-FINAL REPORT-

MIDTERM REVIEW

GEF PROJECT 9583

**"Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) into Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina."**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GEF ID** | 9583 |
| **UNDP ID** | 5791 |
| **Evaluation period** | September 2019 – December 2022 |
| **Date of evaluation** | February 2023 |
| **Country** | Argentina |
| **GEF Operational Focal Area / Strategic program** | BD-4 P 9  BD-4 P 10  LD-3 P4  LD-4 P5 |
| **GEF Focal Area** | Biodiversity  Land degradation |
| **Executing agency / Implementing Partner** | Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS) |
| **Other project partners** |  |
| **Evaluator** | Ing. Diego Quishpe MSc. |
| **Acknowledgments** | To the Project Management Unit, UNDP and key stakeholders of the provinces of Buenos Aires, Mendoza and Jujuy |

***MTR Final Report*** *- English version*

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**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ADA | Water Authority at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Services of Buenos Aires |
| AFOA | Asociación Forestal Argentina- Regional Delta (Argentine Forestry Association - Delta Region) |
| AOP | Annual Operating Plan |
| APBM | Asociación de Productores Bolivianos de Mendoza (Association of Bolivian Producers of Mendoza) |
| APN | Administración de Parques Nacionales (National Parks Administration) |
| ARBA | Agencia de Recaudación de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires Tax Collection Agency) |
| ASPO | Aislamiento Social Preventivo y Obligatorio (Preventive and Obligatory Social Isolation) |
| BD | Biodiversity |
| CABA | Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Autonomous City of Buenos Aires) |
| CDR | Combined Delivery Report |
| CEFIC  CIOUT | Centro de Educación, Formación e Investigación Campesina  Comisión Interministerial de Ordenamiento Urbano y Territorial de Buenos Aires (Commission for Urban and Territorial Land Use Planning of Buenos Aires) |
| COFELMA | Consejo Federal Legislativo de Medio Ambiente (Federal Legislative Council for Environment) |
| COFEMA | Consejo Federal de Ministros de Ambiente (Federal Council of Environment Ministers) |
| COFEPLAN | Consejo Federal de Planificación y Ordenamiento Territorial (Federal Council for Planning and Land use Planning) |
| CONADIBIO | Comisión Nacional Asesora para la Conservación y Utilización Sostenible de la Diversidad Biológica. (National Advisory Committee for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity) |
| CONICET | Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas. (National Council for Technical and Scientific Research) |
| CONPRODEL | Consejo de Productores del Delta (Delta Producers Council) |
| CPD | Country Programme and Action Plan Document |
| CPOT | Consejo Provincial de Ordenamiento Territorial de Mendoza (Mendoza Provincial Council for Land Use Planning) |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DGI | Mendoza General Department of Irrigation |
| DISPO | Distanciamiento Social Preventivo y Obligatorio (Preventive and Obligatory Social Distancing) |
| DIRPROY  DNBi | Dirección de Proyectos de Cooperación (Management of cooperation projects)  Dirección Nacional de Biodiversidad (National Biodiversity Directorate) |
| EGS | Ecosystem Goods and Services |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessments |
| EIS | Exotic Invasive Species |
| ELUP | Environmental Land Use Planning |
| ENBPA | Estrategia Nacional de Biodiversidad y Plan de Acción (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan) |
| ES | Ecosystem Services |
| FACE  FAO | Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures  United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization |
| FARN | Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Environment and Natural Resources Foundation) |
| FCD | Fundación Cambio Democrático (Democratic Change Foundation) |
| FH | Fundación para la Conservación y el Uso Sustentable de los Humedales / Wetlands International Argentina- Buenos Aires |
| FHNFA | Fundación de Historia Natural Félix de Azara (Félix de Azara Natural History Foundation) |
| FPIC | Free, Prior and Informed Consent |
| FSP | GEF Full Sized Project |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GEBs | Global Environmental Benefits |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| I.I. | Impact Indicator |
| IBA | Important Bird Area |
| IDE Ambiente | Infraestructura de Datos Espaciales Ambiental (Environmental Spatial Infrastructure Data) |
| IDERA | Infraestructura de Datos Espaciales de la República Argentina (Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Republic of Argentina) |
| INA | Instituto Nacional del Agua (National Water Institute) |
| INAI | Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas (National Indigenous Peoples Institute) |
| INTA | Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (National Agricultural Technology Institute) |
| LADA | Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands |
| LD | Land Degradation |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MAyDS | Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina) |
| MAPBA  MINAI | Ministerio de Ambiente de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires)  Ministerio de Agroindustria (Ministry of Agro-Industry) |
| MIPBA | Ministerio de Infraestructura de la Provincia de Buenos AireS (Ministry of Infrastructure of the Province of Buenos Aires) |
| MSW | Municipal Solid Waste |
| MTR | Midterm Review |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NIM | National Implementation Modality |
| O.I. | Outcome Indicator |
| OBIO | Observatorio Nacional de Biodiversidad (National Biodiversity Observatory) |
| ONDTyD | Observatorio Nacional de la Degradación de Tierras y Desertificación (National Observatory on Land Degradation and Desertification) |
| OPDS | Organismo Provincial para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (Buenas Aires Provincial Agency for Sustainable Development) |
| PA | Protected Areas |
| PAN | Plan de Acción Nacional de Lucha contra la Desertificación, Degradación de Tierras y Mitigación de Sequía (National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought Mitigation) |
| PES | Payment for Ecosystem Services |
| PFNM  PIF | Productos Forestales No Maderables (Non-Timber Forest Products)  Project Identification Form |
| PIR | GEF Project Implementation Report |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| POPP | Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures |
| PPG | Project Preparation Grant |
| PROCODAS | Programa Consejo de la Demanda de Actores Sociales (Social Stakeholder Demand Council Program) |
| PRODEAR | Programa para el Desarrollo de Áreas Rurales (Rural Area Development Program) |
| PRODECCA | Programa para el Desarrollo de las Cadenas Caprinas (Goat Value Chain Development Program) |
| PRODERI | Programa para el Desarrollo Rural Incluyente (Inclusive Rural Development Program) |
| Prodoc | Project Document |
| PROSAP | Programa de Servicios Agrícolas Provinciales (Provincial Agricultural Services Program) |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| PY | Project Year |
| SAYOT | Secretaría de Ambiente y Ordenamiento Territorial (Secretariat for Environment and Land Use Planning |
| SBAA | Standard Basic Assistance Agreement |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SECIN  SEM-OAT | Secretaría de Coordinación y Cooperación Internacional del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto (Secretariat for International Coordination and Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship)  Sistema para Evaluar y Monitorear la Implementación del OAT en la Argentina (System to Evaluate and Monitor ELUP Implementation in Argentina) |
| SESP | Social and Environmental Screening Procedure |
| SGAyDS  SLM | Secretaría de Gestión Ambiental y Desarrollo Sustentable (Secretariat of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development)  Sustainable Land Management |
| SOBA  SPARN | Secretaria de Política Ambiental en Recursos Naturales (Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources) |
| TE | Terminal Evaluation |
| TICCA  ToC | Territorios y Áreas Conservados por Pueblos Indígenas y Comunidades Locales (Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities)  Theory of Change |
| TSA | Targeted Scenario Analysis |
| UGCÑ | Unidad de Gestión del Qhapac Ñam en Jujuy (Management Unit of Qhapac Ñam in Jujuy) |
| UGQH | Unidad de Gestión de la Quebrada de Humahuaca en Jujuy (Management Unit of the Humahuaca Gorge in Jujuy) |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |

# **Executive Summary**

## **Project Information Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Title:** | Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management (SLM) into development planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina | | | |
| **UNDP Project ID (PIMS#):** | 9583 | **PIF Approval Date:** | | 23 May 2017 |
| **GEF Project ID (PIMS#):** | 5791 | **CEO Endorsement Date:** | | 14 December 2018 |
| **ATLAS Business Unit, Award #, Project ID** | 114826 | **Project Document (Prodoc) Signature Date (date project began):** | | 13 November 2019 |
| **Country or countries:** | Argentina | **Date project manager hired:** | | Current coordinator: June 2021 |
| **Region:** | Latin America | **Inception Workshop Date:** | | 8 April 2020 |
| **Focal area:** | Biodiversity and Land Degradation | **Mid-Term Review completion date:** | | February 2023 |
| **GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:** | BD-4 P 9  BD-4 P 10  LD-3 P4  LD-4 P5 | **Planned closing date:** | | 13 November 2025 |
| **Trust Fund:** | GEF TF | **If revised, proposed op. closing date:** | | 13 November 2025 |
| **Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:** | Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS) | | | |
| **Other implementing partners:** | Buenos Aires Provincial Agency for Sustainable Development (OPDS), currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires (MAPBA)  Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy  Mendoza Secretariat of Environment and Land Use Planning (SAYOT)  INTA (National Agricultural Technology Institute)  INA (National Water Institute) | | | |
| **Project Financing** | ***at CEO endorsement (US$)*** | | ***at Midterm Review (US$) \**** | |
| **[1] GEF financing:** | 8,995,434.00 | |  | |
| **[2] UNDP contribution:** | 200,000.00 | | 33,333.00 | |
| **[3] Government:** | 42,190,000.00 | | 3,179,330.00 | |
| **[4] Other partners:** | - | | - | |
| **[5] Total co-financing [2+3+4]:** | 42,390,000.00 | | 3,212,663.00 | |
| **PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1+5]** | 51,385,434.00 | |  | |

\*Taken from latest PIR]

## **Project Description**

1. The project, "Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) into Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina", aims to generate multiple biodiversity benefits and combat land degradation through the development of a system of policies, governance mechanisms, and technical, economic, and financial instruments for Environmental Land Use Planning. To these ends, the project strategy is based on a "top down" approach for generating national proposals and a "bottom up" approach for capacity building at the territorial level in order to scale project objectives. The structure of the project is based on three levels of implemention: The first level supports development of the project’s general objective through the fulfillment of three Impact Indicators (I.I) described below:
2. **Indicator 1 (I.I.1):** Natural resources managed under a sustainable use and conservation, access and benefit-sharing regime.
3. **Indicator 2 (I.I.2):** Number of direct project beneficiaries (by gender and ethnicity) who improve their livelihoods through environmentally friendly natural resource management and sustainable production.
4. **Indicator 3 (I.I.3):** Degree of improvement in Biodiversity conservation and LD reduction in three target landscapes as a result of ELUP implementation.
5. At a second level, four key results are defined with their respective Outcome Indicators (O.I.) with the definition of eleven (11) outcome indicators (O.I.). The expected results are as follows:
6. **Outcome 1:** Federal strategies and enabling framework to underpin ELUP and support implementation in priority habitats and ecosystems to reduce pressure from key production sectors (target sectors: agriculture, mining and peri-urban infrastructure, tourism). Verified through the performance of three outcome indicators (O.I. 4-6).
7. **Outcome 2:** Application of ELUP instruments and procedures in the pilot provinces with target ecoregions and productive sector land-use planning. Verified through the performance of five outcome indicators (O.I. 7-11).
8. **Outcome 3:** Replicability framework for the adoption of ELUP in all Argentine provinces. Verified through the performance of three outcome indicators (O.I. 12-14).
9. **Outcome 4:** Dissemination of lessons learned, monitoring and evaluation. Verified through the performance of one outcome indicator (O.I. 15).
10. Finally, the development of these performance levels generates an impact of national/global benefits that improve the conditions of biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, environmental land use planning, translated into tangible benefits for people and ecosystems, which are detailed below:
11. 5,079,270 hectares where ELUP has been agreed upon and implemented in priority landscapes in the three pilot provinces.
12. Additional 507,926 hectares in three pilot provinces where expansion is expected thanks to the project's dissemination and co-financing activities.
13. 613,128 hectares in beneficiary landscapes where BD conservation and land degradation reduction benefits have been achieved.
14. 128,370 hectares of land restored in the target landscapes.
15. 11,665 project beneficiaries improve their livelihoods (20% increase in the LADA livelihood index).
16. Based on the architecture described above, the project planned to achieve its goals within 6 years. The project is implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as an agency empowered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and the National Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS) of Argentina as executing agency.

## **Project Progress Summary**

1. At the time of the Mid-Term Review, the project is executing actions towards its four outcomes and the most represenative progress in regard to these actions is that related to the generation of enabling conditions and knowledge to promote the application of ELUP through the creation of regulations, assimilation, articulation and thinking oriented to replication/complementarity. Although there are signs of progress, the post-MTR challenge is to define strategies for mainstreaming the ELUP approach, to provide tangible evidence that allows for appropriation and replicability, and mainly to close the implementation gap that remains between technical and financial progress (22.6%). In general terms, the outcomes show the following progress:
2. a) strategies and favorable federal framework to strengthen ELUP and support implementation in priority habitats and ecosystems to reduce pressure from key production sectors (target sectors: agriculture and livestock, mining, and peri-urban infrastructure), the overall performance of the outcome up to mid-term is on track to be achieved; progress has been made in two of the three component indicators.
3. b) application of ELUP instruments and procedures in the pilot provinces with target ecoregions and for productive sector land use, the overall performance of the mid-term outcome is on track to be achieved, with significant progress in five out of five indicators.
4. c) replicability framework for the adoption of ELUP in all Argentine provinces, the overall performance of the mid-term outcome is on track to be achieved, with consistent progress in three of the three indicators.
5. d) dissemination of lessons learned monitoring and evaluation performance is one out of one for the component indicator.
6. This fact, as mentioned is about conceptual assimilation, at the moment there is no evidence from the "best bet" approach and its testing, identifying the key management point for the improvement of operational support processes to generate ELUP evidence as mentioned above.

## **MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Measure** | **MTR Rating** |
| **Project Strategy** | N/A |
| **Progress Towards Results** | Outcome 1: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) |
| Outcome 2: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) |
| Outcome 3: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) |
| Outcome 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) |
| **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management** | Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) |
| **Sustainability** | Moderately Unlikely (MU) |

The achievement description is in section 4, the results shown are the post-field-mission findings.

## Summary of conclusions

1. The project design presents a clear architecture based on a general objective with impact and outcome indicators that allow interaction and work with various stakeholders that can work under a strategy of complementarity. In addition, it presents a logical Theory of Change (ToC) identifying potential barriers, a strategy of action, assumptions, outcomes, a set of approaches with Top-Down characteristics, i.e., it is based on national guidelines for local assimilation, in which "learning by doing" is carried out by provincial stakeholders to promote replication and scalability processes in the Republic of Argentina. Regarding this, three phases were noted: the first of high interest during the formulation of the project on the part of the stakeholders, another of dissipation of interest and rotation of both PMU and local stakeholders, and a current phase in which interest in actions is rekindled, but with asymmetric progress in the outcomes. Finally, at the MTR, a positive characteristic is revealed through demonstration of knowledge about the goals, outputs and indicators defined in the Logical Framework (LF) of results (Prodoc) on the part of the stakeholders, with 94% affirming knowledge and assimilation of the Prodoc.
2. The field mission to the intervention sites and the documents analysis provided a comprehensive view of the activities proposed for the implementation of Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP). It is important to note that the project started during the COVID-19 health emergency. This particularity delayed key ELUP actions such as information gathering, field visits, interaction between stakeholders and activation of two of the three governance mechanisms described in the Prodoc such as the Provincial Working Groups and the Technical Advisory Committee, which, due to their local characteristics, require in-person attendance. Therefore, it is strongly recommended as part of this report to activate these mechanisms, formalize them and document their operation as a strategy for planning, resilience when confronted with change and project leadership.
3. Financial execution shows the least progress in the overall execution of the project. Aspects such as financial uncertainty, inflation and prolonged execution mechanisms have resulted in a progress at midterm of 22% of the budget. The adaptive management and learning that the project's technical team has achieved should be highlighted. Some relevant aspects to mention here are the discussions and consensus to improve execution with each stakeholer involved, the drafting of Letters of Agreement in accordance with the needs, difficulties and possibilities of successful execution, and the development of work plans. However, all these efforts should be perceived as joint implementation strategies for improving execution and alignment with the project's activities and goals. Two stages of action are observed, the first dealing with strengthening the soft processes of the institutions with the increase of operational and financial support both in the PMU and partners, which allows for the conceptual leap to action. The evaluator considers that the conceptualization, knowledge generation and enabling conditions are positive. However, the execution aspects should be strengthened with the support of professionals with knowledge of processes, operations, procurement, financial reporting and execution, i.e., an adequate balance between the technical and operational aspects necessary for projects with these characteristics.
4. At a general level, the project has a clear conceptual intervention strategy with institutional enabling conditions in Mendoza, INTA, Buenos Aires, INA and Jujuy (in that order). However, budget execution has contributed to a large gap in project results, hence at the moment the process of replicating proven actions has no evidence to work from. Therefore, if actions are generated in new provinces, five conditions should be rectifed: a) actions must be considered complementary but not replication, i.e. they support the actions of one or more stakeholders; b) in the case of change of a stakeholder, their express wish to participate is important c) the actions must be strongly framed in the fulfillment of Prodoc indicators and objectives, d) the strengthening of the operational management team must be prioritized in order to achieve an appropriate technical-operational balance and finally an effective PMU leadership must be consolidated for promoting the ELUP approach.
5. During the RMT, three important elements were identified for the application of ELUP in the Argentine territory: political/regulatory support, knowledge development and evidence (tangible benefits). With the elections of 2023, the rotation of national, local and institutional authorities has been identified as a potential risk for implementation, for which it is necessary to identify management and resilience strategies such as those mentioned throughout the document.

## **Recommendations Summary Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Corrective actions for design, implementation monitoring and evaluation** | Strengthening the teams linked to the project (PMU and provinces), in order to maintain a balance between technical and operational performance, for which the Labor Law No. 24.557, known as uptake for discharge, must be operationalized according to the requirements of the project, considering the need to hire personnel to fulfill the programming and resources available in the project (36 months and 78% of the budget, respectively). |
| Development of a results-based management strategy between DIRPROY (Management of cooperation projects) of the Nation, PMU with the support of UNDP, to establish financial execution times and results, which must be in line with the goals planning established in the project’s logical framework. It is recommended that consensus spaces be created (monthly operational meeting) to define short-term agreements to counteract monetary changes, price quotes, budgets, allocation of funds (FACE) and payments based on the planned timeframe. |
| 1. Operationalize the project's governance mechanisms, such as the provincial working groups and the Technical Advisory Committee, to document, guide and formalize (institutional memory) the work agreements and improve the project's operational resilience in the event of changes in management and political positions. |
| Hold a meeting to analyze the MTR as an "inception workshop" to ratify institutional commitments, co-financing and build a "Pareto 80-20" work strategy aligned with the logical framework. This horizontal work concept requires internalizing the ELUP approach, identifying which actions are substantially important (20) and which result from the fulfillment of these (80), in order to apply different lines of work, considering that having various stakeholders (INA, INTA, Provinces) is a strength for the fulfillment of the project's objective. |
| **Proposed future directions underscoring key objectives** | 1. Develop a communication strategy to make the work of ELUP visible under two approaches, the first one the recognition of the approach itself, coupled with the dissemination of achievements and results and a third one that allows inter-project synergies through platforms of knowledge, governance and exchange of experiences. |
| Develop the soft aspects of project execution through administrative-operational mechanisms in the PMU and partners, as a first task to promote the successful implementation of the letters of agreement, such as enabling transfers based on results and not only on compliance with minimum reporting percentages, substantial investments, specificity of response for each territory; this set of elements and others generated by the project must be constantly monitored without losing sight of the central purpose of the ELUP approach. |
| Horizontal application approach in the project: Given the extensive participation of stakeholders and provinces, identify opportunities and leverage them to other territories, although during the MTR the possibility of increasing the number of provinces for the project was proposed, this should only be carried out after an analysis of "success factors" since the "replication" approach cannot be applied to the MTR because the actions and their benefits have not been tested. However, the "complementarity" approach can be applied, as has already been done in the work that INA will carry out in addition to INTA's actions. |
| Generate an entrepreneurial or performance approach to interventions, through the inclusion of the private sector or others that, under review, can promote the economic sustainability of ELUP in the medium term. Also explore the mechanisms established in the Prodoc such as incentives, financing, cooperativism, set of relevant actions within the framework of the horizontal work strategy and the sum of efforts/stakeholders post MTR to achieve objectives and goals in the timeframe of the project. |

# **Introduction**

## **Purpose of the MTR and objectives**

1. The Mid-Term Review is conducted as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the GEF/UNDP portfolio, and aims to assess the progress of the "Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina" project in achieving the objectives and results set out in the Project Document, and determine early indications of success, findings or delays, in order to identify challenges and issue corrective recommendations necessary to ensure the achievement of the expected results prior to completion.
2. The Mid-Term Review also aims to evaluate four key categories of project progress, as outlined below:
3. *Project strategy*
4. *Progress in achieving results*
5. *Project implementation and adaptive management*
6. *Sustainability*
7. It also includes a review of cross-cutting issues on gender, indigenous peoples and women's empowerment.

## **Scope and methodology**

1. The mid-term review covered the period from September 2019 to February 2023 (3 years), focused on national action, its articulation and derived actions in the provinces in the Argentine territory. To this end, the relevance, feasibility and performance of the impact (objective) and outcome (component) indicators were reviewed. In addition, the progress of the indicators was evaluated under a SMART criteria approach and the progress of the set of actions and identification of which actions should be strengthened by the end of the project was carried out using a modified Pareto methodology.

### **Principles of design and execution of the MTR**

1. In the MTR of the project, a mixed methodology was applied, that is, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, where impact indicators (objective) and outcome indicators (components) were analyzed in a sequential and logical order, through review of documents and access to information from key stakeholders (interviews). This methodology sought an active interaction between the evaluator, the project team, the UNDP Office and other parties involved, in order to enrich the evaluation process and allow timely feedback on the findings (Figure 1).

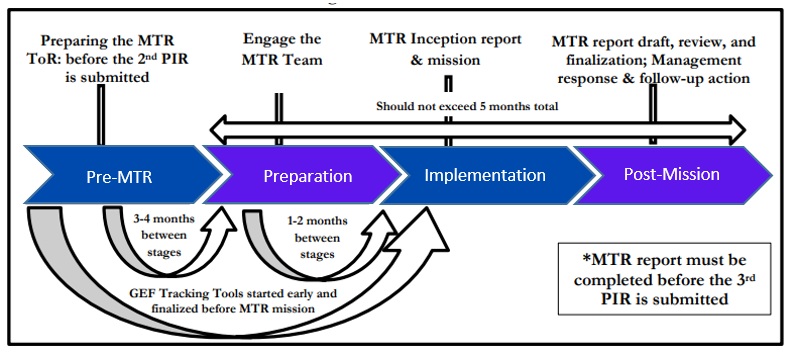


Figure 1. Phases of the MTR. Source: UNDP-GEF, 2014

1. The MTR was executed in four phases:

* **Phase I**. Definition of a work agenda: A work agenda was defined jointly with the technical team of the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the staff of UNDP Argentina, which considered the key stakeholders and institutions identified in the Terms of Reference. Based on the definition of key stakeholders, a work plan of virtual interviews and the schedule of the field mission to the Republic of Argentina was structured.
* **Phase II**. Document review: Based on the information available in the project and with the help of the project team, the data and information collected was compared, which allowed for the fine-tuning of key elements such as: stakeholders, activities, reports, among others.

Relevant documents and information for this phase are Project Document, PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, Environmental and Social Protection Policy, Annual Reports/PIRs, budget revisions, reports on lessons learned, and any other material deemed useful for the MTR (Annex 6.7 List of documents reviewed).

* **Phase III.** Execution of interviews: A semi-structured interview model was used, with specific questions, according to the roles and engagement of the stakeholders with the project, a process carried out through individualized interviews and focus groups according to their importance for the MTR.

In this phase, primary information was collected on evaluation criteria, barriers, lessons learned, reflections and finally important findings for the evaluation and dimensioning of ratings.

The results of the interviews will be used to answer the specific questions of the project review.

* **Phase IV.** Discussion of results and systematization of conclusions and recommendations: Key working meetings were held, an initial one that addressed methodological issues, timeline, work agenda, inputs required for the evaluation, the second meeting was held at the formal start of the mission with the participation of MTR stakeholders, a third meeting for the presentation of the main findings prior to the final report to project stakeholders.

### **MTR approach**

1. The MTR had a participatory proactive approach, ensuring a close relationship with key stakeholders, such as the Project Management Unit (PMU), the UNDP Country Office, government counterparts and the MTR team.

### **Data collection methods**

1. For data collection, procedures were followed to gather information related to the impacts and outcomes of the project. The Delphi methodology was used (Figure 2), which employs structured techniques that require an interviewer (evaluator), a questionnaire (evaluation matrix) and a group of experts (key stakeholders).
2. The methodology was applied mainly for the selection of stakeholders and the interview phase, in which the participants responded anonymously, confidentially and without interacting with each other on the questions of the Midterm Review, after which conclusions were drawn on the progress of the project with respect to the objectives and outcomes set out in the Logical Framework.

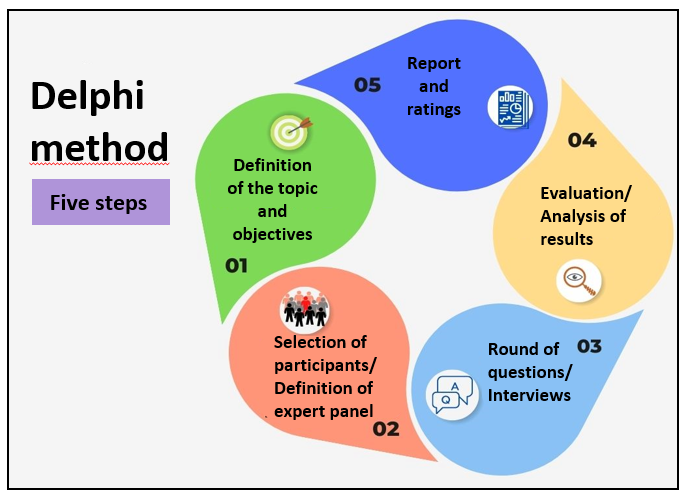


Figure 2. Delphi Method. Source: Prepared by the consultant

### **Limitations of the MTR**

1. The start of the MTR was rescheduled due to environmental issues (heat waves) and the national context, these conditions set the beginning of the review as a virtual phase of interviews with relevant stakeholders. With the initial findings, the field mission was carried out from February 8 to 20 in the Republic of Argentina. The main limitations in the territory were the travel between provinces and at certain times the extremely hot environmental conditions that led to internal rescheduling of the work.

## **Structure of the MTR report**

1. The Midterm Review will consistently follow the guidelines and structure set out in the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Funded Projects 2014*.
2. This report is made up of 6 sections, which are: Executive Summary, Introduction, Project Description and Background Context, Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations, and Annexes.

# **Project Description and Background Context**

* 1. **Development context**

1. The project "Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Development Planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina" corresponds to the Sixth (6th) GEF replenishment. With the approval of the PIF and PPG (2016), the Project formally began implementation in July 2019, with a planned duration of 6 years.

**Environmental and socio-economic**

1. The Republic of Argentina is a federal country composed of 23 provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA). With a vast maritime and continental territory, the country has a natural, cultural and economic complexity and diversity. In fact, it is one of the countries with 15 terrestrial ecoregions and 3 marine/freshwater ecoregions. The ecoregions of the Misiones Atlantic Forest, the Dry and Humid Chaco and the Yungas Forest have the greatest faunal and floristic diversity in the country and the world, the global and national importance of which is self-evident.
2. In addition, with a population of 46,234,830 inhabitants as of 2022[[1]](#footnote-2), and an economy based on its natural resources, these ecoregions provide key ecosystem services to society and a wide range of productive sectors, making it important to design and implement strategies linked to sustainability, resilience to climate change and biodiversity conservation through key actions such as Environmental Land Use Planning.

**Legal and institutional**

1. The project is framed within national laws such as: National Native Forest Law (Law No. 26.331) categorizing forest ecosystems according to the different types of land uses; General Environmental Law No. 25.675, through its Article 10 in which it establishes Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) as a policy and instrument of environmental management to guide the use of natural resources; the National Wildlife Conservation Law No. 22.421; the Glaciers and Environment Preservation Law No. 26.639 and the Wetlands Bill. In addition, the project is aimed at contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 15, which proposes the protection, restoration and promotion of the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable management of forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss.
2. The Project also takes into consideration the federal context of the Republic of Argentina to design, promote and replicate framework norms or "minimum standards" to be adapted to the conditions of each province, so that these experiences generate sustained processes in other territories and translate into national and regional benefits.

## **Problems that the project sought to address**

1. Despite significant steps in the establishment of protected areas in Argentina, a large area of key ecosystems still remains in productive zones and are subject to increasing threats due to habitat loss and ecosystem fragmentation; climate change; presence of invasive exotic species; conventional agricultural and livestock activities; mining; and expansion of peri-urban infrastructure.
2. In order to promote the rational use of natural resources, the country's Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) initiative came into being and its subsequent application to areas of the country with the expectation to contribute to the reduction of the identified potential threats and adoption of "best bet" options such as resilience, sustainable production and conservation of natural resources. This process identified problems/barriers which the project sought to address for ELUP implementation, and are described in three key sets:
3. **Barrier #1:** Insufficient regulatory framework, policies and reliable information to effectively develop ELUP at national and provincial levels.
4. **Barrier #2:** Weakness of the provinces' tools and instruments to approve, implement and monitor the ELUP.
5. **Barrier #3:** Dispersed knowledge and insufficient sharing of environmental management practices at the provincial and interprovincial levels.
   1. **Project Descripción and Strategy; milestones to be met and timeframe for completion**
6. Responding to the above barriers, the overall objective of the project is to generate multiple biodiversity benefits and combat land degradation through the development of a system of policies, governance mechanisms and technical, economic and financial instruments so that Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) would be a better practice benefitting communities and ecosystems.
7. The intervention strategy for implementing the ELUP approach takes into consideration the federal structure of the country and the prerogatives of the national and provincial governments who own the natural resources on their lands. It also recognizes the need to work at multiple levels to address barriers that arise across national boundaries, such as market constraints, and the need to test instruments and tools at the local level that encompass a range of diverse land use modalities and ecoregions. In order to optimize the generation of global environmental benefits (GEBs), the project will focus primarily on target sectors with biodiversity conservation loss and land degradation.
8. For this purpose, it includes four (4) outcomes to be attained in the 6-year implementation period from November 2019 to November 2025, which are:

| **Outcomes** | **Outputs** | **Outcome Indicators** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome 1:** Federal enabling framework and strategies to reinforce ELUP and underpin implementation in priority ecosystems and habitats to reduce pressure from key production sectors. (Target sectors: agriculture & livestock; mining and peri-urban infrastructure, tourism) | **Output 1.1:** Updated and standardized Environmental Information System to support the ELUP process and decision making. | **\* Indicator 4:** Capacity to plan and implement ELUP & ES valuation in development plans and sector financing to reduce threats to BD & LD in priority areas.  **\* Indicator 5:** Number and type of national level land-use policy, planning, strategy and regulatory instruments that mainstream ELUP.  **\* Indicator 6:** Number and type of new partnership mechanisms at federal level for dialogue to mainstream BD and ELUP in sectoral programming and finance decisions (including level of direct participation of women and indigenous peoples). |
| **Output 1.2:** Federally agreed upon ELUP criteria |
| **Output 1.3:** Standardized tools for implementing ELUP in the target sectors |
| **Output 1.4**: Intersectoral and interjurisdictional articulation mechanisms |
| **Outcome 2:** Application of ELUP procedures and instruments in pilot Provinces with targeted ecoregions and production sector land uses. | **Output 2.1.** Provincial Regulatory Framework for Strengthening ELUP | **\* Indicator 7:** Capacity to manage human-biodiversity interface in target provinces to produce BD and LD benefits and flow of ES.  **\* Indicator 8:** Number and type of new partnership mechanisms at provincial level for participatory ELUP and consensus building (including level of direct participation of women and indigenous peoples).  **\* Indicator 9:** GEF Core Indicator 4: Surface area (hectares) of landscapes under improved practices in the target landscapes excluding protected areas.  **\* Indicator 10:** GEF Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares) in the targeted ecoregions/ landscapes.  **\* Indicator 11:** Level of improvement in livelihoods of beneficiaries in target landscapes differentiated by gender and ethnicity, measured through the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) Livelihood Index which measures 5 capitals: social, productive, human, physical and natural. |
| **Output 2.2.** Provincial Governance Framework for participatory ELUP and consensus-building by sectors |
| **Output 2.3.** Set of instruments validated in pilot landscapes to define and implement ELUP |
| **Output 2.4.** Biodiversity-friendly production and SLM practices validated for different land use zonings under ELUP |
| **Outcome 3:** Replicability framework for ELUP uptake in all Argentine provinces | **Output 3.1**  Experiences of ELUP and related instruments at the national level evaluated as input to determine the best combination of instruments for different ecoregions and production sectors. | **\* Indicator 12:** Increase in capacity of non-pilot provincial environmental authorities to adopt and implement ELUP criteria and SLM practices in remaining provinces and nationally important ecoregions.  **\* Indicator 13:** Monitoring of ELUP used to adjust sectoral and financial programming guidance.  **\* Indicator 14**: Level of improvement in knowledge, aptitudes and practices (KAP) in ELUP, ES, sustainable production and other key issues at national and provincial levels measured through surveys in Year 1 and Year 6 (including gender disaggregated data) as a result of capacity building programs on ELUP. |
| **Output 3.2.** National Capacity Strengthening Program for ELUP oriented to Provincial Authorities |
| **Output 3.3.** Creation of a system to Evaluate and Monitor the Implementation of ELUP in Argentina. |
| **Outcome 4:** Dissemination of lessons learned and monitoring and evaluation | **Output 4.1:** Operational M&E system for the Project and generation of periodic reports | **\* Indicator 15**: Knowledge effectively managed in support of ELUP. |
| **Output 4.2:** Knowledge management system in place to disseminate best practices and lessons learned |

1. By contrasting the identified barriers with the proposed outcomes, the project will create an enabling framework for mainstreaming the environmental land-use planning approach and the development of the necessary tools for its implementation. In doing so, it will consolidate sectoral, socioeconomic and ecosystemic criteria.

**Description of the implementation sites**

1. Project activities are being implemented in the following provinces and target landscapes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Provinces** | **Target Landscape** |
| **Buenos Aires** | Talares del Este – Bahía de Samborombón |
| SOBA |
| Delta del Paraná |
| **Jujuy** | Hornocal-Valle Grande |
| Susques-Jama-Catua-Olaroz |
| **Mendoza** | Piedemonte Andino del Área Metropolitana de Mendoza (AMM) |
| Oasis Norte – Cinturón Verde |
| Valle de Uco |
| Malargüen |

## **Project Implementation Arrangements**

1. The project is executed under the National Implementation Modality (NIM). The Implementing Partner is the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS), which is responsible for project management, achievement of results and effective use of GEF resources, as well as working in coordination with provincial authorities, other strategic partners in the project.

### **Project Board**

1. The basic governance mechanism, according to Prodoc, is the Project's Board of Directors, made up of a representative of the Secretariat for International Coordination and Cooperation (SECIN) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, a representative of UNDP and a representative of the national Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAySD) designated as an implementing partner.
2. The Project Board must meet at least once per calendar year, and extraordinarily when required by any of its members. In addition, it is responsible for: a) Approving the Project's Multi-year Work Plan, b) Monitoring the execution of the Project, c) Approving budgetary and substantive revisions, d) Approving technical and financial reports.
3. The implementing partner shall serve as the project’s National Director and is responsible to the Board of Directors for: a) The management and results of the project, the achievement of its objectives, the use of its resources and the application of rules and procedures; b) The custody and proper use of project supplies, in accordance with Prodoc's instructions and the necessary information on their use; c) Financial reporting and accountability for the custody and proper use of project funds; and d) The supervision of the responsible parties (if applicable).

### **Agreements with main implementation partners**

1. According to the Prodoc, the Project's Implementing Partner is responsible for signing letters of agreement with each provincial counterpart to carry out the field activities necessary to ensure fulfillment of the project's objectives in each province. Other parties responsible for the project include the Secretariat of the Environment and Land Use Planning of the Province of Mendoza, the Ministry of the Environment of the Province of Jujuy and the Provincial Agency for Sustainable Development of the Province of Buenos Aires, currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires.
2. The agreements identify the activities through which the field work is implemented in each province, thus contributing to the Project's Operational Plans and the overall objective of the project. Within the framework of the letters of agreement, the project may allocate resources during the term of the project, which will be subject to the fulfillment of the activities, and outputs indicated in each agreement, the amount of co-financing contributed by each province and will be under the implementation regulation defined by UNDP.

### **Theory of change**

1. In the MTR, the project’s proposed theory of change (ToC) was evaluated. The ToC considers the initial situation to be the absence of Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) mechanisms in the Argentine Republic (status quo). In order to change this scenario, through implementation of the project, the generation of benefits from biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management (SLM) is promoted, under a "learning-by-doing" approach through the achievement of four key outcomes, measured by the performance of their respective outcome indicators (O.I. 1-12), which through causality result in the achievement of three impact indicators (I.I.) of the project’s general objective: *to generate multiple biodiversity benefits and combat land degradation through the development of a system of policies, governance mechanisms and technical, economic and financial instruments for Environmental Land Use Planning.*
2. The described process generates impacts with quantitative characteristics: number of hectares of prioritized landscapes that have adopted the ELUP criteria and decisión-making, considered the ToC control point.
3. In the RMT, the probability of success was identified through impact pathways, with the resolution of the identified barriers and the active participation of stakeholders that promote the adoption of ELUPs being key.
4. It is important to point out that this design architecture is flexible, broad and horizontal in nature, since there is no interference between components and there is complementarity. As described above, under this horizontal scheme, it is important to identify which indicators in the set of indicators are dependent and which are independent (Pareto 20:80) in order to intervene substantially on those activities that support (20) the execution of the rest of the actions of the initiative (80).
5. Although the local impact of the project can be quantified in terms of the number of hectares intervened, at a global level the performance of the project can be evaluated using the following formula:

**Where:**

**Impact**: Change from the initial state, translated into benefits of global significance

**Outcomes**: Outputs achieved in implementation of ELUP

**Barriers**: Interaction of threats, local conditions and constraints, which remain constant.

**Risk**: Empowerment of provincial stakeholders to implement ELUP

1. Narratively, formula 1 describes the ToC in terms of results performance and barrier reduction, basing its analysis on the project’s impact, considering that the level of activities and outputs are within the influence of the project (outcomes), the higher this is numerically and the more solid the implemented actions are, the greater effect they have in reducing barriers and constraints ELUP implementation. However, in the ToC, risks are constitued by the willingness and support of national and provincial institutions, including key stakeholders, such as public, private and civil society partners (high dependence on third parties), to generate multiple global and local environmental services benefits in the Republic of Argentina. Annex 6.8.

### **Total resources**

1. According to Prodoc, the total resources allocated to the project are US$ 51,385,434.00, which correspond to US$ 8,995,434.00 from the GEF (grant) and US$ 42,390,000.00 from counterparts, as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Total project resources according to Prodoc

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Source** | **Type** | **Total (US$)** |
| GEF | Grants | 8,995,434 |
| Co-financing | | 42,390,000 |
| MAyDS (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development) | Grants | 12,611,232 |
| In-kind | 2,910,000 |
| INTA (National Agricultural Technology Institute) | Grants | 4,500,000 |
| In-kind | 1,640,000 |
| Provincial Agency for Sustainable Development of the Province of Buenos Aires (currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires) | Grants | 6,666,666 |
| In-kind | 166,666 |
| Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy | Grants | 1,054,054 |
| In-kind | 458,050 |
| Secretariat of Environment and Land Use Planning of Mendoza | Grants | 6,666,666 |
| In-kind | 166,666 |
| CONICET (National Council for Technical and Scientific Research) | In-kind | 5,000,000 |
| INAI (National Indigenous Peoples Institute) | In-kind | 350,000 |
| UNDP | Grants | 200,000 |
| TOTAL, US$ | | 51,385,434 |

## **Main stakeholders**

|  |
| --- |
| **Stakeholder** |
| **National level** |
| Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina (MAyDS) |
| National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA) |
| Federal Council of Environment Ministers (COFEMA) |
| National Advisory Committee for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity (CONADIBIO) |
| National Council for Technical and Scientific Research (CONICET) |
| National Parks Administration (APN) |
| National Observatory on Land Degradation and Desertification (ONDTyD) |
| National Biodiversity Observatory (OBIO) |
| Indigenous Peoples National Institute (INAI) in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights |
| Environment and Natural Resources Foundation (FARN) |
| Democratic Change Foundation (FCD) |
| National Water Institute (INA) |
| **Provincial level** |
| Mendoza Secretariat of Environment and Land Use Planning |
| Mendoza Provincial Land Use Planning Agency |
| Buenos Aires Provincial Agency for Sustainable Development (OPDS) |
| Ministry of Environment – Directorate of Environmental Land Use Planning and the Secretariat of Biodiversity of the Province of Jujuy |
| Municipalities: Mendoza: Malargüe, Mendoza Capital, San Carlos, Las Heras, Tunuyán, Tupungato, Luján de Cuyo, Godoy Cruz; Jujuy: Boroughs of Susques, Humahuaca and Valle Grande; Buenos Aires: Campana, San Fernando, Magdalena, Punta Indio, Chascomús, Lezama, Castelli, Villarino and Carmen de Patagones. |
| Mendoza General Irrigation Department (DGI) |
| Water Authority at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Services of Buenos Aires (ADA) |
| Buenos Aires Tax Collection Agency (ARBA) |
| Ministry of Infrastructure of the Province of Buenos Aires (MIPBA) |
| Territorial Organization for the Mapuche People "Malaweche" and Indigenous Mapuche Communities of Malargüe- Mendoza |
| Indigenous Communities of the Atacama, Omaguaca and Kolla peoples in the territory of the Province of Jujuy |
| Association of Bolivian Producers of Mendoza (APBM) |
| Stakeholders in the wine industry (COVIAR or Bodegas Argentinas A.C.) of Mendoza |
| Management Unit of Qhapac Ñam in Jujuy (UGCÑ) |
| Management Unit of the Humahuaca Gorge in Jujuy (UGQH) |
| CEBIO- Jujuy |
| Fundación Proyungas- Jujuy |
| Argentine Forestry Association - Delta Regional (AFOA) |
| Fundación para la Conservación y el Uso Sustentable de los Humedales / Wetlands International Argentina- Buenos Aires (FH) |
| Félix de Azara Natural History Foundation (FHNFA) |
| Delta Producers Council (CONPRODEL) |
| Mendoza Provincial Council for Land Use Planning (CPOT) |
| Other provincial and local community-based and social organizations |
| National Water Institute (INA) |
| **Academic institutions** |
| Cuyo National University |
| Jujuy National University |
| Buenos Aires National University |
| La Plata National University |

# **Findings**

## **Project Strategy**

### **Project Design**

1. Based on the documents review and the interviews carried out, according to the evaluator’s criteria, the project "Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management (SLM) into development planning: Making Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) Operational in Argentina" has been identified as being in alignment with GEF's priorities regarding the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals, global objectives on biodiversity conservation, combating desertification, adaptation to climate change and sustainable planning/development. It is consistent, relevant and innovative.
2. The project design addresses environmental and social safeguards, intersectionality, theory of change and risk management. Despite the adequate inclusion of the aforementioned criteria, at mid-term the implementation strategy has been identified as dispersed and unclear, mainly due to the role of actors and the levels of interest in the subject. Also, the set and interaction between indicators (14), as an example of the aforementioned, the role of stakeholders in the ToC is not described. Regarding the approaches proposed by the project such as "learning by doing" and "better alternatives", which translate into tangible benefits, only in outcome 2 are mechanisms shown for making progress regarding this assertion. Globally and quantitatively, it is observed that there is no conceptual balance and tangible actions, which weakens stakeholder’s empowerment and ownership which are normally demonstrated by "evidence". In addition, the reasoning regarding scaling/replication of benefits such as those described in outcome 2.4 to take them to another scale is ambitious and did not consider risks during execution.
3. Also, the project logic was designed to fulfill outcomes based on implementation carried out by territorial stakeholders with a weight of 50%, which for the MTR is considered a factor of co-dependence on third parties, which requires harmony and strong interest in intervention that includes the risks of political changes, financial instability and others specific to the territory that do not consider alternative mechanisms of execution.
4. Although a technical analysis of the intervention zones (knowledge capital) has been made, new complementarity strategies must be formulated, with this process the amount of work and global benefits would be increased. This complementarity should be the sum of positive social and political contributions to achieve the objectives. It is reiterated that this mechanism is one of "complementarity" but not of replication, since the interventions proposed in the Prodoc still have not been proven. This process has already been generated spontaneously, as in the experience of including INA, which complements INTA's actions and budget as an adaptive management of peers and complements, a 1:1 mechanism.
   * 1. **Results Framework / Logframe**
5. The ELUP concept is extremely attractive and innovative; it is based on existing guidelines in the Republic of Argentina on "minimum budgets" environmental management, which means using national reference guidelines and improving their application with standards that are always higher than the national minimum standards for the provinces, a "top down" structure process. However, it requires a driver to move from concept to tangible evidence, and this condition requires solid operational and financial support to avoid the risks of under-execution, as evidenced by the MTR.
6. The project structure has 15 indicators, distributed for the four (4) outcomes and the overall objective. In this logic, the base of outcomes is achieved through the attainment of 12 outputs. When analyzing this set of indicators under a SMART approach, most of them are consistent and logical with the allocated budget. In general, the proposed indicators are Specific, Measurable, Relevant, Achievable and Time-bound, the latter being critical. On the other hand, in the evaluator's opinion, the indicators were proposed and/or designed with the assumption of high interest and participation of stakeholders, which at the MTR is not yet evidenced in results or co-financing, therefore at midterm it is necessary to apply corrective action, review or rethinking to articulate efforts.

## **Progress Toward Results**

### **Progress towards outcomes analysis**

1. The project is organized into four main outcomes: a) strategies and enabling federal framework to strengthen ELUP and support implementation in priority habitats and ecosystems to reduce pressure from key production sectors (target sectors: agriculture and livestock, mining, and peri-urban infrastructure; b) application of ELUP instruments and procedures in pilot provinces with target ecoregions and for productive sector land uses; c) replicability framework for the adoption of ELUP in all Argentine provinces; and d) dissemination of lessons learned, monitoring and evaluation. [Annex 6.1](#_Matrix_of_Assessing)2. includes the progress matrix, which is based on a traffic light system regarding the level of progress achieved to date, along with its outputs, actions, and cumulative goals.
2. terms of overall expected results, the following progress can be observed:
3. **Outcome 1.** Federal enabling framework and strategies to reinforce ELUP and underpin implementation in priority ecosystems and habitats to reduce pressure from key production sectors. (Target sectors: agriculture & livestock; mining and peri-urban infrastructure, tourism).
4. Outcome 1 should operate at the federal level and develop a framework of policies, strategies and regulations to promote and regulate ELUP and is currently making progress towards the expected outputs and outcomes. Progress has been made with 2 indicators up to mid-term:
5. **Indicator 4:** Capacity to plan and implement ELUP and ES evaluation in sector development and financing plans to reduce threats to BD and LD in priority areas, measured by:

* In accordance with the last PIR, the project reports compliance with the indicator, resulting in 62.22% (300 people trained in agroecological topics, planning, good practices, among others).

1. **Indicator 5:** Number and type of land use policy, planning, strategy and regulatory instruments at the national level that incorporate ELUP.

* A draft ministerial resolution was developed with criteria, opinions, preliminary policy recommendations, planning and strategies of the PMU. The main objective of the document is that it become a reference framework that expresses the agreements generated from the Ministry of Environment and Development.

1. **Indicator 6:** Number and type of new partnership mechanisms at the federal level for dialogue to incorporate BD and ELUP into sectoral programming and financing decisions (including the level of direct participation of women and indigenous peoples).

* The project has developed 2 spaces for dialogue - COFEMA; - CONADIBIO; and 1 space for inter-institutional dialogue (COFEMA). Other spaces for dialogue (DNBi, MAyDS, INAI, INTA, SPARN, FAO-INAI-APN, TICCA (UNDP).

1. *Regarding progress on deliverables/outputs to the MTR for output 1.1: with respect to the creation of an updated and standardized environmental information system to support the ELUP process and decision-making, the project has a decision-making platform that includes mainly cartographic information, intervention sites, environmental context of provinces, and the location of indigenous peoples is relevant to the ELUP proposal. An additional focus on climate change needs to be included.*
2. *In the case of output 1.2: regarding ELUP criteria agreed at the federal level, the overall progress is 30% (PIR 2022) since spaces for dialogue have been generated to promote proposals that articulate the laws Nº 25.675 (General Environment Law) and the Native Forest Law Nº 26.331 with the ELUP approach.*
3. *No significant progress has been made on output 1.3: Standardized instruments to implement ELUP in the target sectors.*
4. *Finally, progress on output 1.4 Mechanisms for intersectoral and interjurisdictional articulation is related to the governance mechanisms generated with COFEMA and CONADIBIO, and the coordinated work with the provinces of Mendoza, Buenos Aires and Jujuy in that order.*
5. **Outcome 2.** Implementation of ELUP instruments and procedures in the pilot provinces with target ecoregions and production sector land use planning.
6. Outcome 2 seeks to develop decision-making tools to facilitate ELUP in the three pilot provinces in selected target landscapes, according to the conditions and scale needed for each tool to achieve an increase in BD conservation and reduce land degradation. Currently it has asymmetric progress in each territory - Mendoza, Buenos Aires and Jujuy - in that order in terms of progress towards outputs and outcomes. Overall, the outcome is on track to be achieved according to the mid-term review and analysis of the following indicators:
7. **Indicator 7:** Capacity to manage the human-biodiversity interface in target provinces to produce benefits in terms of BD and LD and ES flow, measured through:

* Elaboration of agroecological certification protocol and municipal zoning.
* MAPBA (previously OPDS) scoring AVERAGE progress of 53.33% in the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard.

1. **Indicator 8:** Number and type of new partnership mechanisms at the provincial level for participatory ELUP and consensus building (including the level of direct participation of women and indigenous peoples).

* The creation of a multi-stakeholder space is under development: between municipalities (environmental areas, SAYOT and ELUP)
* The creation of a space for indigenous representation on the Board of the Provincial Council for Territorial Planning for the Province of Mendoza is under development.
* Development of the Sustainable Commodities Platform

1. **Indicator 9:** GEF Core Indicator 4: Area (hectares) of landscapes under improved practices in target landscapes other than protected areas.

* At the time of the evaluation for the indicator, 183,938 hectares in the provinces of Mendoza and Buenos Aires with ELUP or landscape mechanisms planning approaches.

1. **Indicator 10:** GEF Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares) in target ecoregions/landscapes

* At the time of the evaluation, 59,554 ha of restored area in the target landscapes have been achieved with the actions proposed by the project and the provincial stakeholders.

1. **Indicator 11:** Level of improvement in livelihoods of beneficiaries in target landscapes differentiated by gender and ethnicity, measured through the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) Livelihood Index that measures 5 types of capital: social, productive, human, physical and natural.

* For this indicator, the TOR for the determination of the LADA baseline has been developed.

1. *Regarding the progress of component outputs related to the provincial regulatory framework for the strengthening of the ELUP (Output 2.1) and the provincial governance framework (Output 2.1), the processes underway in each province have estimated achievement rates of 65% Mendoza, 40% Buenos Aires and 15% Jujuy.*
2. *As for output 2.3. on instruments validated in pilot landscapes to define and implement ELUP, there is a solid proposal developed by the project team, which can be applied to scaling and complementarity of ELUP actions.*
3. *Regarding output 2.4 Biodiversity-friendly production practices and validated SLM for the different land use zonings according to ELUP, the role played by INTA and INA in terms of the proposal has made significant progress, but actions must be scaled up and two key elements for sustainability must be generated: ownership and financial self-sustainability, which should be considered post-MTR.*
4. **Outcome 3.** Replicability framework for the adoption of ELUP in all Argentine provinces.
5. Outcome 3 employs a three-pronged approach: the first is to facilitate a broader analysis of experiences across the country to implement land use zoning and related requirements of productive sectors; the second approach is to implement a program to strengthen provincial institutions to develop ELUP; and the third approach will involve the development of a system to evaluate and monitor the implementation of ELUP in Argentina. At the time of the MTR this is on track to be achieved based on 3 indicators and their mid-term performance:
6. **Indicator 12:** Increased capacity of environmental authorities in non-pilot provinces to adopt and implement ELUP criteria and SLM practices in the remaining provinces and nationally important ecoregions, measured by percentage increase in UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard ratings.

* For the present indicator, the project has carried out the analysis jointly with the MAyDS for identifying the provinces for scaling-up. However, these spaces depend on the political will of the national and provincial authorities. In accordance with the information and interviews carried out, it can be mentioned that the spaces for dialogue with the authorities of the pilot provinces should be strengthened and work in parallel with the potential scaling-up areas.

1. **Indicator 13:** Monitoring of ELUP for the purposes of adjusting sectoral and financial programming guidelines.

* For this indicator, the project has promoted the development of spaces for dialogue and the initial formulation of a ministerial agreement. However, according to the design of this indicator, the monitoring results will be visible when the ELUPs are implemented in the pilot provinces and the monitoring and evaluation tool needs to be designed concurrently to adjust the sectoral and financial programming guidelines.

1. **Indicator 14:** Level of improvement in knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) on ELUP, ES, sustainable production and other key issues at national and provincial levels measured through surveys in Year 1 and Year 6 (including gender disaggregated data) as a result of capacity building programs on ELUP.

* According to the activities of the last PIR, the actions carried out by the project included the implementation of capacity strengthening spaces for stakeholders at the national and provincial levels. However, despite not showing compliance in executing the survey planned for the first year on knowledge, attitudes and practices in the ELUP, it is expected that by 2023 the reporting of the indicator will begin, with a good level of knowledge on the part of national and provincial stakeholders, and by the end of the project there will be a good level of mastery of the subject to ensure scaling up and sustainability.

1. *The performance of output 3.1 on ELUP experiences and related instruments at the national level evaluated as contribution to determine the best combination of instruments for different ecoregions and production sectors has achieved conceptual progress and a proposal for application for each pilot province. Output 3.2. National Capacity Building Program for ELUP oriented to Provincial Authorities and Output 3.3. Creation of a system to Evaluate and Monitor the Implementation of ELUP in Argentina are complemented with the progress reported in Component 1 on capacity building and the ELUP platform that is operational and requires incorporating aspects of M&E, climate change and combating desertification, in order to have the desired positive impact as support for ELUP.*
2. **Outcome 4.** Dissemination of lessons learned monitoring and evaluation.
3. Outcome 4 will also allow for the consolidation of lessons learned and best practices and lessons learned will be published, ensuring access to this information by a wider community of stakeholders in order to benefit from experiences, failures and successes of the pilots implemented by the project. The project is currently making gradual progress towards the expected outputs and outcomes. A mid-term indicator has been achieved:
4. **Indicator 15:** Knowledge effectively managed in support of ELUP, measured through:

* The project has developed 4 brochures + 2 digital publications so far.
* Development of an open access digital platform for the visualization of geo-information, which has reached more than 70 established institutions. <https://oat.ambiente.gob.ar/>

1. *Outputs 4.1 and 4.1 regarding the M&E system, best practices and lessons learned at the time of the MTR have not made significant progress, but the ELUP platform is in place and should be strengthened to incorporate the elements of monitoring and effective decision support proposed in the project.*

### **Remaining barriers to the achievement of the project objectives**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Barriers identified in the Prodoc | Current status |
| Lack of political will and commitment of institutional stakeholders for interinstitutional and intersectoral coordination for ELUP. | Low commitment of political will towards the inter-institutional and inter-sectoral coordination required for effective environmental land use planning; the project is engaging in ongoing meetings with stakeholders to minimize this risk and generate support for the kind of coordination required, as well as an understanding of the importance of environmental land use planning and establishing supporting legislation, including new partners and the signing of new LoA. |
| High level of staff turnover (authorities and technical staff) of the Implementing Partner and key institutions at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. | Operational risk related to high staff turnover, both at the technical and senior levels, resulting in project delays and reduced adoption of ELUP. The project team is fully staffed, and continuous meetings are held with stakeholders at all levels to increase local support for the project.  In operational matters, during the year 2022 there was a change of authorities in the MAyDS - a new Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources and a new National Director of Planning and Environmental Land Use Planning – with direct implications for Project management. There were also changes such as the elimination of the OPDS and the creation of the Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires and the change of name and organizational structure of the Ministry of Environment of Jujuy, which became the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Jujuy. |
| Financial crisis in Argentina, which affects the timely availability of cofinancing for project implementation or reduces the level of cofinancing due to budgetary constraints. | Along these lines, there has been an increasing inflation rate of greater than 100% per year. While these risks were considered when developing the project document, they have had a greater impact than initially addressed, as the overall economic and social scenarios have worsened more than initially assumed. In light of very recent events (currency devaluation), the risk related to the economic, political and social scenario needs to be reevaluated.  Economic uncertainty, inflation, the devaluation of the currency and constant variation in prices make it difficult for suppliers make offers and quotes, this in turn generates administrative and operational delays that hinder budget execution. |
| Project activities will be carried out within critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, including protected areas and indigenous peoples' lands. | The risk is that unless proposed land uses take into account the constraints of ecosystem structure and function, they may adversely affect the conservation values of these areas. |
| Indigenous peoples are present in the selected sites in the provinces of Mendoza and Jujuy. | Presence of indigenous peoples (IP) in selected sites in the provinces of Mendoza and Jujuy. The project has an updated Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) that will ensure IP participation and guarantee free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to be implemented during the next period. The project is participating in the working group on indigenous peoples to improve their participation in the project.  Some of the environmentally sensitive areas will be located on IPP’s lands and, unless culturally appropriate consultation is undertaken with the objective of achieving FPIC, land use planning in these areas may affect the rights and interests, lands, resources, territories and traditional livelihoods of the indigenous peoples concerned. |
| Barriers not identified in the Prodoc | Current status |
| Mobility restrictions associated with COVID-19. | The COVID-19 pandemic and the respective restrictions on circulation have had repercussions on the progress of the project's objectives. There have been delays in carrying out face-to-face and territorial meetings, among other activities.  As measures have been reduced or eliminated, mobility and other restrictions are not expected to be a risk to future project activities. |

## **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

### **Management Arrangements**

1. The governance structure of the project consists of a Steering Committee composed of national and local government representatives, UNDP and INTA. This coordination space aims to facilitate the planning and implementation of activities in line with the project's objectives, budget, priorities and goals at the national and provincial levels.
2. In order to coordinate and implement actions at the local level, the project's Technical Committee and three Provincial Working Groups were established in the Prodoc. These spaces bring together representatives of the SGAyDS, UNDP, INTA, provincial governments, and other institutions and organizations. Their objective is to provide technical inputs for the achievement of project results, as well as to be responsible for ensuring adequate alignment between project activities and institutional constituents, and to promote appropriate participation spaces for all target groups.
3. At the time of the MTR, the existence and work of the Steering Committee was evident, the other two mechanisms are not in place and their activation is strongly recommended in order to achieve consensus, leadership and resilience in the face of political changes.

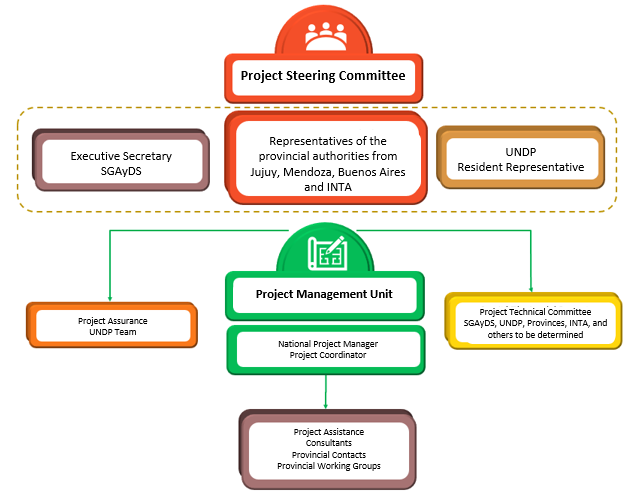


Figure 3. Project management arrangement. Source: Prodoc

1. In the MTR, it became evident that administrative processes and times are prolonged and do not align with the project’s reality and demanding situation. Likewise, the political situation and changes in authorities, which are normal processes, must be managed and resilience processes internalized to avoid that these changes become risks in the execution of the project. In view of this situation, the technical and operational balance is crucial for the remaining mid-term to closing period. It is necessary to mention that the project management has been adjusted, including the reformulation of the letters of agreement, administrative modifications, the incorporation of new partners (National Water Institute - INA) and the decentralization of territorial work by SPARN.

### **Work planning**

1. The project uses annual operating plans (AOPs) that include a breakdown of activities according to expected results, with budgets specified for each group of activities. Due to the complex governance arrangements, the AOP approval process and the critical path of the processes is beyond the control of the technical team. During the evaluation it was identified that the progress reports do not include an analysis of the difference between planned and executed, which does not allow for better strategic monitoring.
2. The context imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions on the movement and gathering of people has made it difficult to carry out some activities such as the launch of the project in all provinces, field studies, surveys, training and workshops, due to the Preventive and Obligatory Social Distancing (DISPO) put in place by Presidential Resolution implemented by the Preventive and Obligatory Social Isolation (ASPO) which began in March 2020, coinciding with the effective start of the Project, and were extended until January 2022. Nonetheless, this has not been a limiting factor for the implementation of activities by the technical team since they have adopted the modality of remote work and planned field trips in the different provinces, facilitating virtual institutional articulation and allowing entry into the territory in a joint and consensual manner with all the project partners.
3. In general terms, some medium-term indicators began to be mobilized more effectively as of June 2021, to the extent that the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic allow. In addition, the work planning processes, as can be seen, maintain tangible goals and are based on predefined results. The key project stakeholders have a critical path with the current political and financial situation, the agenda of activities is planned prioritizing the work where field visits are required.

### **Finance and co-finance**

1. According to the Prodoc, the original budget allocated to the project is USD $51,385,434, which is financed by the GEF grant (USD $8,995,434) and counterparts (USD $42,390,000), a total of USD $25,200,969 should have been executed by the MTR (third year), as established in the Prodoc. However, up to the date of the MTR evaluation, the financial execution has progressed at a very slow pace, and according to the CDRs from December 2020, December 2021 and December 2022 provided by the project, the financial execution at the time of the MTR is USD $ 2,035,383.31; i.e. 22.62% of the allocated budget as detailed in Table 2:

Table 2. Financial execution by outcome

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Detail** | **Year 2020** | **Year 2021** | **Year 2022** | **TOTAL** |
| Outcome 1 | 97,886.05 | 65,158.93 | 80,217.69 | 243,262.67 |
| Outcome 2 | 158,965.58 | 424,374.60 | 824,185.28 | 1,407,525.46 |
| Outcome 3 | 10,051.34 | 78,295.51 | 102,274.82 | 190,621.67 |
| Outcome 4 | 808.85 | 5,802.35 | 44,322.70 | 50,933.90 |
| Project Management | 14,794.20 | 26,496.37 | 32,197.96 | 73,488.53 |
| Advance payments | 0.00 | 10,765.23 | 58,785.84 | 69,551.07 |
| TOTAL | 282,506.02 | 610,892.99 | 1,141,984.30 | 2,035,383.31 |

1. According to the above, only 22.62% of the available budget financed by GEF has been executed, leaving US$6,960,050.69 (Figure 4) to be executed during the last three years of the project's life.

Figure 4. Financial execution by result and by year

1. Project implementation is under the National Implementation Modality (NIM), for which follow-up and monitoring is carried out in accordance with UNDP's transparency and accountability standards. In function of the aforementioned, three annual audits have been carried out to date (September 2020, June 2021 and June 2022) by the firm Bértora.
2. Finally, the counterparts’ real contributions both in kind and in cash (Table 3 and Figure 5) are equal to US$ 3,212,663.00, corresponding to 8% of the total value committed by the partners in the project design.

Table 3. Co-financing

| **Cofinancing Sources** | **Name of co-financing entity** | **Type of co-financing** | **Amount co-financed at CEO approval date (USD$)** | **Real amount contributed as of the date of the Mid-Term Review (USD$)** | **Real percentage (%) of planned amount** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Host Government | SPARN - Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources of the Governmental Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development | Subsidies | 12,611,232.00 | 1,620,230.00 | 13 |
| Host Government | SPARN - Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources of the Governmental Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development | In kind | 2,910,000.00 | 370,000.00 | 13 |
| Host Government | INTA - National Agricultural Technology Institute | Subsidies | 4,500,000.00 | 220,000.00 | 5 |
| Host Government | INTA - National Agricultural Technology Institute | In kind | 1,640,000.00 | 32,000.00 | 2 |
| Host Government | Provincial Agency for the Sustainable Development of the Province of Buenos Aires, currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires | Subsidies | 6,666,666.00 | 100,000.00 | 2 |
| Host Government | Provincial Agency for the Sustainable Development of the Province of Buenos Aires, currently Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires | En especie in kind | 166,666.00 | 3,400.00 | 2 |
| Host Government | Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy | Subsidios Subsidies | 1,054,054.00 | 22,000.00 | 2 |
| Host Government | Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy | En especie in kind | 458,050.00 | 6,400.00 | 1 |
| Host Government | SAYOT - Secretariat of Environment and Territorial Planning of the Province of Mendoza | Subsidios Subsidies | 6,666,666.00 | 800,000.00 | 12 |
| Host Government | SAYOT - Secretariat of Environment and Territorial Planning of the Province of Mendoza | En especie in kind | 166,666.00 | 5,300.00 | 3 |
| Host Government | CONICET National Council for Technical and Scientific Research) | En especie in kind | 5,000,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Host Government | INAI National Indigenous Peoples Institute | En especie in kind | 350,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Host Government | UNDP |  | 200,000.00 | 33,333.00 | 17 |
|  | **Total cofinancing** | | **42,390,000.00** | **3,212,663.00** | **8 %** |

### **Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**

1. The project's Prodoc includes the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, which briefly outlines the personnel in charge or responsible for supervision and monitoring, monitoring and reporting requirements, budget and time allocated for the plan's activities. For monitoring and follow-up, the plan proposes the use of corporate tools such as: audits, spot checks, project implementation reports (PIR), mid-term review (MTR), and terminal evaluation (TE). This plan establishes that project results will be monitored annually and evaluated periodically during execution to ensure that results are achieved in an effective manner.
2. However, based on the information reviewed and the interviews conducted, there have been delays in terms of monitoring and evaluation of project activities, the main reason being that data collection for the baseline of certain indicators has not been carried out as planned. Among the monitoring tools used by the project until the MTR are PIR 2021, PIR 2022, Audits 2021 and 2022, Steering Committee Minutes.
3. In project planning the UNDP Country Office is responsible for compliance with all UNDP project M&E requirements, including ensuring that the UNDP Quality Assurance Assessment during project implementation is conducted annually; those annual targets are carried out at the level of outputs, and that they be monitored and reported.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

1. The Stakeholder Participation Plan established in the Prodoc mentions that the active participation of stakeholders is fundamental for ensuring implementation through a multisectoral, multidisciplinary and multilevel approach. Thus, within this plan, stakeholders are identified from the preparation of the PPG; in the planning, design and development of the project, through focus group meetings, participatory forums (PPG phase inception workshop and multiple individual and consultation meetings). The MAyDS participated in the inception workshop with the National Directorate of Planning and Environmental Land Use Planning, the National Biodiversity Directorate, environmental secretaries or agencies from the provinces of Mendoza, Jujuy and Buenos Aires, INTA and UNDP representatives, who defined the ELUP line of work. In addition, provincial workshops were held with INTA, provincial and social stakeholders to present the project in the territory and coordinate future lines of work.
2. Regarding the implementation phase of the project, in general terms, stakeholder participation has been carried out as follows:

* INTA collaborated with the project in carrying out trainings and strengthening in agroecology, sustainable production, native crops, biological inputs, good livestock practices, and conservation, among others. Around 3383 people participated in this process, including authorities, technicians and civil society. INTA has also worked in coordination with the Indigenous Peoples Network for Addressing Instituions.
* Implementation of spaces for dialogue and working groups for the formal mainstreaming of ELUP, in collaboration with CONADIBIO and COFEMA.
* In coordination with civil society organizations, spaces for inter-institutional dialogue have been established.
* In the province of Mendoza, a space for indigenous representation is being developed in the Provincial Land Use Planning Council, in addition to the creation of a multi-stakeholder space between municipalities.
* In the province of Buenos Aires, multi-stakeholder spaces have been generated with the Wetlands Foundation.
* The province of Jujuy is working on the articulation of synergies with Fundación Vida Silvestre (Wildlife Foundation).
* Articulation with the project "Sustainable Pasture Ranching: A Necessary Transition and an Opportunity for Argentine Pampas Production" and participate in the working group with institutions that promote sustainable pasture ranching and in the design of an Action Plan 2022-2025.
* Project coordination with the National Biodiversity Directorate (DNBi), MAyDS "Inclusive Conservation" Program.
* Coordination with INAI to agree on possible ways of implementation in Mendoza and Jujuy.
* Several Letters of Agreement have been signed, such as:

Letters of agreement with the Ministry of Environment of the Province of Buenos Aires, Letter of agreement with OPDS (Provincial Organism for Sustainable Development) of Buenos Aires, Letter of agreement with SAYOT of Mendoza, Letter of agreement with the Ministry of Environment of Jujuy, Letters of agreement with INTA and the regional centers of each province, and Letter of agreement with the National Water Institute (INA).

1. Based on the information provided by the PMU and interviews with key stakeholders, most of the partners defined in the Prodoc have participated. However, the private sector has not been involved as of the evaluation date and remains an important niche for the ELUP approach to work on.
2. Additionally, the joint work of the National Government, provincial governments and institutions in the implementation of the project's objectives is evident, with the political and financial challenges described throughout this document, which has led to the execution of isolated actions by each actor.
3. The project has provided training to local stakeholders on ELUP issues, which has allowed for public participation and awareness raising.

### **Reporting**

1. The project´s objective is to generate multiple benefits through the development of policies, governance mechanisms and technical and economic instruments for Environmental Land Use Planning. During the first half of implementation, the project developed useful information such as the implementation and updating of a geoviewer that allows access to and visualization of geospatial information and analysis of indicators. Undoubtedly, knowledge management is a fundamental aspect, not only for achieving project ownership and the integration of the different stakeholders, but also for maintaining transparency in the implementation processes.
2. In information management, multi-stakeholder spaces for data exchange and decision-making have been facilitated through plenary sessions, working groups, workshops and forums, where proposals for policy instruments, planning and basic regulations for the ELUP are discussed and validated. The preparation of the first draft of a ministerial resolution with criteria, recommendations and policy strategies from the PMU was reviewed. The purpose of this document is to be the reference framework that expresses the agreements generated by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in the area of Environmental Land Use Planning.
3. Additionally, two Project Implementation Review Reports (PIR) have been completed to date, one for 2021 and the most recent for 2022. Finally, since the beginning of the project to date, the following documents have been submitted: (i) Letters of Agreement; (ii) Steering Committee Minutes; (iii) Financial Audit Reports for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022; (iv) Cofinancing Reports.

### **Communications**

1. The communication and information strategy according to Prodoc allows for the dissemination and exchange of experiences and lessons learned from the processes and actions implemented. It facilitates the scaling up of results through websites, information networks, forums and publications, among others. Likewise, good practices and lessons learned have been disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders to promote the implementation of similar projects in the region.
2. In this strategy (Prodoc) three dimensions will be articulated: a) the design and implementation of the project's dissemination policy to raise awareness of ELUP issues; b) the management of technical information related to ELUP issues and its processing to generate communication products; and c) the systematization of the project's emerging information in order to manage the knowledge produced.
3. Based on these elements, the communication processes took place as follows:

* Generation and dissemination of relevant, reliable and understandable information for all stakeholders as an element to strengthen and enrich decision-making. In this context, it is necessary to strengthen the generation and/or construction of territorial information and its periodic updating, the articulation of public information from various sources, accessibility, as well as promoting spaces and mechanisms for transparency with respect to project progress.
* Coordination with organizations such as COFEMA, CONADIBIO, COFEPLAN and COFELMA to act as channels for the replication of best practices, mediators in management and consensus processes at the federal level for the implementation of ELUP.

## Sustainability

1. This section describes the risks to project sustainability, among which are Covid-19 (2020-2021), economic instability, and changes of authorities, such as in the cases of the MAyDS with a new Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources and a new National Director of Planning and Environmental Land Use Planning.
2. **Findings from the interviews**
3. Stakeholders have a broad knowledge of the objectives, goals and outcomes defined in the Prodoc, which reflects a positive assimilation of the initiative's activities.
4. Substantive analysis of administrative processes for disbursement of project resources to the Sectional Governments and implementing partners.
5. Need for flexibility of the "Alta por Baja" (uptake/discharge) Law in order to have the minimum technical and operational personnel for the execution of the base project and complementary actions required.
6. Role Reversals
7. Responsibility Law, disbursements cannot be made to municipalities, identify mechanisms for expanded participation as horizontal intervention strategy.
8. Elections of authorities that require a thorough analysis of the letters of agreement regarding period, resources and actions.
9. Beneficiaries lose interest, as they do not see concrete actions being executed while waiting for disbursements to implementing partners.
10. **Argentina’s national context**
11. High monetary inflation and monthly and year-on-year inflation (8% and 111%, respectively), coupled with several types of currency exchange whose variation and impact is strong on project execution, such as the official dollar (100 pesos to the dollar) and the blue dollar (380 pesos to the dollar), considering that the market makes greater reference to the blue exchange rate for transactions and that the project was designed with an official exchange rate of 3 pesos to the dollar.
12. Uncertainty due to elections and possible turnover of key officials in project execution.

### **Financial risks to sustainability**

1. Financial execution represents one of the critical factors in project management. As of the MTR evaluation date, execution progress is equal to 22% of the US$8,995,434.00 allocated by GEF, which at mid-term should be between 45% and 50% of the budget. This shows the need to improve the involvement of all stakeholders, especially counterparts, in order to accelerate execution and better support the planned actions in progressing towards the achievement of the objectives. The mechanisms of horizontal strategy and the diversification of stakeholders for post mid-term intervention is key. Therefore, generating business criteria for ELUP measures, exploring financing mechanisms, competitive funds and the complementarity of territories, should be included in this strategy recommended by the evaluator.

### **Socio-economic risks to sustainability**

1. The project document (Prodoc) presents the social and environmental screening, where overall the project was rated to be at "Moderate Risk. In general, in the construction of the initiative and the planning of activities, the principles for safeguarding the social elements and biodiversity of the prioritized landscapes targeted by the project were considered.
2. The SESP checklist addressed the principles of: Human Rights, Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, Human Displacement and Settlement, and Indigenous Peoples. Under these approaches a total of 3 out of 5 risks were marked in the checklist, which allows the evaluator to have an insight into the socio-economic impacts of the project and how they will be addressed during implementation.
3. The project design proposes socioeconomic sustainability based on maintaining the areas identified as priorities because of their high ethnocultural value for the indigenous communities involved. The indigenous peoples (Omaguaca, Kolla, Atacama and Mapuche) are present in the selected pilot sites in the provinces of Mendoza and Jujuy. Some of the environmentally sensitive areas may be located on their lands and, unless cultural consultations are carried out, there is a risk that land use planning in these areas may affect rights and interests, lands, resources, territories and traditional livelihoods. Despite the fact that the project has an updated Indigenous Peoples Plan that will ensure IPP participation and guarantee free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), interviewees mentioned that it has not been possible to implement FPIC, which is planned to be implemented during the next period.
4. The gaps identified in Prodoc include: i) lack of parity in decision-making spaces; ii) differences between men and women in access to better income and livelihoods; iii) differences in the use of time; and iv) differences in access to and control of resources between men and women. The project incorporates gender and multicultural issues, based on the premise of guaranteeing the participation of women and men in the spaces, dialogue platforms and mechanisms generated by the project, which will contribute to their effective social empowerment.
5. Based on the above, the greatest socioeconomic risk was identified as the presence of indigenous peoples in the pilot sites, which had the effect of impacting their land rights and interests.
6. According to the background provided for the mid-term review, the risk to socio-economic sustainability is rated Medium Low (MB), as the main focus of the project strategy is to promote sustainable uses that ensure the preservation and improvement of livelihoods, particularly of indigenous peoples.

### **Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability**

1. The governance of the project at the managerial level is in place and operational, for example, virtual and face-to-face mechanisms have been used for the execution of the Steering Committee, such as the one held in December, with broad participation of stakeholders and provinces.
2. Despite the progress achieved during this reporting period, there is a wide range of opportunities for improvement in all the outcomes, especially in outcomes 2 and 3, where the involvement of local partners is fundamental to achieving the expected outcomes and objectives.
3. If the outcome continues to suffer from delays in action in terms of governance, key decisions and insufficient government support, major amendments will be needed to reverse the current and persistent trend. In other words, adaptive management and accelerated actions are vital to get back on track towards this outcome.
4. In 2023, dynamic changes are expected in national and territorial political governance due to the planned elections in the Republic of Argentina; this process presents a potential risk in the implementation of actions and budget execution.

### **Environmental risks to sustainability**

1. The project document (Prodoc) presents the social and environmental screening, where overall the project was rated to be at "Moderate Risk. In general, in the construction of the initiative and the planning of activities, the principles for safeguarding the social elements and biodiversity of the prioritized landscapes were considered.
2. The SESP checklist addressed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Under these approaches a total of 2 out of 5 risks were marked in the checklist, which allows the evaluator to have an insight into the environmental impacts of the project and how they will be addressed during implementation, which were ratified and critical during the field visit and which point out new aspects of intervention such as fire management and forest fires that currently affect ELUP intervention territories.
3. The project design proposes environmental sustainability based on maintaining areas identified as priorities for their high biodiversity conservation value; or that are identified as vulnerable to land degradation and, in turn, the loss of ecosystem goods and services that are important for livelihoods and production sectors. The project’s support in the development of instruments such as ELUPs will test sustainable land management practices, and a combination of instruments will be structured to implement restrictions in priority areas as needed. This will provide direct benefits to nine ecoregions with globally significant biodiversity, or priority areas for combating land degradation.
4. The same UNDP social and environmental screening procedure identifies that the greatest environmental risk that could reverse the results of the project is climate change, affecting the suitability and productivity of land uses, which would result in the potential results of the project becoming sensitive or vulnerable to the effects of this global phenomenon.
5. According to the background provided for the midterm review, the risk to environmental sustainability is rated Low, as the efforts implemented by the project, such as the conservation of areas of ecosystemic importance, the Environmental Land Use Plans (ELUPs), and the coordination with institutions and communities, inherently have a good possibility of scaling up to provinces or other areas of ecosystemic importance.

## **Summary of MTR ratings**

Table 4. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for ELUP Project

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure** | MTR Rating | Achievement Description |
| **Project Strategy** | N/A | The project was conceived with the objective of generating multiple biodiversity and land degradation benefits through the development of a system of policies, governance mechanisms and technical, economic and financial instruments for Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) to mainstream the environmental and socioeconomic assessment of ecosystem goods and services (EG&S) in the decision making of different sectors and levels of government. |
| **Progress Towards Results** | Objective: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | |
| Outcome 1:  Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | The Project aims to establish a federal enabling framework and strategies to strengthen ELUP and support implementation in priority ecosystems and habitats to reduce pressure from key productive sectors (target sectors: agriculture and livestock, mining and peri-urban infrastructure, tourism). Outcome 1 results are key to enable and coordinate actions with Outcomes 2 and 3.  The project has initiated capacity strengthening processes with multiple institutions such as the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Secretariat of Environmental Policy for Natural Resources (SPARN), the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) and provincial agencies. These processes allowed the project to train more than 300 officials and technicians from different institutions on ELUP issues. Dialogue spaces were agreed upon with COFEMA, CONADIBIO, the Ministry of Agriculture, IDERA, Fundación Humedales, among others, and work will begin on the participatory diagnosis of the situation of Environmental Land Use Planning in the country's different provinces and other planning instruments.  During this period, the project prepared a "Base document for ELUP implementation" that is being discussed and reviewed with various institutions that will guide the dialogue for mainstreaming the base document into sectoral planning and programming. |
| Outcome 2:  Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | Output 2 focuses on the implementation of ELUP procedures and instruments in pilot provinces with specific ecoregions and productive sector land uses. The project should prioritize work to strengthen provincial regulatory frameworks, including planning and regulatory instruments, as committed to in the ProDoc. The project has been participating in work within the framework of the Integrated Strategic Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Paraná Delta. This is an interjurisdictional agreement between the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos and Santa Fe, as well as the national government that aims to manage the wetlands of the Paraná Delta. Also, the project started working by virtue of this agreement on capacity building on the ELUP approach for this delta.  Field work began in Mendoza (Highly Satisfactory), Buenos Aires (Satisfactory) and Jujuy (Unsatisfactory) to implement sustainable management practices and build the capacity of local technicians and farmers. Use of the UNDP Capacity Score Card defined the baseline values that will be monitored in the three provinces where the project is implementing its actions. In Mendoza, the project developed an agroecological certification and municipal zoning protocol that is being reviewed with local partners and will guide future actions in the province. In addition, the project is participating in a multi-stakeholder space with municipalities and SAYOT to implement ELUP tools. In the province of Buenos Aires, the articulation with Fundación Vida Silvestre will allow working on a sustainable commodities platform (livestock). This process will continue during the following years of project implementation. |
| Outcome 3:  Moderately Satisfactory (MS)) | The objective of the set of interventions is to establish a replicability framework for the adoption of ELUP in all Argentine provinces. During this period, the project conducted a first technical analysis for the selection of non-pilot provinces for Outcome 2. During the next year, the project should consolidate national instruments and ELUP field implementation experiences to replicate accordingly in other provinces. As defined in the Prodoc, a capacity strengthening program will be implemented between years 3 and 6 and will target staff of the environmental authorities of the non-pilot provinces, INTA regional offices, sectoral entities, universities, NGOs and civil society organizations. In addition, a methodological guide for the implementation of ELUP in the pilot provinces and a methodological guide for the implementation of ELUP in the non-pilot provinces will be developed. |
| Outcome 4:  Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | Project Outcome 4 focuses on dissemination of lessons learned and monitoring and evaluation. The project published three documents with methodological guides for conflict management, Geoportal Use Protocol and a Manual on the rights of indigenous peoples. In addition, eight documents are being reviewed for publication this year on various topics, including guidelines, management guidelines, biodiversity and field guides.  The project's progress towards the indicators at the objective level is still limited and progress was not as expected for this period. The project has the support of the responsible parties with whom Letters of Agreement were signed in 2020. However, as explained by the Project Manager and Country Program Officer, these agreements did not fulfill the activities or, in some cases, budget delivery was very low. or not utilized. With this consideration at the end of 2021, the MAyDS decided to amend and change these LoAs to accelerate implementation.  Unfortunately, the multiple changes in the MAyDS and the low level of commitment of the identified responsible parties for the implementation of Outcome 2 activities have resulted in a low level of planned interventions and little impact for achieving the project objectives as planned in the project document. |
| **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management** | Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) | While the application of planned adaptive management is constant in the project, this has not translated into tangible results for the achievement of outcomes, strategic participation of provinces and adequate financial execution. Several factors encompass this assessment:  Weak territorial political will for project implementation in the Jujuy Province, which has been reflected by low budgetary and technical execution in the province, with distinct governance mechanisms among the stakeholders.  Absence of information from July 2019 to February 2020, according to the 2022 PIR this delay was due to the lack of baseline information for certain indicators and was further hampered by the pandemic.  Financial execution is below plan; of the $8 million project, only 22% of the budget has been executed.  Another factor that has delayed the normal performance of the project was the COVID-19 pandemic that coincided with the start of the initiative, which obliged the use of virtual activities and that post MTR require strategies to mitigate the effects of the restriction caused by the pandemic.  Generally, in terms of adaptive management: the project upholds three letters of agreement schemes and has had to incorporate new stakeholders such as INA to broaden the range of action in order to achieve goals and budget execution.  Although actions have been identified and planned with native communities, free and informed prior consultation with indigenous communities on Law 5915 is still pending.  At the MTR, the absence of baselines for several Prodoc indicators was evident, which prevented evaluation of the change or impact from planned or executed interventions. |
| **Sustainability** | Moderately Unlikely (MU) | Result from the integration of the environmental, socio-political, institutional and financial sustainability assessment detailed in the following table: |

Table 5. Sustainability rating

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RATING 4** | **Environmental sustainability/ Likely (L)** |
| The project design proposed environmental sustainability based on "better alternatives", and thus the proposal to move from a conventional planning scenario to an environmental land use planning approach that includes sustainable production practices, biodiversity conservation, and adaptation to climate change with the support of regulations that go beyond a sustainable development approach in the Republic of Argentina. In the MTR, it was identified that the greatest environmental risk for the adoption of ELUP comes from climatic effects and productive practices that transgress ecosystems. However, the high biodiversity of the Argentine territory plus the knowledge of coexisting with a changing and seasonal climate, per se, generate resilience for the territory and if effectively complemented with solid ELUP regulations plus high acceptance of the ELUP approach, Sustainability would be LIKELY (L) in the medium and long term. | |
| **RATING 2** | **Sociopolitical Sustainability/ Moderately Unlikely (MU)** |
| In the project design, social and political sustainability is given by multilevel actions of awareness raising, empowerment and replication of the ELUP approach. The proposal is based on an initial Top-Down construction that provides federal inputs to be adapted afterwards to local conditions (bottom up) and this set allows, based on evidence of success, the replication to other territories. With these premises, the political dependency on the development of the two approaches and under the current conditions (national and sectional elections) sustainability would be UNLIKELY given the definitive rotation of authorities together with the short time of the project, therefore this section has a MODERATE probability of permanence.  Also, a high risk is identified due to the productive vocation of the Argentine territory and that it may lead to the expansion of traditional production, with its consequent impact on the goals of the project, elimination, segmentation and degradation of forests, desertification and maladaptation.  At the MTR, strong stakeholder involvement and interest was identified (Mendoza, INTA, Buenos Aires). In the case of Jujuy, during the field mission, no high-level meetings were held, the project's provincial technician did not participate and the visit to the territory with the communities was not planned. Therefore, the stakeholders did not know about the MTR and these were the first meetings about the initiative.  Along the same lines, the MTR identified the renewal of national and provincial authorities as the greatest institutional risk, due to the elections, hence the need to establish "anchors" with individual agents and above all the operationalization of the governance mechanisms defined in the Prodoc such as Steering Committees, Technical Advisory Committees and provincial working groups, which define the direction, document it and make it possible to safeguard what was planned through evidence of previous work. | |
| **RATING 4** | **Institutional framework and governance/ Likely (L)** |
| In the design of the project and the evidence at the time of the MTR, institutional sustainability is based on the contribution of the project to provide information for decision making, articulate stakeholders and demonstrate with practices the benefits of ELUP. In this sense, institutional ownership is very high because the ELUP issue is imperative for the context of the Argentine territory.  On this background, the evaluator’s comment is LIKELY, given that the scenarios proposed have not affected the performance of the project and, on the contrary, laws have been promoted, regulatory bodies such as the Chascomús Local Ordinance 5622-22 for the application of ELUP and the proposed ministerial agreement “Bases for ELUP” and processes such as the Gender Action Plan, Indigenous Peoples Plan. In addition, at the information level, raster (geographic layers) has been generated on ELUP in the environmental information system IDERA and SINIA[[2]](#footnote-3) that strengthen the management of the sustainable use of biodiversity, useful for national processes.  The connection with academia and an area of knowledge strongly related to INTA allows us to see an important niche for sustainability, mainly in the area of knowledge, which may result in benefits for stakeholders, both in terms of technology transfer as well as empowerment, since the ELUP processes are mainly based on local context and reality. | |
| **RATING 1** | **Financial Sustainability/ Unlikely (U)** |
| In the project design, financial sustainability is based on the establishment of conditions to demonstrate the "best alternatives" for ELUP. This approach has had a setback in terms of the use of available financial resources and leveraging co-financing, which quantitatively in execution are at 22% and 8% respectively. This requires a solid implementation strategy in order to generate evidence for ELUP and regain stakeholder interest that is reflected in effective counterpart investment.  At the MTR, the criteria of UNLIKELY is issued, based on the evidence around execution, the possibility of raising counterpart funds and new funds to strengthen the ELUP approach, together with the economic uncertainty, which requires a strategy of substantial use of available resources. | |

# **Conclusions & Recommendations**

## **Conclusions**

1. This section presents the conclusions obtained from the findings identified in the evaluation, based on the five criteria of project strategy, progress towards results, project implementation and adaptive management, and finally sustainability and in an expanded manner, project performance, cross-cutting issues, empowerment and gender. For each comment, the finding and the suggested improvement path for stakeholders will be established.
2. The progress up to the mid-term review shows that the goals established in the Results Framework are **on the way to being achieved**. However, in order to complete the goals, set post-MTR, a joint and articulated commitment of the stakeholders is required to comply with the "theory of minimums", i.e., to comply with what has been defined and financed (Prodoc) and subsequently generate the plus or added value to the ELUP initiative. This involvement requires the implementation of horizontal intervention strategies, with broad intervention mechanisms (strengthening of letters of agreement, integrated fire management, incentives, hard measures), strengthening governance, work teams and complementarity, which must be supported by political decision and the generation of binding regulations.
3. The project design presents a clear architecture based on a general objective with impact and outcome indicators that allow interaction and work with diverse stakeholders that can work under a strategy of complementarity. It also presents a logical Theory of Change (ToC) in which potential barriers, action strategy, assumptions and results are identified. This is a set of approaches with Top-Down characteristics, i.e. based on national guidelines for local assimilation, in which "learning by doing" is carried out by provincial stakeholders to promote replication and scalability processes in the Republic of Argentina. Regarding this, three phases were noted: the first of high interest during the formulation of the project on the part of the stakeholders, another of dissipation of interest and rotation of both PMU and local stakeholders, and a current phase in which interest in actions is rekindled, but with asymmetric progress in the outcomes. Finally, at the MTR, a positive characteristic is revealed through demonstration of knowledge about the goals, outputs and indicators defined in the Logical Framework (LF) of results (Prodoc) on the part of the stakeholders, with 94% affirming knowledge and assimilation of the Prodoc.
4. The field mission to the intervention sites and the documents analysis provided a comprehensive view of the activities proposed for the implementation of Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP). It is important to note that the project started during the COVID-19 health emergency. This particularity delayed key ELUP actions such as information gathering, field visits, interaction between stakeholders and activation of two of the three governance mechanisms described in the Prodoc such as the Provincial Working Groups and the Technical Advisory Committee, which, due to their local characteristics, require in-person attendance. Therefore, it is strongly recommended as part of this report to activate these mechanisms, formalize them and document their operation as a strategy for planning, resilience when confronted with change and project leadership.
5. Financial execution is the least advanced in the project's overall performance. Aspects such as financial uncertainty, inflation and extended execution mechanisms have resulted in a progress at midterm of 22% of the budget. The adaptive management and learning that the project's technical team has achieved should be highlighted. Some relevant aspects to mention here are the discussions and consensus to improve execution with each stakeholer involved, the drafting of Letters of Agreement in accordance with the needs, difficulties and possibilities of successful execution, and the development of work plans. However, all these efforts must be translated into joint implementation strategies that enhance execution and are aligned with the project's activities and goals. Two stages of action are mentioned, the first on strengthening the soft processes of the institutions with the increase of operational and financial support both in the UEP and partners, which allows the conceptual leap to action and a second on agreed substantial investments, i.e. to identify macro actions and generate consensus for their achievement considering that there are three spaces for action such as through UNDP with the approval of the Country, through the PMU through invested letters and in the provinces themselves that have administrative autonomy. The evaluator considers that the conceptualization, knowledge generation and enabling conditions are positive. However, the execution aspects should be strengthened with the support of professionals with knowledge of processes, operations, procurement, financial reporting and execution, i.e., an adequate balance between the technical and operational aspects necessary for projects with these characteristics.
6. At a general level, the project has a clear conceptual intervention strategy with institutional enabling conditions in Mendoza, INTA, Buenos Aires, INA and Jujuy (in that order). However, budget execution has contributed to a large gap in project results, which is why there is no evidence at the moment to propose replication processes of proven actions. Therefore, if actions are generated in new provinces, five conditions should be met: a) actions must be considered complementary rather than replication, i.e. they support the actions of one or more stakeholders; b) in the case of change of a stakeholder, their express wish to participate is important c) the actions must be strongly framed in the fulfillment of Prodoc indicators and objectives, d) the strengthening of the operational management team must be prioritized in order to achieve an appropriate technical-operational balance and finally an effective PMU leadership must be consolidated for promoting the ELUP approach.
7. During the RMT, three important elements were identified for the application of ELUP in the Argentine territory: political/regulatory support, knowledge development and evidence (tangible benefits). With the elections of 2023, the rotation of national, local and institutional authorities has been identified as a potential risk for implementation, for which it is necessary to identify management and resilience strategies such as those mentioned throughout the document.
8. The project’s start coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic was of overriding importance, postponing the period of information gathering and field visits. However, through adaptive management that included virtual planning, 306 meetings were held with a total of 975 hours, 4356 participants, 71 videos and 52 audios, which highlight the project’s effort to adapt the work to the conditions of this time.
9. As part of adaptive management, the project has used different mechanisms to promote effective discussion on technical and financial aspects. Management paths have been initiated to improve execution, decentralization, creation of adapted work plans and other elements. However, this process has taken more than a year, with no results or testing to determine the effectiveness of its implementation. It is suggested to have an organically structured monitoring process through the expansion of the project's operational team. This will allow generating inputs for decision making and evidencing/documenting the work to which the project is committed.
10. Through letters of agreement, the project has made progress in management with provinces and implementing partners (such as INTA/INA), but within the budget planning assigned to this mechanism, there has not been adequate progress in the planned activities. Nevertheless, these letters of agreement have been improving according to the needs and conditions of the territory. Thus, the theory of change is part of these commitments, which denotes knowledge and acceptance of the rationale of the work. With this background, the work strategies at the time of the MTR are as follows:

* Buenos Aires: letters of agreement reversed; execution is carried out through the Project Management Unit.
* Jujuy and Mendoza: letters of agreement with the original format.
* Implementing Partner (INTA): a letter of agreement has been designed for each region, achieving the decentralization of resources to implement the actions according to the planning, relying on the administrative team of each regional INTA.

1. To measure the effectiveness of what is planned, it is necessary to monitor, evaluate and report on the development of these mechanisms, a process that must be organically integrated as part of the project's day-to-day operations.
2. From the evidence gathered in the MTR, the project has an intervention strategy. However, progress is asymmetrical among territories, consistent with the significant progress of some interventions:

* The Province of Mendoza and the executing partners INTA and INA have made significant progress, with clear objectives. Efforts are required - with the support of the Nation - to meet the goals and budget execution planned for the remaining time of the project.
* The province of Buenos Aires executes adequate management of activities in the intervention sites with pilots, which are being replicated and strengthened. At the provincial level, activities are implemented through letters of agreement and there is adequate coordination. Notwithstanding, the processes need to be strengthened so that they can be properly implemented.
* Jujuy is the province with the least progress to date. It is necessary to strengthen project management, both the leadership and presence of the executing unit, to generate articulating spaces, leadership and counterparts that determine the real scope in terms of time and resources and to explore support mechanisms to achieve the goals and activities with the overall benefit of the initiative in mind.

1. The PRODOC identifies key elements for the environmental land use planning approach and its proper implementation, which are highlighted in this MTR. For example, output 1.4 corresponding to intersectoral and interjurisdictional articulation mechanisms defines a clear idea of promoting a permanent dialogue and articulation with institutions of the productive and jurisdictional sectors, including the public and private sectors. It also promotes a high-level vertical dialogue in which national, provincial and municipal guidelines for the application of the environmental land-use planning approach, such as the methodology for identifying stakeholders, gender plan, indigenous peoples' plan and the IDERA- ELUP platform are included. This space allows reaching consensus for the application and implementation of actions that complement output 2.4, which consists of biodiversity-friendly production practices and sustainable land management. This ends up being the conjunction of several indicators 2.1, 2.3. In addition, it determines important aspects to which the project can contribute, such as climate change, desertification and land use.
2. Along the same lines, there are national guidelines that have integrated/planned the ELUP approach, such as: the IDERA/ ELUP geo-viewer as a decision support tool, a strategy to strengthen the Federal System of Protected Areas (SIFAP) as an instrument for coordination among jurisdictions, and the proposal "Draft document Bases for ELUP" was presented as a reference framework for Environmental Land Use Planning at different provincial, municipal, and inter-jurisdictional scales. At the municipal level (bottom up) there are letters of intent for ELUP in the municipalities of Malargüe, Luján de Cuyo, Lavalle, Las Heras, Capital, Godoy Cruz, Guaymallén and Tupungato, which add a total of 6,5562,700 ha for intervention using the project approach. This series of instruments has innovative conceptual advances, however the leap towards implementation is required, for which the creation of a "learning by doing" practice is recommended based on the laws and experiences of the Province of Mendoza, in a three-step process: 1) passing the "ELUP Basis" proposal to the province so that it can adapt the document to its conditions and regulations; 2) formalizing the regulatory framework and implementation strategy; and 3) generating tangible actions that demonstrate the benefits. In this line of work, it is necessary to strengthen the territorial team, facilitate INTA’s and the PMU’s execution and promote parallel cross-learning with the other two provinces. To these ends, incorporating complementary stakeholders that meet characteristics like Mendoza may be interesting for the replication process.
3. The project can respond to these elements that occur in the intervention zones, as they constitute binding elements ELUP. At the mid-term review, the inclusion of integrated fire management, forest fire prevention and firefighting as an integral practice of resilience and territory is feasible.
4. The project generated the "Decision Support System" knowledge management platform, which contains basic cartographic information and new information gathered by the implementing partners. For territorial planning, it is recommended that training in the use of these tools be expanded and strengthened.
5. From the results of the interviews for the MTR, it was concluded that there is a need for a technical/administrative balance, given to the strength of the current team, characterized by a high degree of knowledge. Yet, due to the characteristics of the project, which is theoretically divided into three zones, plus the project's own unit, it is necessary to incorporate operational support technicians that allow for the massification of the technical work in order to meet the ELUP objective in terms of timing and quality.
6. From the interviews with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other stakeholders, a recurring situation was identified in the proposals to donors, which are attractive in their preparation, with the inclusion of many stakeholders and interest. Nonetheless, when starting projects, work proposals must be reinforced so that they are realistic and well dimensioned in terms of scope, also considering the dependence on third parties and how to reach a successful conclusion with this set of elements.
7. Inherently and without this being something new in the region, elections and possible changes of authorities are risks for the implementation of the project's budgetary actions, so having resilience mechanisms, such as letters of agreement, advisory committees, registries, are alternative mechanisms to develop implementation agreements and maintain political and technical will in the face of these scenarios.
8. The monetary situation in which the project is carried out is characterized by uncertainty and inflation, these elements have a direct impact on the execution of the project, however, it is something that is widely known to the stakeholders and because of this valid adaptive management mechanisms have been implemented. A strong commitment and support from the nation and territorial institutions is required to remedy this aspect that will continue during the life of the ELUP project.
9. An important finding is that all of the interviewees have clear knowledge of the indicators, goals, project design, as well as clarity about the challenges that currently exist involving budget execution. This aspect regarding project knowledge should be capitalized on in a positive way to generate positive intervention strategies.
10. Regarding cross-cutting issues, the project has generated three key instruments for the empowerment of indigenous communities, such as the Indigenous Peoples Plan, which has been widely discussed with INAI and mainstreamed into the actions of INTA, the executing partner. There is also a geo-viewer that includes the territorialization of the native peoples and their work matrix. Consultation and training processes are pending, so that in the medium term the ELUP proposal is assimilated in the respective Jurisdictions (Mendoza and Jujuy). Regarding the empowerment of women and gender focus, at team level there is a balance of participation, training mechanisms and a Gender Action Plan that is being applied in the actions of the project, a positive element that is not only included as a project requirement or of national regulations (Mikaela Law) but that can become a recurrent organic process in the projects of Argentina.

## **Recommendations**

1. Strengthen the project management unit in operational aspects such as administrative systems and the organic proposal for monitoring and evaluation. It is essential to define clear roles and responsibilities, provide adequate training and development, implement efficient administrative systems, establish accountability mechanisms and respecting compliance with the applicable legal regulations. In addition, completion of the minimum project team composition and the counterparts mainly in the territory, as defined in the Prodoc, is highly recommended. Although restrictions on the hiring of administrative personnel are a critical issue, given the importance of the project, national stakeholders can also resort to hiring mechanisms within the legal framework in order to mitigate this aspect, for example using consultant or occasional contracts.
2. Design and implementation of horizontal strategies consistent with administrative timelines, set of actions tied to stakeholders' commitments. Due to the dynamics of the project, complementarity of actions between new provinces is important for the achievement of indicators in time and quality.
3. As part of the communication and governance strategy, it is recommended that strategies, plans and policies be formulated to make the joint work with territorial and national stakeholders more visible. This strategy should be considered both externally and internally as a mechanism for exchange and ownership of the initiative.
4. As part of sustainability, it is necessary to strengthen administrative support for the execution of the letters of agreement in order to maintain the commitment of the implementing and executing stakeholders. As part of continuous improvement, it is recommended that the mechanisms for implementing actions through the letters of agreement should be reviewed and adjusted strategically to ensure the planned execution in each period by the partner, and to have the flexibility to adjust the items to comply with the concrete actions in the territory, added to the assignment of administrative personnel and follow up of the LoA (Letters of Agreement).
5. Take advantage of the mechanism for replication and complementarity of actions and evaluate the potential for private sector participation.
6. It is important to highlight that, from the development of the project to its execution, new actions have been identified which, although not specifically included in the project document, can contribute significantly to the generation of the Environmental Land Use Planning Policy with a landscape approach, such as the issue of integrated fire management, which can be considered once the project's minimums are met and move on to value-adding processes such as fire prevention and others.
7. The indicators are sequential and depend on each other, so a monitoring strategy is recommended for the end of the project, since for several of these, the Prodoc established that the baseline would be defined in the first two years of execution. However, due to delays caused by various factors, certain indicators were not able to be defined until the third year. Because of this, the role of monitoring is crucial for proposing and reporting on delayed actions.
8. The financial execution of the project has been identified as a critical factor; to date it has a progress of about 22%, while by the time of the mid-term review it should have attained close to 40-50%. The involvement and participation of all project stakeholders at all levels is recommended in order to accelerate budget execution aligned with the fulfillment of indicators. The suggested mechanisms are strengthening of actions and support that the Ministry can give through agile processes from the Projects Directorate for disbursements and reviews, achieving the allocation of the budget to the territory in the planned time. In addition, the provinces and territorial stakeholders must have aligned and reporting processes so that they can access resources on time and so that this does not affect the operation of the project. There is a very high risk of not being able to meet the planned execution in the remaining time of the project if substantial corrective actions are not taken regarding the execution of letters of agreement and the implementation of actions.
9. The Nation has proposed including new provinces as replicas, however, in the evaluator's opinion, there are still no practical experiences that could be considered successful and so the approach should use the criteria of complementarity rather than that of replication. If the National line of work of to include new provinces is maintained, it is suggested that, regarding the process of the output "Identification of replication sites" developed by the PMU (PIR 2022), to consider the possibility of success (political, financial and temporal) and follow the comments of the evaluator to strengthen the planned actions and stakeholders with which the Prodoc was built until exhausting all the recommendations suggested in this report. On exception, in cases with substantial delays, agreements may be reached to limit, redefine or terminate actions without losing sight of promoting the ELUP approach and its benefits in any intervention under the project context.
10. Promote, formalize, and operationalize the governance mechanisms defined in PRODOC: Steering Committees are being used and are functional; however, it is necessary to activate the Advisory Committees defined in PRODOC to discuss, reach agreements and improve operational aspects. The PRODOC defines the existence of Technical Advisory Committees, and it is necessary that they be operationalized. Meetings and agreements that are held need to be formalized and documented and the decisions and intervention strategies ratified so that, with any change of authorities of different contextual circumstances, their orientation is evident. At the territorial level, the PRODOC identifies the provincial working groups, in this space the role of the Project Management Unit in the province is important since it must have a leadership role to convene and articulate the work between the different local and national actors. It is extremely important to strengthen and activate the three governance mechanisms of this project.
11. Generate an entrepreneurial or performance approach to interventions, through the inclusion of the private sector or others that, with a revision, can promote the economic sustainability of ELUP in the medium term. Also, explore the mechanisms established in the Prodoc such as incentives, financing, cooperativism, set of relevant actions within the framework of the horizontal work strategy and the sum of efforts/actors post MTR to achieve objectives and goals in the timeframe of the project. Important examples in the region are cited, such as the mechanisms of competitive funds whose characteristic is the incorporation of stakeholders that work under under the project’s objective and that could have the agility required for the timeframe of the project. In any case, the strategy to be taken should be planned during the second semester after the MTR, in order to document, systematize and replicate these mechanisms, which has not been possible so far.

# **Annexes**

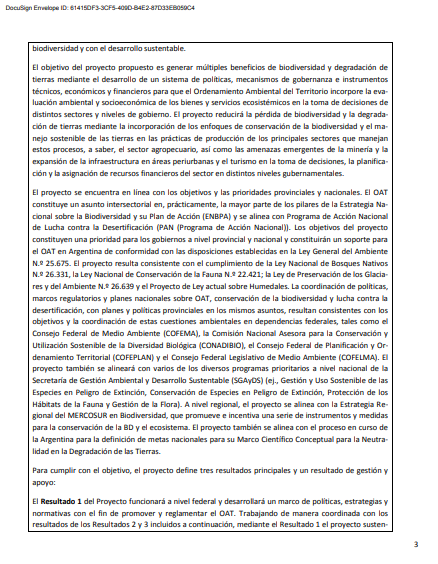
## MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

Interfaz de usuario gráfica, Texto, Aplicación

Descripción generada automáticamente

Texto

Descripción generada automáticamente



Texto

Descripción generada automáticamente

Interfaz de usuario gráfica, Texto, Aplicación, Correo electrónico

Descripción generada automáticamente

Interfaz de usuario gráfica, Texto, Aplicación

Descripción generada automáticamente

## **MTR scoring matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Initial question: Please describe your role and involvement with the project?** | | | |
| **According to the initial answer, the interview was conducted, and the corresponding question was chosen from the described portfolio** | | | |
| **Key questions** | **Indicators** | **Sources** | **Methodology** |
| **Estrategia de proyecto: Project strategy:** | | | |
| To what extent is the project strategy relevant to national priorities and country ownership and involvement? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Is it the best way to obtain the desired results? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What were the internal and external factors that have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the results? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Are you aware of the coordination spaces established for this project? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Have the budgets and schedules initially established in the document been respected? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Are potential sources of co-financing identified, as well as leveraged and associated financing? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Is the existing team at the national, provincial, local level adequate to manage the project? | Quality of indicators (SMART), Feasibility of M&E plan | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Are PIR reports, progress reports and other means of communication on project implementation adequate and of good quality? | Degree of adoption of corporate tools and follow-up on recommendations | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| There is an M&E plan in design (results framework, indicators, measurement and reporting plan, use of evaluations) appropriate to the project and country context. |  | PIR | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| **Progreso en el logro de resultados: Progress towards results:** | | | |
| What is the degree of compliance with the desired results and objectives so far? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What positive aspects such as lessons learned have been generated from the project so far and which ones could be important? | Degree of knowledge of the project | Interviews with key stakeholders, quantification of responses | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| In what way have the Project's stakeholders contributed to increase the visibility of the actions? | Statement of contribution and interest of local stakeholders in activities and outputs | Project outputs and communications | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Overall, what is the cost-effectiveness of the project in terms of resources invested and results achieved? | Number of outputs | Reports in comparison to the Prodoc | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What impact has the project had in social, environmental and conservation aspects? | Degree of knowledge about the outcomes | Interviews  Project reports | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What key results has the project generated (i.e., significant improvements in the state of natural resources, substantive progress in achieving these impacts)? | Progress of the results in the logical framework | Outputs achieved |  |
| **Project implementation and adaptive management:** | | | |
| Has the project so far been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and adapting to changing conditions? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| To what extent do the project's monitoring and evaluation, information and communication systems contribute to its implementation? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| To what extent is the project consistent with the GEF operational programs or strategic priorities on which the project was funded? | Level of alignment with UNDP Country Program and synergies with ELUP | UNDP Regional Interview  Compared with that described by the interviewee | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What aspects do you consider to be barriers or limitations to the implementation of the project? | Degree of knowledge of the project | Interviews with key stakeholders, quantification of responses | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Have the resources been used appropriately, and to what extent were the project outputs achieved with those resources? | Progress of achievements in the logical framework of results | Scoring of indicators and achievements in the logical framework | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Is due diligence demonstrated in the management of funds, including periodic audits? | Due diligence reports | Spotcheck reports | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| **Sustainability:** | | | |
| To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic and/or environmental risks to the long-term sustainability of project results? |  | PRODOC, PIR, interviews, documentation provided by the Project Management Unit, etc. | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What practices developed by any of the activities have contributed or can contribute to strengthen the other activities within the framework of the project? | Adaptive management measures reported in response to changes in context. | UNDP Regional Interview  Compared with the Global ABS EF described by the interviewee | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Does the project complement other strategies or projects implemented in the same territory and thematic area? | Qualitative identification of initiatives | Interviews with PMU and government authorities  Prodoc compared with background information | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Do the institutions incorporate expected project outcomes and objectives? | Number of instruments generated and adopted | Tangible outputs | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| **Cross-cutting issues (gender focus, SDGs, among others)** | | | |
| How does the project contribute to cross-cutting issues of gender, women's empowerment and communities? | Adoption of the approach and scalability | Outputs that implicitly include the approach  Number of formal gender documents | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| What is the impact of the project in terms of gender, participation and decision-making? | Percentage of participation | Participation record | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| Were the abovementioned processes planned or spontaneous, how are they adapted to the project context? | Degree of adoption of the subject matter | Perception surveyed with all the interviewees | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| How do you describe the participation of communities in relation to the project's subject matter? | Level of alignment to national and international standards | Formal documents  Background information  Interview with the Gender and Communities Specialist | Collection of primary information and key stakeholder interviews |
| **Preguntas de fortalecimiento Strengthening questions** | | | |
| To what extent do you think the Project's objectives are being achieved? | 1 - 5 |  |  |
| Are the financial gaps significant, moderate or none at all regarding the contributions from international cooperation and the Nation for addressing these issues? | Management level for replication and continuity | Interviews with governmental stakeholders  UNDP Country Office |  |

## **Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ELUP Project Argentina | |
| **Objective of the questionnaire: to collect data regarding the quality of project implementation** | | |
| **The following questionnaire is aligned with the strategic objectives of the project. Please contextualize your answers according to your institution's role within the project.** | | |
| **Project strategy** | | |
| To what extent is the project strategy relevant to national priorities and country ownership and involvement? |  |
| Is it the best way to obtain the desired results? |  | |
| What were the internal and external factors that have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the results? |  | |
| Are you aware of the coordination spaces established for this project? |  | |
| Have the budgets and schedules initially established in the document been respected? |  | |
| Are potential sources of co-financing identified, as well as leveraged and associated financing? |  | |
| Is the existing team at the national, provincial, local level adequate to manage the project? |  | |
| Are PIR reports, progress reports and other means of communication on project implementation adequate and of good quality? |  | |
| There is an M&E plan in the design (results framework, indicators, measurement and reporting plan, use of evaluations) appropriate to the project and country context. |  | |
| **Progress Towards Results:** | | |
| What is the degree of compliance with the desired results and objectives so far? |  | |
| What positive aspects such as lessons learned have been generated by the project so far and which ones could be important? |  | |
| In what way have the Project's stakeholders contributed to increase the visibility of the actions? |  |
| Overall, what is the cost-effectiveness of the project in terms of resources invested and results achieved? |  |
| What impact has the project had in social, environmental and conservation aspects? |  | |
| What key results has the project generated (i.e., significant improvements in the state of natural resources, substantive progress in achieving these impacts)? |  | |
| **Project implementation and adaptive management:** | | |
| Has the project so far been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and adapting to changing conditions? |  | |
| To what extent do the project's monitoring and evaluation, information and communication systems contribute to its implementation? |  | |
| To what extent is the project consistent with the GEF operational programs or strategic priorities on which the project was funded? |  | |
| What aspects do you consider to be barriers or limitations to the implementation of the project? |  | |
| Have the resources been used appropriately, and to what extent were the project outputs achieved with those resources? |  | |
| Is due diligence demonstrated in the management of funds, including periodic audits? |  | |
| **Sustainability:** | | |
| To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic and/or environmental risks to the long-term sustainability of project results? |  | |
| What practices developed by any of the activities have contributed or can contribute to strengthen the others within the project? |  | |
| Does the project complement other strategies or projects implemented in the same territory and thematic area? |  | |
| Do the institutions incorporate expected project outcomes and objectives? |  | |
| **Cross-cutting issues (gender focus, SDGs, among others).** | |
| How does the project contribute to cross-cutting issues of gender, women's empowerment and communities? |  |
| What is the impact of the project in terms of gender, participation and decision-making? |  | |
| Were the abovementioned processes planned or spontaneous, how were they adapted to the project context? |  | |
| How do you describe the participation of communities in relation to the project's subject matter? |  | |
| **Strengthening questions** | | |
| To what extent do you think the Project's objectives are being achieved? |  | |
| Are the financial gaps significant, moderate or none at all regarding the contributions from international cooperation and the Nation for addressing these issues? |  | |

## **Rating scales**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Progress Towards Results Rating Scale** | |
| Highly satisfactory (HS) | The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all of its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objectives/outcomes can be presented as a "good practice". |
| Satisfactory (S) | The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings. |
| Moderately Satisfactory (MS) | The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, but with significant shortcomings. |
| Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) | The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings. |
| Unsatisfactory (U) | Most of the established objectives/outcomes are not expected to be achieved by the end of the project. The objective/outcome has failed |
| Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Escalas de valoración de la sostenibilidad Sustainability Rating Scale** | |
| Likely (L) | Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future |
| Moderately Likely (ML) | Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review |
| Moderately Unlikely (MU) | Significant risk that keys outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on |
| Unlikely (U) | Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained |

## **MTR mission itinerary**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting** | **Stakeholders** | **Time** |
| **BUENOS AIRES** | | | |
| 02/08 - Wednesday | ELUP Project Team |  |  |
|  | MAyDS |  |  |
|  |  | Coordinator-Consultants | 11 to 15 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | UNDP |  | 15:30 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 02/09 - Thursday | MAyDS | Beatriz Domingorena | 10:00 |
|  |  | Guido Veneziale | 10:30 |
|  | UNDP |  |  |
|  | Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship - Chancellery |  | 12:30 |
|  | Min. of Environment Buenas Aires Province (MAPBA) |  | 15:30 |
| 02/10 - Friday | Territorial visit (Delta) | Group tour with partners | 8:00  Departure BA |
| 02/11 - Saturday | No activity |  |  |
| 02/12 - Sunday | Flight to Jujuy | Lodging Jujuy |  |
| **JUJUY** | | | |
| 02/13 - Monday | Jujuy Min. of Env. and CC | M.I. Zigarán - Susana Amador | 08:00 |
|  | Provincial Coordinator ELUP | Hugo Iza |  |
|  | INTA- Territorial tour | Flavio Speranza | 10:00 |
|  |  | Lodging Jujuy |  |
| 02/14 - Tuesday | Flight Salta-MDZ 11:00 |  |  |
|  |  | Lodging Mendoza |  |
| **MENDOZA** | | | |
| 02/15 - Wednesday | SAYOT | Diana Rapalli |  |
|  | Provincial Coordinator ELUP | Sergio Ferrer |  |
|  | INTA | Martín Pérez |  |
|  | INA | José Pozzoli – Dora Balada |  |
| 02/16 - Thursday | Territorial visit INTA- SAYOT-ELUP | Group tour with partners | 08:00 Departure |
| 02/17 - Friday | Morning: Territorial visit CEFIC | ELUP Team | 08:00  Departure |
|  | Zoom presentation on Results 13:00 hrs |  | 13:00 |
|  | Afternoon: 16:00 hrs Flight MDZ-Buenos Aires |  |  |

## **List of people interviewed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NAME** | **CONTACT INFORMATION** |
| Beatriz Domingorena | bdomingorena@ambiente.gob.ar |
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| Enrique Goites | goites.enrique@inta.gob.ar |
| Flavio Speranza | speranza.flavio@inta.gob.ar |
| Dora Balada | doraleonorbalada@gmail.com |

## **List of documents reviewed**

**Key project documents**

• Project Identification Form (PIF)

• PRODOC Project Document

• Original detailed project work plan (CEO endorsement)

• Annual Project Operating Plans

• UNDP Initiation Plan

• UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)

**Project management documents**

• Inception workshop

• Annual Project Reports to UNDP

• Project Implementation Reports (PIRs 2020, 2021 and 2022)

• Audit reports (2020, 2021, 2022)

• Combined Delivery Report (2020, 2021, 2022)

• Project Steering Committee Minutes and Documents

• Social and Environmental Screening Template

• Project Management Unit Contacts

## **UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Consultants**

**Los evaluadores/consultores:**

1. Deben presentar una información completa y justa en su evaluación de las fortalezas y debilidades, de tal manera que las decisiones o acciones llevadas a cabo se encuentren bien fundadas.
2. Deben revelar el conjunto completo de conclusiones junto con la información de sus limitaciones y tenerlo a disposición de todos aquellos afectados por la evaluación que posean el derecho expreso para recibir los resultados.
3. Deberán proteger el anonimato y la confidencialidad de los informantes individuales. Deberán ofrecer el máximo tiempo de notificación, limitar las demandas de tiempo y respetar el derecho de las personas a no involucrarse. Los evaluadores deberán respetar el derecho de las personas a otorgar información de manera confidencial, y deben asegurarse de que la información sensible no pueda ser rastreada hasta su origen. Los evaluadores no están obligados a evaluar a personas individuales, pero están deben mantener el equilibrio entre la evaluación de las funciones de gestión y este principio general.
4. En ocasiones, al realizar las evaluaciones destaparán pruebas de delitos. Se debe informar de manera discreta sobre tales casos al órgano de investigación apropiado. Los evaluadores deberán consultar con otras entidades de supervisión relevantes cuando exista la mínima duda sobre si estos temas deberían ser comunicados y de cómo deberían comunicarse.
5. Deberán ser sensibles hacia las creencias, usos y costumbres y actuar con integridad y honestidad en sus relaciones con todas las partes interesadas. En la línea de la Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, los evaluadores deben ser sensibles hacia los temas de discriminación e igualdad de género. Deberán evitar ofender la dignidad y autoestima de aquellas personas con las que establezcan un contacto durante la evaluación. Sabiendo que existe la posibilidad de que la evaluación afecte negativamente a los intereses de algunas partes interesadas, los evaluadores deberán conducir la evaluación y comunicar el objetivo de ésta y sus resultados de una manera que respete claramente la dignidad y la autoestima de los implicados.
6. Son responsables de su actuación y (los) producto(s) que generen. Son responsables de una presentación escrita u oral clara, precisa y equilibrada, así como de las limitaciones, conclusiones y recomendaciones del estudio.
7. Deberán aplicar procedimientos contables sólidos y ser prudentes a la hora de utilizar los recursos de la evaluación.

**Formulario de Acuerdo del Consultor del MTR**

Acuerdo para acatar el Código de Conducta para Evaluadores del sistema de la ONU:

Nombre del Consultor: Diego Quishpe Landeta \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nombre de la Organización Consultora (cuando sea necesario): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Afirmo que he recibido y entendido y que acataré el Código de Conducta para Evaluadores de las Naciones Unidas.**

Firmado en Quito a 1 de mayo de 2023

Firma:



## **Signed MTR Final Report Approval Form**

**Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:**

**Commissioning Unit**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## **Audit trail obtained from comments received on draft MTR report**

[Informe\_Rastro\_OAT.docx](file:///C:\Users\agdgq\Documents\Evaluaciones%20de%20proyectos\Ordenamiento-ambiental-Medio%20termino\Informe_Rastro_OAT.docx)

## **Relevant Midterm Tracking Tools**

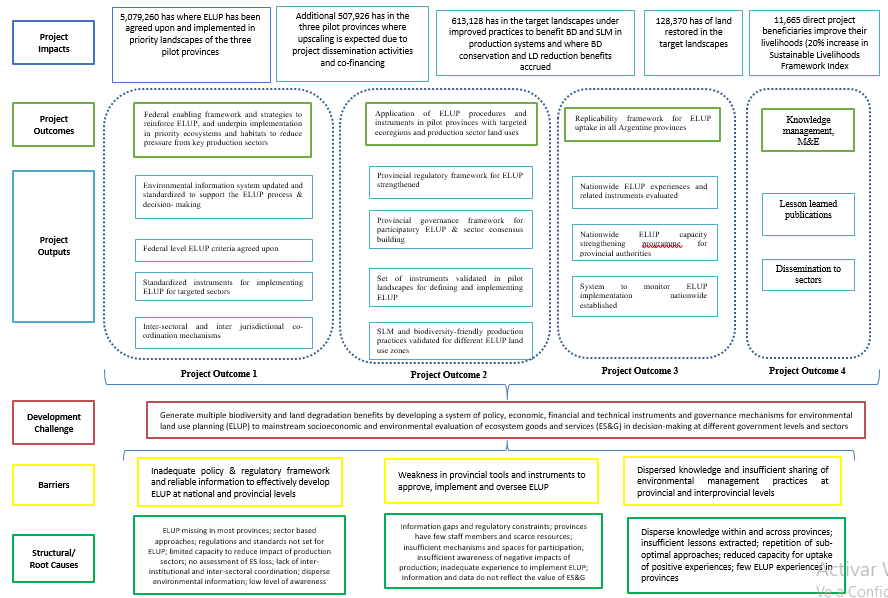
Attached file.

## **Matrix of Assessing Progress Toward Results**

| **Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Level at latest PIR 2022** | **Midterm Target** | **End-of-Project Target** | **Midterm Level & Assessment** | **Achievement Rating** | **Justification for Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective:**  To generate multiple biodiversity and land degradation benefits through the development of a system of policies, governance mechanisms and technical, economic and financial instruments for Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP) to mainstream environmental and socioeconomic assessment of ecosystem goods and services (EG&S) in decision making by different sectors and levels of government. | | | | | | | | |
| **UNDP Mandatory Indicator 1:** Natural resources managed under a sustainable use, conservation, access and benefit-sharing regime, measured through: | | | | | | | | |
| a) Number of hectares where ELUP has been agreed and implemented in priority landscapes covering approximately 10% of the target ecoregions, in 3 pilot provinces through the application of instruments to strengthen modified production, i.e. EIAs of sector development initiatives include mitigation measures to reduce pressures, sector specific and development programs include restrictions on production practices, protocols/regulations to maximize effectiveness in combating sector related threats. | 0 | a) Total: 1,187,810 ha (Number of hectares where ELUP will work implemented in pilot sites based on agreements with the provinces).  Note that ELUP has not yet been implemented in this area).  Buenos Aires: 906,900 ha  -Espinal: 612,610 (Chascomús+SOBA+Agroecología)  -Pampeana: 275,000 ha  -Delta/Flooded Savannas: 6,300 ha + 13,000 ha (biodiversity corridor)  Jujuy: 119,328 ha  -Yungas: 86,974 ha  -Puna/High Andes: 32,354 ha  Mendoza: 160,812 ha  -Low Mountains: 25,711 ha (Mendoza Piedmont Metropolitan Area)  -High Andes: 28,525 ha (Valle de Uco Piedmont)  -Patagonian Steppe: 42,884 ha  - Low Mountain: 63,650 (Plains and plateau mountains)  NOTE: A letter of intent was signed with the municipalities of the pilot sites in Mendoza, making a total of 6,562,700 hectares available for intervention. | 0 | a) Total: 5,079,260  Buenos Aires: 3,059,070   * Espinal: 300,610 * Pampas: 2,726,370 * Valle and Paraná Delta: 32,090   Jujuy: 532,600   * High Andes: 115,790 * Sierras and Bolsones Mountains: 14,870 * Yungas: 80,970 * Dry Chaco: 50,500 * Puna: 270,470   Mendoza: 1,487,590   * Sierras and Bolsones Mountains: 37,050 * Plains and Plateau Mountains: 837,190 * Patagonian Steppe: 305,900 * High Andes: 307,450 | 21.25% mid-term target | **On track to be achieved** | Although the indicator does not have a baseline, nor a defined mid-term target, according to the last PIR, the project made progress in planning and management with stakeholders to work in approximately 1'187.810 ha of the pilot provinces that will implement ELUP.  It is worth mentioning that, in order to optimize time and resources, and above all to meet the target, from the beginning, the development of the ELUPs need to take into consideration the areas for scaling up.  Achievements attained for the indicator up to the time of the evaluation:   * Letters of intent with the pilot site municipalities |
| b) Number of additional hectares covering the total area of global ecoregions in the 3 pilot provinces were scaling up is expected due to project outreach activities and co-financed interventions. | 0 | b) Total: 507,926  (Additional hectares)  Buenos Aires: 305,907   * Espinal: 30,061 * Pampas: 272,637 * Valle and Paraná Delta: 3,209   Jujuy: 53,260   * High Andes: 11,579 * Sierras and Bolsones Mountains: 1,487 * Yungas: 8,097 * Dry Chaco: 5,050 * Puna: 27,047   Mendoza: 148,759   * Sierras and Bolsones Mountains: 3,705 * Plains and Plateau Mountains: 83,719 * Patagonian Steppe: 30,590   High Andes: 30,745 |
| **UNDP Mandatory Indicator 2**/GEF Core Indicator 11: Number of direct project beneficiaries (by gender and ethnicity) who improve their livelihoods through environmentally friendly natural resource management and sustainable production. | 0 | TOTAL: 3,389 people + 3,737 (indirect beneficiaries)  Direct:  Buenos Aires: 2,030  Mendoza: 1,324  Jujuy: 35  Indirect:  Buenos Aires: 1,000  Mendoza: 2,737  BUENOS AIRES:  -Training in agroecology: 630 (PMU)  -Sustainable bovine production: 568 (Talares-INTA)  -Native cultivation 20: (Delta-INTA)  -Hydrometric Network: 10 (Delta-INTA)  -Bio-Inputs: 30 (Talares-INTA) + 1,000 Indirect  Peri-urban Agro-ecological Gardens: 743 (Talares-INTA)  -Survey of productive practices: 26 (SOBA-INTA)  MENDOZA:  Agroecology training and strengthening: 300 (PMU)  Agroecology: 5 (Anillo Verde-INTA) + Indirect 264  Biological inputs: 12 (Cinturón Verde-INTA)  Irrigation: 20 (Anillo Verde-INTA)  MENDOZA:  Agroecology training and strengthening: 300 (PMU)  Agroecology: 5 (Anillo Verde -INTA) + Indirect 264  Biological inputs: 12 (Anillo Verde -INTA)  Irrigation: 20 (Anillo Verde -INTA)  Field notebook use: 35 (Anillo Verde -INTA)  Agrochemical containers: 4 (Anillo Verde -INTA) + 250 indirect  Biodiversity in vineyards: 45 (Valle de Uco-INTA)  Livestock management: 3 (Valle de Uco -INTA) + 10 indirect  Study of impact on farms and ecosystem services: (INTA) indirect beneficiaries 2,213  JUJUY:  Network of established partners: 35 (INTA) | 3,400  (40% are women; 10% belong to indigenous groups) | 11,665  At least 40% are women; 10% belong to indigenous groups (based on average % of female and indigenous population in 3 target landscapes as per the 2017 Permanent Household Survey). Breakdown is:  Buenos Aires: 2,750 (0% indigenous peoples)  Mendoza: 7,000 (2% indigenous peoples)  Jujuy: 1,905 (70% indigenous peoples) | 99.67% in relation to the mid-term target.  29.05% in relation to the project's final target | **On track to be achieved** | The project has developed capacity building actions focused on improving the livelihoods of co-implementers or direct and indirect beneficiaries. As a result, the indicator has made satisfactory progress with respect to the midterm target. However, it is necessary to disaggregate the information on women and indigenous groups in future reports in order to fully comply with the stipulations of the indicator.  Achievements attained for the indicator up to the time of the evaluation:  \* 3,389 direct beneficiaries + 3,737 indirect beneficiaries |
| **Indicator 3:** Degree of improvement in BD conservation and LD reduction in three target landscapes as a result of ELUP implementation, measured through increases in: | | | | | | | | |
| a) the level of Net Primary Productivity (NPP), measured by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) and the Soil-Adjusted Vegetation Index (SAVI) (trends in hectares). | Baseline and specific targets for NPP, % land cover and soil organic content TBD in PY1 | Buenos Aires: 461,700  - Pampa: 275,000  -Espinal: 180,400  - Valle del Paraná: 6,300  Jujuy: 119,328  -Puna: 61,877  - High Andes: 22,392  - Yungas: 14,403  - High Mountain: 20,656  Mendoza: 160,470  - High mountain: 6,319  - Low Mountain: 82,584  - Patagonian steppe: 39,424  - High Andes: 32,143 | Mid-Term Target to be determined in PY1 | Total area over which the measures will be applied:  Buenos Aires: 461,700  - Pampa: 275,000  - Espinal: 180,400  - Valle del Paraná: 6,300  Jujuy: 119,328  - Puna: 61,877  - High Andes: 22,392  - Yungas: 14,403  - Sierras and Bolsones Mountains: 20,656  Mendoza: 160,470  - Sierras and Bolsones Mountains: 6,319  - Plains mountains: 82,584  - Patagonian steppe: 39,424  - High Andes: 32,143  The targets will be defined at the beginning of the project. | 0% target at mid-term | **Not on track to be achieved** | In the design of the indicator, the baseline for monitoring it was not established within the logical framework of Prodoc. It is mentioned that the baseline was to be defined during the first year of project implementation, however, there were delays due to the pandemic. Even so, it was conceptualized in the Prodoc that the "Final Report of the Voluntary Program for the Establishment of Soil Degradation Neutrality Targets" of May 2020, prepared by the National Directorate of Planning and Environmental Land Use Planning, would be used. The aforementioned report presents the monitoring of these indicators in 2018 and their validation in 2019, it is necessary to mention that in the same report it is stated the update was performed in 2022. Furthermore, that the measurements of this will be performed every 4 years, which is the time considered to observe measurable variations.  For this reason, it is considered that the indicator runs the risk of not being met during the life of the project.  These 3 indicators will be measrued at the pilot site level to obtain information that will contribute to decision making and to verify the effectiveness of the proposed practices. |
| b) % of land covered (trends in hectares). |  | Mid-Term Target to be determined in PY1 |  |
| c) soil organic carbon content (trends in hectares). |  | Mid-Term Target to be determined in PY1 |  |
| **Outcome 1: Federal strategies and enabling framework to reinforce ELUP and underpin implementation in priority ecosystems and habitats to reduce pressure from key production sectors. (Target sectors: agriculture & livestock; mining and peri-urban infrastructure, tourism)** | | | | | | | | |
| **Indicator 4:** Capacity to plan and implement ELUP and ES valuation in development and financing plans of the sector in order to reduce threats to BD and LD in priority areas, measured by: Capacity to plan and implement ELUP & ES valuation in development plans and sector financing to reduce threats to BD & LD in priority areas, measured by: | | | | | | | | |
| a) 20% increase in the scores obtained by the SGAyDS and other sectoral institutions in the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scoring System. | a) 46.6%  (Maximum score 100% on UNDP Adapted Capacity scorecard) for SGAyDS  Other sectoral institutions will be selected in PY1 | a) 62.22%  NOTE: the number of staff and technicians trained exceeds 300 people:  EVIDENCE 7.A - Capacity Scorecard | a) 50%  (Maximum score of 100% on the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scoring System) | a) 56%  (Maximum score of 100% on the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard) for SGAyDS  20% increase for selected sectoral institutions in PY1 | 100 % of target with reference to mid-term | **Achieved** | In accordance with the latest PIR, the project reports compliance with the indicator, resulting in satisfactory progress with respect to the mid-term goal.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  62.22% (300 people trained). |
| b) Percentage of sector financing instruments that mainstream ELUP and new production guidelines and/or improved access to instruments. | b) 12 economic instruments related to LD, BD and sustainable development: i) Native Forest Law Fund, ii) Forest Plantations Fund, iii) Sheep Recovery Fund, iv) Inclusive Rural Development Program, v) Rural Area Development Program, vi) Technology Fund, vii) Social Actors Demand Council Program, viii) Seed Fund, ix) Tourism Program, x) Sustainable Territorial Innovation, xi) Galicia Bank credit line, xii) Provincial Agricultural Services Program. 7 instruments partially include ELUP criteria or aspects related to ELUP. | b) 0%  November 2021, the director of the PRODECCA Program of the National Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries was contacted to coordinate with funding projects for reducting threats to BD and LD in priority areas of the province of Mendoza. | b) Inter-sectoral coordination established and agreed for mainstreaming of ELUP criteria | b) At least 50% have mainstreamed ELUP in the eligibility criteria for financing.  (Forest Plantation Fund, Sheep Recovery Fund; Goat Production Fund; Banco Galicia; others, to be determined). | 0 % target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the last PIR, the project has managed with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries the actions that allow the inclusion of the ELUP criteria in the economic instruments. However, in order to achieve compliance with the indicator, the PMU must join and resume efforts in coordination with the institutions of interest to include ELUP in the instruments. |
| **Indicator 5:** Number and type of land use policy, planning, strategy and regulatory instruments at the national level that mainstream ELUP. | Regulations that partially include ELUP: General Environment Law Nº25.675, Native Forest Law Nº26.331, Glacier Law Nº 26.639, National Parks Law Nº 22.351; Wildlife Conservation Law Nº 22.421; Law Nº 24 375 ratifying the Convention on Biological Diversity; Law Nº 23.919 ratifying the RAMSAR Convention; Law Nº 24.701 ratifying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; Environmental Water Management Law Nº 25.688; and Law Nº 27.037 National System of Marine Protected Areas | Progress was made in the coordination and establishment of spaces for dialogue.  The inter-institutional spaced generated for dialogue are detailed in indicator 6. Most of them correspond to the federal level and others to coordination with civil society organizations. With regard to mainstreaming of the Project in the National Advisory Commission for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (CONADIBIO), an inter-institutional and federal articulation of multiple parties is involved (see members: https://bit.ly /3wejeb8).  NOTE:  A ministerial document or resolution is being prepared with preliminary criteria/opinions/recommendations from the PMU on policy, planning and strategies to be agreed upon at the federal level.  The main objective of the document is that it become a reference framework that expresses the agreements generated by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in the area of Environmental Land Use Planning. | Sector coordination and dialogue established through dialogue spaces (see Indicator 7 below). Preliminary criteria agreed. | Development of a federal regulation on minimum budgets for ELUP. | 30 % target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | In accordance with the last PIR, the project has promoted spaces for dialogue with stakeholders for the generation of instruments at the national level that include ELUP.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  Development of the draft ministerial resolution with criteria, opinions/  preliminary policy, planning and strategic recommendations of the PMU. The main objective of the document is to become a frame of reference that expresses the agreements generated from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in terms of Environmental Land Use Planning. |
| **Indicator 6:** Number and type of new partnership mechanisms at the federal level for dialogue to mainstream BD and ELUP into sectoral programming and financing decisions (including level of direct participation of women and indigenous peoples). | There are several spaces at the federal level that deal with different subjects e.g., COFEMA, CONADIBIO, ONDTyD but none specifically addressing ELUP. | 2 spaces for dialogue  - COFEMA  - CONADIBIO  1 space for inter-institutional dialogue generated.  Within the Federal Environmental Council (COFEMA), Commission for Environmental Land Use Planning (ELUP).  2- Formal mainstreaming of ELUP into CONADIBIO's working groups.  Progress is being made in other areas of dialogue:  - One (1) space for dialogue under development as of the elaboration of the ministerial document or resolution explained in indicator 5 whose main objective is to become a reference framework on Environmental Land Use Planning at different scales: provincial, municipal, interjurisdictional dialogue , another space for interinstitutional and intersectional dialogue will be established with alliances at the federal level for dialogue with the goal of mainstreaming BD and the PMU in sectoral programming and financial decisions.  Progress was made in the coordination and establishment of spaces for dialogue:  - Articulation with the National Biodiversity Directorate (DNBi) of the MAyDS. Mainstreaming of technicians into ELUP.  - Articulation between ELUP and the MAyDS "Inclusive Conservation" Program was formalized.  - Coordination with INAI to hold a meeting to present the IPP Plan and agree on possible ways of implementation in Mendoza and Jujuy.  - Articulation with INTA´s Indigenous Peoples Network for Institutional Approach  - Articulation with SPARN (MAyDS)-FAO-INAI-APN Articulation – TICCA Network (PNUD)  These spaces will begin to operate through plenary sessions, working groups and roundtables, and forums where the main sectors and key actors will present, discuss and validate proposals for regulations and instruments that generate standards, with the aim of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and SLM in the key sectors of ELUP. | 1 space for inter-institutional and intersectoral dialogue established (at least 40% women and includes indigenous peoples). | 1 space for inter-institutional and inter-sectoral dialogue to mainstream BD and ELUP into sectoral programming and financial decisions functioning with work plans and budget (at least 40% women and including indigenous peoples). | 100 % of target with reference to midterm | **Achieved** | In accordance with the latest PIR, the project reports compliance with the indicator, resulting in satisfactory progress with respect to the mid-term goal.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  2 spaces for dialogue  • COFEMA  • CONADIBIO  1 space for interinstitutional dialogue interinstitucional generated (COFEMA).  Other spaces for dialogue (DNBi, MAyDS, INAI, INTA, SPARN, FAO-INAI-APN, TICCA (PNUD) |
| **Outcome 2:** Application of ELUP instruments and procedures in the pilot provinces with target ecoregions and productive sector land use planning | | | | | | | | |
| **Indicator 7:** Capacity to manage the human-biodiversity interface in target provinces to produce benefits in terms of BD and LD and SE flow, measured through: | | | | | | | | |
| a) Ratings according to the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scoring System of the environmental authorities of the pilot provinces: i) Provincial Agency for Sustainable Development (OPDS) of the Province of Buenos Aires, ii) Ministry of Environment of the Province of Jujuy, iii) Secretariat of Environment of the Province of Mendoza. | a) OPDS: 48.8%.  Jujuy: 48.8%.  Mendoza: 80%)  (Maximum score: 100% in UNDP's Adapted Capacity Scorecard) | a)  MAPBA (Ex-OPDS): 53.33%  Jujuy: 53.33%  Mendoza: 84.44% | a) OPDS: 53%  Jujuy: 53%  Mendoza: 86%  (Maximum score 100% on the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard) | a) OPDS: 59%  Jujuy: 59%  Mendoza: 96%  (Maximum score 100% on the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard) | 99 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the latest PIR the project has registered significant progress in the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard with reference to the mid-term target. However, more work needs to continue on activities that promote capacity to manage the human-biodiversity interface in the pilot provinces. |
| b) Number and type of policy, planning and regulatory instruments at the provincial level for ELUP that include a sustainability, resilience and landscape approach. | b) 7 provincial instruments that partially mainstream criteria or aspects of the ELUP: i) Law No. 8051 of Mendoza, ii) 3 provincial laws for the zoning of native forest lands, iii) 3 provincial general environmental laws, | b) Mendoza: preparation of agroecological certification protocol and municipal zoning. It will be ready in the fourth quarter of 2022. | b) Sector coordination and dialogue established through the provincial multi-stakeholder platforms (see Indicator 9 below). | b) At least 3 provincial laws strengthened with instruments, guidelines and/or economic regulations for ELUP.  At least 5 new instruments developed and approved to implement ELUP at the provincial/municipal level (i.e., methodological guides, ELUP protocols, planning guides). | 10 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the PIR 2021 for this indicator, it was proposed that in the year 2023 the process of contracting a consultant would begin with the objective of developing technical specifications to define the methodologies, modalities and training tools, the contents of each modality, the definition of the different target audiences and the tentative implementation schedule for the three years that the training program will initiate. Additionally, although inter-institutional coordination is implicit in the activity, it is necessary that future reports include information related to the planned goals. |
| **Indicator 8:** Number and type of new partnership mechanisms at the provincial level for participatory ELUP and consensus building (including the level of direct participation of women and indigenous peoples). | Mendoza has a Provincial Land Use Planning Council that will serve as a space for dialogue. Jujuy and Buenos Aires do not have participatory mechanisms for the ELUP. | Mendoza: 2  1. under development:  Creation of a multi-stakeholder space: between Municipalities (environmental areas, SAYOT and ELUP).  2. Space for indigenous representation in the Roundtable of the Provincial Council of Land Use Planning of the Province of Mendoza (under development).  Buenos Aires: 1  Multi-stakeholder space Fundación Humedales.  Jujuy: 1 (under development)  Sustainable commodities platform: 1  Under development: Articulation of synergies with Fundación Vida Silvestre.  Articulate with the project "Sustainable Pasture Ranching: A Necessary Transition and an Opportunity for Argentine Pampas Production" and participate in the working group with institutions that promote ranching with sustainable pastures and in the design of an Action Plan 2022-2025. | 1 multi-stakeholder space strengthened with new members (Mendoza) Design of 2 multi-stakeholder spaces (Buenos Aires and Jujuy) and 1 sustainable commodities platform (Buenos Aires) and stakeholder identification | 3 multi-stakeholder spaces that operate with work plans and budgets (made up of at least 40% women and indigenous peoples).  1 sustainable commodities platform (beef) established and operating with action plans developed (Buenos Aires). |  | **On track to be achieved** | In reference to the interviews and documentation reviewed, considerable progress has been made on this indicator, as spaces for dialogue have been established with multiple provincial stakeholders. However, it is necessary to strengthen the new alliances with concrete actions and agreements established in order to generate spaces of trust. |
| **Indicator 9:** GEF Core Indicator 4: Area (hectares) of landscapes under improved practices in target landscapes excluding protected areas, measured by: | | | | | | | | |
| a) area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity, e.g., agroecological practices, management of grazing and recovery periods and restoration (qualitative analysis, not certified) (GEF sub-indicator 4.1). | 0 | Total: 68.785 ha.  a) 64,647 ha  Buenos Aires: 34,793 ha.  5,093 Chascomús+6,300 ha. Delta+23,400 ha. SOBA  (425 ha. Delta – under development)  Mendoza: 29,854 ha.  21,854 ha. (CV)+8,000 ha. (V de Uco)  (12,500 ha. Jocoli – under development)  Jujuy: 0 ha. | Total: 183,938 ha  a) 57,021 ha | b) Total: 613,128 ha  a) 240,644 ha  - Buenos Aires 31% (116,631 ha)   * Mendoza 46% (59,560 ha) * Jujuy 60% (64,453 ha) | 37.40 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | In accordance with the last PIR, the project reports progress with respect to the mid-term target. Nevertheless, it is necessary to start strengthening actions with the Province of Jujuy to ensure that the intervention area has agroecological practices, silvopastoral systems, reforestation, among others.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  183,938 ha in the provinces of Mendoza and Buenos Aires. |
| b) area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems, e.g., silvopastoral systems, windbreaks, no-till, crop rotation (GEF Sub-indicator 4.3).) | 0 | b) Total: 4,138 ha.  Buenos Aires: 4,138 ha. (Magdalena y Punta Indio)  Mendoza: 27,000 ha. under development (extensive ranching with goats + horticulture).  Jujuy: 0 ha. | b) 126,917 ha | b) 372,484 ha  - Buenos Aires 69% (259,598 ha)   * Mendoza 54% (69,918 ha)   Jujuy 40% (42,968 ha) |
| **Indicator 10:** GEF Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares) in target ecoregions/landscapes, measured by: | | | | | | | | |
| a) restoration of degraded agricultural land areas (GEF sub-indicator 3.1) | 0 | Total: 59,554 ha.  a) 59,554 ha.  - Buenos Aires: 29,700 ha.  6,300 ha. Delta+23,400 ha. SOBA  - Mendoza: 29,854 ha.  21,854 ha. (CV)+8.000 ha. (V de Uco)  Jujuy: 0 ha. | Total: 38,592 ha  a) 29,441 ha | Total: 128,370 ha  a) 97,868 ha  - Bs As: 85,471 ha  - Mendoza: 12,397 ha  - Jujuy 0 ha | 100 % of target with reference to midterm  46.39 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the latest PIR, the project reports satisfactory progress with respect to the midterm goal. Nevertheless, it is necessary to plan activities to promote the restoration of agricultural lands, forests and forest lands, native pastures and weeds in the intervention areas. It is also worth mentioning that the indicator given the established timeframe is ambitious and the monitoring mechanism for these indicators needs to be strengthened.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  59,554 ha |
| b) restoration of forest area and forest land (GEF sub-indicator 3.2) | 0 | b) 0 ha.  Buenos Aires: 0 ha.  Mendoza: 0 ha.  Jujuy: 0 ha.  Note: These areas are in the process of restoration. INTA reports every activity and indicates the number of beneficiaries, number of hectares and the indicators to which they apply. | b) 9,150 ha | b) 30,502 ha  - Bs As: 0 ha  - Mendoza: 18,595 ha  - Jujuy: 11,907 ha |
| c) restoration of natural grasslands and scrublands (GEF sub-indicator 3.2). | 0 |  |  |  |
| **Indicator 11:** Level of improvement in livelihoods of beneficiaries in target landscapes differentiated by gender and ethnicity, measured through the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) Livelihood Index that measures 5 types of capital: social, productive, human, physical and natural. | Baseline Index values to be determined in PY1 for each target landscape (Index ranges from 1 (low) to 5 (high)). | 0  NOTE: The final value will be measured at the end of the project according to the stipulated target.  The approval of the ToR for the determination of the LADA baseline is in administrative processing. | 0 | 20% improvement in the Subsistence Index | 0 % of target with reference to midterm | **Not on track to be achieved** | According to the Prodoc and the PIR 2022, no baseline information is presented for this indicator, but in these documents, it is indicated that this information would be defined in year 1 of project implementation. However, due to the pandemic, among other reasons, this information has not been collected.  Therefore, the MTR evaluation cannot properly evaluate it. In addition, it is mentioned that in the last PIR there is an administrative process for the approval of ToR for the determination of the LADA baseline. |
| **Outcome 3:** Replicability framework for the adoption of the ELUP in all Argentine provinces. | | | | | | | | |
| **Indicator 12:** Increased capacity of environmental authorities in non-pilot provinces to adopt and implement ELUP criteria and SLM practices in the remaining provinces and nationally important ecoregions, measured by percentage increase in UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard ratings. | Environmental authorities of non-pilot provinces to be identified and agreed upon in PY1/PY2 | The determination of the non-pilot provinces is in process.  NOTE:  The ELUP has performed the technical analysis for the selection of the non-pilot provinces, the MAyDS authorities are now analyzing their determination and it will depend on the willingness of the selected provincial authorities to adhere to the implementation of ELUP in their jurisdictions. | Implementation of the UNDP Adapted Capacity Scorecard. Establishment of the baseline. | 20% increase in scores in Adapted Capacity Scoring System | 0 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the last PIR, the project has carried out the joint analysis with the MAyDS for determining the provinces for scaling up. However, these spaces depend on the political will of the national and provincial authorities. In accordance with the information and interviews carried out, it can be mentioned that the spaces for dialogue with the authorities of the pilot provinces should be strengthened and worked in parallel with the potential areas for scaling up. |
| **Indicator 13:** monitoring of ELUP used to adjust sectoral and financial programming guidelines. | 0 | This indicator will begin to be measured as of the first quarter of 2023.  Note:  Due to the delay in the start of the territorial and face-to-face activities of the Project due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, necessarily, there were also some changes, adaptations and delays with respect to the planned project activities for this indicator. | System for Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of ELUP in Argentina | System for Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of ELUP in Argentina operating in target landscapes and selected non-pilot provinces monitoring ELUP adoption | 0 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the last PIR, the project has promoted the development of spaces for dialogue and the initial formulation of a ministerial agreement. However, according to the design of this indicator the monitoring results will be reflected when the ELUPs are implemented in the pilot provinces, simultaneously it is necessary to design the monitoring and evaluation tool to adjust the sectoral and financial programming guidelines. |
| **Indicator 14:** Level of improvement in knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) on ELUP, ES, sustainable production and other key issues at national and provincial levels measured through surveys in Year 1 and Year 6 (including gender disaggregated data) as a result of capacity building programs on ELUP. | KAP survey in PY1. Baseline and targets to be established | This indicator will begin to be measured as of the first quarter of 2023. | (Not set or not applicable) | KAP survey (target based on knowledge improvements to be determined in PY1) | 0 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the activities of the last PIR, the actions carried out by the project for the other indicators have implemented capacity building spaces for stakeholders at the national and provincial levels.  However, despite not evidencing compliance with the survey planned for the first year on knowledge, attitudes and practices in ELUP, it is expected that by the year 2023 the reporting of the indicator will begin, with a good level of knowledge on the part of national and provincial stakeholders, and by the end of the project there will be a good level of mastery of the subject to ensure scaling up and sustainability. |
| **Outcome 4:** Dissemination of lessons learned, monitoring and evaluation | | | | | | | | |
| **Indicator 15:** Knowledge effectively managed in support of ELUP, measured through: | | | | | | | | |
| a) number and type of project knowledge products and publications on best practices and lessons learned (at least one of them on gender) that have been disseminated. | 0 | a) Total: 6 publications (4 brochures+ 2 digital publications)  - 4 informative brochures: 1 general brochure on the project and 1 on each province.  NOTE: There are 6 publications in the process of being edited. | a) 6 | 15  (e.g., i) annual reports, newsletters; ii) lessons/case studies on: BD/SLM best practices, ELUPs in provinces, gender mainstreaming, dialogue and participation platforms; iii) ELUP methodological guides at national and provincial levels). | 100 % of target with reference to midterm | **Achieved** | In accordance with the latest PIR, the project reports compliance with the indicator, resulting in satisfactory progress with respect to the midterm target.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  4 brochures+ 2 digital publications |
| b) number of institutions at the federal and provincial levels that receive project publications and communication products aimed at improving knowledge and practices on ELUP. | 0 | b) A geo-viewer was developed, implemented and kept up to date for the visualization of geospatial information and analysis of indicators. This product is not a publication, but it contributes to knowledge management in digital format and is freely accessible to any user who wishes to access it, so its availability exceeds the 70 institutions established as the project's goal.  <https://avena.ambiente.gob.ar/> | b) At least 50 | b) At least 70  (Government, private sector, CSOs) | 20 % of target with reference to midterm | **On track to be achieved** | According to the last PIR, the project has implemented a virtual space for dissemination of geospatial information regarding the ELUPs of the project. However, according to the evidence reported it can be seen that the page has an average of 16 visits so it is necessary to strengthen the mechanisms for dissemination and familiarization of the geo viewer for stakeholders at national and provincial level.  Achievements attained up to the time of the MTR evaluation for the indicator:  <https://oat.ambiente.gob.ar/> |

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| **Green** = Achieved | **Yellow =** On track to be achieved | **Red =** Not on track to be achieved |

## **Theory of Change**



1. https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel3-Tema-2-24 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://ciam.ambiente.gob.ar/geovisor.php # [↑](#footnote-ref-3)