions	-9 national institutions joined the project (Center for Genetic and Biotechnological Research (CIGB); National Insurance	-Information on this indicator is inferred from information available on the CPP platform, distribution of

objectives and functioning of the proposed financial mechanisms in support of SLM, and the application of the incentives and procedural instruments	-Soil Dept. of MINAG -Livestock Dept of MINAG -Flora and Fauna Dept of MINAG -Bank of Credit and Commerce		Company (ESEN); Agroforestry Group (GAF); Livestock Group (Gegan); Cuban Ranger Corps (CGB); National Institute of Agroforestry (INAF); Institute of Meteorology; National Institute of Agricultural Engineering (Iagric); and Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO-CUBA). -Institutions know the objectives and operation of the financial mechanisms proposed in support of the SLM. Actions developed include: training of experts; learning exchange visits to demo sites for producers to learn experiences in accessing financial mechanism; systematic participation in activities	brochures on existing and new financial incentives in all provinces, municipalities and productive farms, links with the Program through training, publication, technical and legal regulations provided by Project 1, 2 and 5.
Outcome N. 2 Sustainable funding mechanism demonstrated and validated at local level. Total GEF budget US\$ 94,900				
Output 2.1 Financial incentive mechanisms and procedures fine-tuned for application at local level in target areas				
Output 2.2 Training, guidance and awareness raising programmes for the application of financial incentives generated under Component 1.				
Output 2.3 Programmes for developing capacities and awareness among producers in target areas for obtaining and applying SLM incentives				
2.1 Number of producers in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas who have received direct benefits from at least one financing mechanisms	-Guamuhaya: 71 -Cauto 2 -Total: 83 (ProDoc addition mistake)	-Guamuhaya: 1,404 -Cauto 1,506 -Total: 2,910	-Guamuhaya: 6,642 farmers (1.010 are women or 15.2% of beneficiaries) -Cauto: 12,726 farmers (1.215 women or 9.5% of beneficiaries) Total: 19,368 farmers (2,225 women or 11.5% of beneficiaries) -The most widely used financial mechanisms are the PNMCS, FONADEF, and BANDEC).	-Target largely exceeded; yet, the number of women remains low. -This component is transversal to the others and relies heavily on training and capacity building; it was heavily impacted by COVID 19 during 2020 and 2021; at the end of 2021 overdue capacity building activities recovered, with a significant increase of beneficiary farmers; this is also the result of the international and national situation of the economy which pushes farmers and producers to adopt SLM practices.
2.2 Level of budget assignation by local production entities in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas to activities in support of SLM	-Guamuhaya: 3,587,000 -Cauto 2,078,000 -Total: 5,555,000 (ProDoc addition mistake)	-Guamuhaya: 4,200,000 -Cauto 3,000,000 -Total: 7,200,000	The contribution of local productive entities to SLM activities in the intervention areas are: -Guamuhaya: 15,753,988 CUP/4,458,961 USD -Cauto: 5,762,556 CUP/2,829,647 USD Total: 21,516,545 CUP/7,288,609 USD	-Achieved

			-This financing has been mainly applied in: i) Fire Fighting measures; ii) confection of vermiculture and compost; iii) construction of dams in Hydro Regulating Belts; iv) Silviculture Maintenance; v) Repair of livestock facilities; vi) Cleaning of channels; vii) Accessories for modernized nursery assembly; viii) Correction of Gullies in Hydro regulatory bands; ix) Construction of artisan well; x) Preparation of land; xi) Livestock purchase; xii) Purchase of materials for construction of the History Room of the CCS "Domingo Lara".	
2.3 Increased knowledge and awareness among target institutions and their members at local level, regarding the application of financial instruments	15 Institutions as defined at project start according to requirements of ProDoc	-Increase by 15 Institutions	25 territorial institutions joined the project and are well aware of objectives and operation of the proposed financial mechanisms in support of SLM: -5 in BANDEC branches in Cienfuegos, Sancti Spíritus, Villa Clara, Holguín and Granma -5 in the National Insurance Company (ESEN) branches Cienfuegos, Sancti Spíritus, Villa Clara, Holguín and Granma -5 in the National Insurance Company (ESEN) branches in Imías, Guantánamo, Camagüey, Sierra de Cubitas and Jimaguayú	-Target achieved and largely exceeded
Outcome N. 3 Producers with technical capacities to take advantage of financial support for applying SLM practices.				
Total GEF budget US\$ 1,117,220				
Output 3.1 Programme developed and applied for training institutional actors and producers on SLM.				
Output 3.2 Spatial plans for pilot sites/farms developed by producers and their organizations with project support				
Output 3.3 Tree nurseries in target municipalities established and managed with project support				
Output 3.4 Menu of SLM options in the target areas validated and systematized				
3.1 Percentage of producers (men and women) in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas receiving technical assistance on SLM practices	-Guamuhaya: 10% -Cauto: 2%	-Guamuhaya: 80% -Cauto: 75% - The Sept 2021 mid-term exercise pointed to this indicator not being SMART as the % depends on the number of active workers which largely changed during the period; therefore, the % is	- Overall 6,332 farmers received technical assistance (1,871 are women or 29,5%); they are distributed in the intervention areas as follows: -Cauto: 4,340 farmers trained (1.179 are women, or 27.1%) -Guahamuaya: 1,992 farmers trained (692 are women, or 34.7%)	-Because the indicator was not SMART, it is unrealistic to measure it through the percentage of farmers -The success of the Project and the demonstration pilot sites have seen an important increase in the number of producers every year, as farmers were willing to implement actions and request financial support. This means

		<p>not consistent nor sensible as it does not change proportionally in relation to real fluctuations. It proposed to change the % with a number and a gender target based on the considerations done for target 01:</p> <p>-Guamuhaya: 1,500 trained, 30% of whom are women</p> <p>-Cauto Basin: 4,000 trained, 26% of whom are women.</p>		<p>that the baseline of farmers is higher and the indicator cannot be measured as a percentage as originally envisaged.</p>
<p>3.2 Number of producers (farmers /livestock herders/forest resource users) in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas adopting practices to counter land degradation</p>	<p>-Grazing land management: 150</p> <p>-Forest resource management: 200</p>	<p>-Grazing land management: 1,000 (at least 35 women)</p> <p>-Forest resource management: 5,900 (at least 35% women)</p> <p>The mid-term exercise recommended to increase up to 1,500 (25% women) livestock farmers who adopt SML practices and up to 5,900 (10% women) the forestry farmers who adopt SML practices. The reduction in the women % reflects 2021 data published by ONEI indicating that only 20% of the population in the target municipalities is represented by women in working age.</p>	<p>The number of farmers in the two intervention areas adopting practices to combat land degradation are:</p> <p>-Grazing lands: 2.490 farmers (588 or 23,6% are women)</p> <p>-Forest resources: 7.387 farmers (846 or 11.4% are women)</p>	<p>-Achieved beyond targets</p> <p>-As the USA blockage worsened, agricultural inputs became scarcer and led farmers to find alternative ways for production, using less inputs and making it more sustainable and environmentally friendly. In addition the new monetary order made more favorable to access financial incentives.</p> <p>-The number of women farmers in the Project sites remains low, although increasing thanks to the Project's training activities, largely implemented by territorial teams due to the limitations of the COVID-19 isolation measures.</p>
<p>3.3 Area in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas benefitting from SLM</p>	<p>-Agriculture: 0 ha</p> <p>-Grazing: 0 ha</p> <p>-Forestry: 0 ha</p>	<p>-Agriculture: 40.32 ha</p> <p>-Grazing: 2,000 ha</p> <p>-Forestry: 2,000 ha</p>	<p>Agriculture: 4.644,5 ha</p> <p>Grazing: 2.840,79 ha</p> <p>Forestry: 6.085,73 ha</p> <p>Total: 13.571,02 ha.</p> <p>The most common practices are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Crop rotation -Crop association -Fire trails Sowing against slope - Organic fertilizers (compost, vermiculture) -Live and dead barriers living fences -Forage planting 	<p>-Achieved beyond targets. As mentioned, the priority given to food security in the country has led farmers to allow larger areas of land for food production.</p>

<p>3.4 Erosion rates (t/ha/year) in the Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas</p>	<p>-Guamuhaya: TBD at Project start calculate as 40.0 t/ha/year in 2021 -Cauto: TBD at Project start calculate as 19.4 t/ha/year in 2021</p>	<p>-Guamuhaya: 4% reduction -Cauto: 4% reduction</p>	<p>-Cauto: the current erosion rate of 595.32 t/ha/year represents a reduction of 4.27%. -Guamuhaya: the current erosion rate of 2,673.98 t/ha/year represents a reduction of 2.84%.</p>	<p>At June 2021 progress was registered in this indicator although in a non-uniform way: i) well performing in the 5 municipalities of Granma province in Cauto basin where the methodology was already in use; ii) moderately performing in Guamuhaya area as the pandemic affected visiting the area limiting training of the methodology to be applied which could not be conducted by provincial teams as for other trainings. This was later covered but the indicator for Guamuhaya cannot be measured until April 2023, as the methodology requires. This will be after Project closure and data will be used to assess performance within the entire CPP as a national data.</p>
<p>3.5 Areas of forest ecosystems restored (as measured by area of forest with diverse structure) in Guamuhaya (Villa Clara) and Cauto intervention areas</p>	<p>-Guamuhaya: 2,500 ha -Cauto: 10,000 ha</p>	<p>-Guamuhaya: 3,000 ha -Cauto: 12,000 ha</p>	<p>A total of 23,933.26 ha of forest ecosystems have been restored in its two intervention areas: -Guamuhaya: 8.095.19 ha (Villa Clara: 3,667.3 ha; Santi Spiritus: 3,089.78 ha; Cienfuegos: 1.341.1ha) -Cauto Basin: 15.838,07 ha (Granma: 5.691,07 ha; Holguín: 10.147 ha). -Compared to planning, the provinces of Sancti Spiritus and Cienfuegos were added in Guamuhaya intervention area.</p>	<p>-Achieved -The mid-term exercise recommended to increase the number of ha. of restored forest ecosystems up to 6,000 ha. for Guamuhaya and maintain 12,000 ha. for Cauto Basin, given the inclusion of the provinces of Cienfuegos and Sancti Spiritus in the Guamuhaya intervention area.</p>
<p>3.6 Rainwater harvesting systems</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>-95 water harvesting systems have been implemented in the intervention areas, benefitting 182 inhabitants. These are simple water harvesting systems, used for domestic tasks; they are more developed in the Cauto Basin due to great drought faced by the population.</p>	<p>-Achieved, beyond targets thanks to training implemented which led farmers to improve their capacities to save water, also due to climate changes and changes in waterfalls.</p>
<p>3.7 Yield of milk in Guamuhaya and Cauto intervention areas</p>	<p>-Cauto: 1,300 l/ha/yr -Villa Clara 1,300 l/ha/yr</p>	<p>-Cauto: 2,200 l/ha/yr -Villa Clara 2,200 l/ha/yr</p>	<p>Total milk production in the two intervention areas is 18.414,85 l/ha/year: -Cauto: 12.854,2 l/ha/year -Guamuhaya 5.560,67 l/ha/year (Villa Clara: 3.106,6 l/ha/year; Santi Spiritus: 1.105,1 l/ha/year; Cienfuegos: 1.348,97 l/ha/year).</p>	<p>-Achieved, beyond targets.</p>

			<p>-Compared to planning where only Villa Clara appears, the provinces of Sancti Spiritus and Cienfuegos are included in the Guamuhaya area.</p> <p>-The Cauto area has a better performance being an area with a stronger cattle development and which received government improved payments for milk.</p>	
<p>3.8 Areas of sustainable management of soil, water and forest resources in pilot sites</p>	<p>-Agricultural lands: 0 ha -Grazing lands: 0 ha -Forestry lands 0 ha</p>	<p>-Agricultural lands: 1 farm (330 ha) -Grazing lands: 12 farms (393 ha) -Forestry lands 7 farms (644 ha)</p>	<p>Areas under sustainable management of soil, water and forest resources in Project sites are: Agricultural land: 631,25 ha Grazing land: 760,56 ha Forest land: 1.015,68 ha</p>	<p>-Achieved, beyond targets thanks to the priority given to food security by the Government which led farmers to allows larger areas for food production.</p>
<p>3.9 Increased knowledge of extension agents in technical aspects of proposed SLM practices</p>	<p>5 extension agents (was to be measured and defined at project start)</p>	<p>-Increase by 10 extension agents</p>	<p>15 extension agents trained in technical aspects of SLM practices. They come from: BANDEC; INRH; PNMCS; the National Insurance Company; Gender specialist from the University of Havana; specialist of environmental education of the PPD in la Sierrita community; forest ranger specialists from Sancti Spiritus; Agricultural Engineering specislist from Holguin; 5 agrometereology specialist from Villa Clara, Granma, Camaguey, Sancti Spiritus and Holguin.</p>	<p>-Achieved, beyond targets.</p>

Annex F – Activities in demonstration/replication sites

GUAMUHAYA				
(Municipality/ Province)	Pilot Farm	Demostrative/Replication	Main actions	TE Comment
Cumanayagua/ Cienfuegos	Las Margaritas Sierrita (Cienfuegos) -Agroforestry Enterprise -99.3 ha. -State Enterprise	Demonstrative	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training; soil and forestry conservation practices; erosion rate calculation; 45% eradication invasive species; Diagnosis and Monitoring of Biodiversity.	-Strong environmental education activity in collaboration with the GEF SDG Project. -Site is proposed for recognized under category I of the SLM classification and is under revisions.
	Santa Ana - UEB Ganadería Camilo (Cienfuegos) -Livestock Enterprise -591 ha. -State Enterprise	Demonstrative	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training; soil and forestry conservation practices; erosion rate calculation; eradication invasive species; Diagnosis and Monitoring of Biodiversity.	-Project is facilitating identifying a well to increase water sources for irrigation -Aiming at 200kg calves for commercialization
	Gallego Otero Medicinal plant museum (LABIOFAN) -301 ha State Enterprise	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training; soil conservation.	-Important soil conservation work in a mountain area -Production of medicinal plants for pharmaceutical industry of the province.
Trinidad/Santi Spiritus	La Baria (Sancti Spiritus Agroforestry UEB. Agroforestal Trinidad) -74 ha. -State enterprise	Demonstrative site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training; soil and forestry conservation practices; erosion rate calculation; promotion of native species; Diagnosis and Monitoring of Biodiversity.	- It has a small one ha area for self-consume where SLM are applied -Led by a woman technician -Strictly linked to the Pitajones nursery
	Los Molinos (Pecuaría, CCS Romelio Cornelio) -26 ha. -Livestock farm -Private (cooperative)	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training; soil conservation practices.	-Strong soil conservation activity – strictly monitored by provincial team - as located in pre-mountain area
Fomento/Sancti Spiritus	La Escalera (UEB Agroforestal Fomento) -Agroforestry -44.4 ha. Forestry farm with 16 ha. Natural forest and 26.5 plants -Private (cooperative)	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training; soil conservation practices; erosion rate calculation;	-1.9 ha. For self-consume -Strong soil conservation activity – strictly monitored by provincial team - as located in pre-mountain area -Provided data for the calculation of the erosion rate
Trinidad/Santi Spiritus	La Esperanza (Pecuaría, CCS Conrado Benítez) -40.26 ha.	Demonstrative site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; erosion rate calculation; Diagnosis and Monitoring of Biodiversity; water harvesting; support for land	-Tried to shift to pig farming but went back to milk livestock for economic constraints and was able to increase production of 2 210 l/ha/year

	-Livestock farm -Private (cooperative)		property and for credit access to purchase livestock.	-Site is proposed for recognized under category I of the SLM classification and is under revisions.
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	El Llano Forest Farm -Forestry farm -48 ha. With 28.55 natural forest and 19 ha. Plants -State Enterprise	Demonstrative site	-Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; erosion rate calculation; Diagnosis and Monitoring of Biodiversity; promotion of natural restoration and use of endemic specie.	-Self-consume of 0.45 ha. -Support for restauration and maintenance of the access roads -Important soil conservation work -provided data for calculation of soil erosion
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	Santa Ana Forest Farm -Forestry Farm -54 ha. of which 11.8 agricultural land -State Enterprise	Replication site	-Financial mechanisms training; soil conservation practices; erosion rate calculation.	-Strong soil conservation activity – strictly monitored by provincial team - as located in pre-mountain area -Provided data for calculating erosion rate.
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	El Sijú Forest Farm -Forestry farm -38 ha. Of which 31.4 ha. Reforested and 4.4 for self-consume -State Enterprise	Replication site	-Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; erosion rate calculation	-Strong environmental education work using Project 3 material- Strong soil conservation work -Provided data for calculating erosion rate
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	UBPC La Herradura -Cooperative forestry and coffee production -320 ha -State Enterprise	Replication site	-Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; erosion rate calculation.	-Coffee production with introduction of high yielding species; making available seeds in Villa Clara, Sancti Spíritus and Cienfuegos obtaining income for about CUP 300 000 -Important training and soil conservation work -Provided data for calculating erosion rate -Site is proposed for recognized under category I of the SLM classification and is under revisions.
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	Domingo Lara (Cooperative) -Livestock production -153,59 ha. with 38 ha. farming - Private Farm	Demonstrative site	-Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; Biodiversity Diagnostic and Monitoring - Support for land property -Promotion of synergies among projects	-Diversified production towards pig farming -Support facilitated alternatives for milk production and purchase of futher cattle allowing substantially increasing Milk production (in 2021 7 044 l/ha/year).
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	Bruno Diaz Valdivieso (Protected Landscape) -Forestry farm -37.31 ha. (5ha coffee, 18 forests) -Independent producer	Replication site	-Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices.	-Provincial team able to overcome the difficulties of accessing this farm
Manicaragua/Villa Clara	El Naranjito (Protected Landscape)	Replication site	-Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices.	-Provincial team able to overcome the difficulties of accessing this farm

	-Forestry farm 40 ha. (4 ha. Coffee, 1 ha self-consume, 25 ha forest -Independent Producer			
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CAUTO BASIN				
(Municipality/ Province)	Pilot Farm	Demonstrative/Replication	Main Actions	TE Comment
Jiguaní/Granma	Ubenilde Quiñones Ortiz. Agroforestry Farm (UBPC Raúl Sanchez -Livestock farm -30,24 ha (4 forest, 12.42 plants, 12.82 pasture; 1 self-consume -State Enterprise	Demonstrative site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; Biodiversity Diagnostic and Monitoring; production support	-Obtained financing for cleaning work from PNMCS -Project donated water pump -Site is proposed for recognized under category I of the SLM classification and is under revisions.
Jiguaní/Granma	Oscar Mestre Ramírez Agroforestry farm (UBPC Raúl Sánchez -Agroforestry farm -33.58 ha. with 20.16 forest, 13.42 plants -State Enterprise	Demonstrative site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; Biodiversity Diagnostic and Monitoring; production support; erosion rate calculation; promoted use of endemic species.	-Important soil conservation work -Develop Interest Rounds in the nearby community Dos Ríos
Jiguaní/Granma	Juan Alvarez Chacón Agroforestry farm (UBPC Raúl Sánchez) - Livestock farm -13.40 ha. with 11.42 pasture, one ha. forest and one ha. self-consume -State Enterprise	Demonstrative site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; production support	-Reforestation of the lagoon shore with important soil conservation work
Cauto cristo/ Granma	Establado Bufalino de la Granja Nro 1 Camilo Cienfuegos (Roberto Esteves Ruz -Livestock Enterprise -202.1 ha. of which 197.3 ha. grassland, 4.0 plants -State Enterprise	Demonstrative site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation practices; production support	-Obtained financing for cleaning work from PNMCS

Urbano Noris/Holguín	Limoncito. Noris -Agroforestry farm and livestock farm -150 ha. State Enterprise	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices.	-Support to select animal resistant to drought
Urbano Noris/Holguín	Livestock/ Forestry Farm Rodolfo Ávila Maceo Urbano Noris. -Livestock farm -80 ha. milk production -State Enterprise	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices.	-Located in area of the country with strong drought so training focusing in managing the problem.
Urbano Noris/Holguín	La Cuchilla (CPA Manuel Velázquez Urbano Noris _Agricultural and livestock farm -127 ha. -Private Cooperative	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices.	-Support to Access credit for the purchase of inputs for vermiculture..
Urbano Noris/Holguín	La Guacaica . Empresa Agropecuaria Urbano Noris Agroforestry farm -120 ha. -State Enterprise	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices.	-Support to identify a well with INHR -Coco production
Calixto García/Holguín	José Antonio Ricardo Montenegro. CCS Juan Manuel Márquez - Agroforestry Farm -12.28 ha. -Private Cooperative	Demonstration site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; support to production.	-Support to production -Site is proposed for recognized under category I of the SLM classification and is under revisions.
Calixto García/Holguín	Luis Ramón García Calero. CCS Juan Manuel Márquez Agroforestry Farm -17.3 ha. -Private Cooperative	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; support to production.	-Selected as a demonstration site, it shifted to replication site for health problems of the owner impeding to comply with the requirements of the Management Plan.
Cacocum/Holguín	UBPC La Cañada Ancha Holguín -Sugar Enterprise (AZCUBA) -190 ha. State Enterprise	Replication site	Financial mechanisms training; SLM training and practices; soil conservation activities; support to production.	-It belongs to AZCUBA focusing on sugar cane production but also including other production -Received training -Chosen by FLACSO for the gender training workshop to identify gender gaps

Annex G – Tracking Tools at TE stage

In a separate file

Annex H – Rating Table

Table 9. TE Rating Scales

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, Implementation/Oversight, Execution, Relevance

6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS): exceeds expectations and/or no shortcomings

5 = Satisfactory (S): meets expectations and/or no or minor shortcomings

4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS): more or less meets expectations and/or some shortcomings

3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): somewhat below expectations and/or significant shortcomings

2 = Unsatisfactory (U): substantially below expectations and/or major shortcomings

1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe shortcomings

Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment

Sustainability ratings:

4 = Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability

3 = Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks to sustainability

2 = Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks to sustainability

1 = Unlikely (U): severe risks to sustainability

Unable to Assess (U/A): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability

Annex I. Clearance

Terminal Evaluation Report for *PIMS+ 3807 Capacity Building for Sustainable Financing Mechanisms/Sustainable Land Management in Dryland Forest Ecosystems and Cattle Ranching Areas in Cuba*

Reviewed and Cleared By:

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Name: María Cruz Gonzales

Signature: _____ Date: _____