



The Seventh Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme of the GEF in Costa Rica

Terminal Evaluation

Terminal Evaluation Report

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Sincerely

Marisol Sánchez

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADI*	Integral Development Association
AEA	Agricultural Extension Agency
AECID*	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
ANP*	Protected Natural Area
ARESEP*	Public Services Regulatory Authority
ASADAS*	Associations Administrators of Communal Aqueduct and Sewer Systems
ASP*	Protected Wild Areas
AyA*	Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers
CADETI*	National Land Degradation Commission
CBD*	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBMA*	Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor
CBPL*	Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor
CCAD*	Ministry of Environment and Energy
CDN*	National Steering Committee
CEDECO*	Educational Corporation for Costa Rican Development
CINAT*	Tropical Bee Research Center
CLOCSAS*	Latin American Confederation of Community Organizations of Water and Sanitation Services
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CMR*	Rural Women Chamber
COMDEKS*	Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative
ENCC*	Costa Rica National Climate Change Strategy
FONAFIFO*	National Forest Financing Fund
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GHG	Greenhouse gases
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
ICE*	Costa Rican Institute of Electricity
IICA*	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
INA*	National Learning Institute
INAMU*	National Women's Institute
INDER*	Rural Development Institute
LPG	Liquefied petroleum gas
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAG*	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
Mideplan*	Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy
MINAE*	Ministry of Environment and Energy
MinSA*	Ministry of Health
MTR	Mid Term Review
NAMA*	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action Programme
NAP*	National Action Plan to Combat Land Degradation
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee
OP6	Operational Phase 6
OP7	Operational Phase 7
OP8	Operational Phase 8
ORAC*	Regional Offices of Communal Aqueducts
PIEG*	National Plan for Effective Equality between women and men

PIF	Project Identification Form
PMU	Project Management Unit
PND*	National Development Plan
PNDIP*	National Development and Public Investment Plan
PPSA*	Payment for Environmental Services Programme
PROCOMER*	Promoter of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica
ProDoc	Project Document
SESP*	Social and Environmental Detection Process
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SINAC*	National System of Conservation Areas
TCU*	University community work
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of reference
UCR*	Costa Rica university
UNA*	National University
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNED*	Distance State University
UNEG	United Nations System of the United Nations Evaluation Group
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WHO	World Health Organization

* By its acronym in Spanish

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Project Information Table

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title	The Seventh Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme of the GEF in Costa Rica	PIF Approval Date	June 11 th 2019
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	6251	Date Project Manager hired: CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date (MSP):	May 6 th 2020
GEF Project ID:	10124	ProDoc Signature Date:	July 2 nd 2020
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	119761	Date Project Manager hired:	July 2017
Número identificativo del proyecto de Atlas/resultado:	116145		
Country/Countries:	Costa Rica	Inception Workshop Date	July 23 rd 2020
Region:	Implemented in five regions: i) the Jesús María River watershed and ii) Barranca; iii) the Montes de Aguacate Biological Corridor, iv) the middle and lower basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River, and v) the Paso Las Lapas Biological Corridor.	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	October 2022
Focal Area	MFA (multifocal)	Terminal Evaluation Completion date:	March 2024
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives	Earth degradation Climate Change Biodiversity	Planned Operational Closure Date:	July 2 nd 2024
Trust Fund:	GEF FT		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity)	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)		
NGOs/CBOs involvement:	Regional		
Financial Information			
PDF / PPG	At approval (US\$M)	At PDF / PPG completion (US\$M)	
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project preparation	66,000	66,000	
Co-financing for project preparation			
Project	At CEO endorsement (US\$M)	At TE (US\$M)	
[1] UNDP contribution:	200,000	205,000	
[2] Government:	2,350,000	2,350,000	
[3] Other multi-/bilaterals:	1,040,000	35,000	
[4] Private Sector:	0	12,000	

[5] NGOs	1,800,000	3,941,403
[6] Total co-financing [1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5]:	5,390,000	6,543,403
[7] Total GEF funding:	2,081,945	2,081,945
[8] Total Project Funding [6 + 7]	7,471,945	8,625,348

1.2. Description of the project.

The Small Grants Programme in its Seventh Operational Phase (SGP OP7), hereinafter referred to as SGP OP7 or the Programme, is implemented in five landscapes: i) the Jesús María River watershed and ii) the Barranca River watershed; iii) the Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor, iv) the lower and middle basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River, and v) the Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor. The total area covered by these landscapes is approximately 199,627 hectares¹. The intervention area combines non-forest activities, mainly coffee and human settlements, with significant forest patches and diverse ecosystems, grasslands, protected areas, and other land uses. Grazing lands constitute nearly 35% of the land use coverage, while combined natural forest categories comprise 46.6%.

The Jesús María River watershed is experiencing significant losses in biodiversity, agricultural productivity, and water availability. During the dry season, freshwater scarcity and unsustainable agricultural practices are exerting increasing pressure on the environment and local communities.

On the other hand, the Barranca River watershed faces similar challenges, with low profitability of agricultural activities and a high rate of deforestation and invasion of riparian zones as key issues.

Regarding the Grande de Tárcoles River watershed, the concentration of population and economic activity has led to a series of problems, including the lack of regulatory urban planning that has resulted in rapid growth and encroachment on the riverbanks by the city.

Furthermore, poor management of solid and liquid waste, along with infrastructure and cultural practices that consider watercourses as simple conduits for these wastes, has contributed to the Grande de Tárcoles River to being considered one of the most contaminated in Central America. This pollution has negative effects on both communities and ecosystems downstream.

It is important to highlight that these biological corridors connect a network of protected areas that conserve and protect endemic and vulnerable species, while also providing essential ecosystem services. Therefore, they are of significant importance for biodiversity. It is in this context that the Programme worked under a participatory approach for landscape planning and management in this region.²

The Programme addressed a series of challenges regarding development in an intervention area that is home to over 420,000 people, where human settlements combine with productive systems and a variety of ecosystems, including agricultural production, grasslands, protected areas, biological corridors, and other land uses. The main threats identified at the beginning of SGP OP7 were the progressive degradation of natural resources due to land use changes, exploitation, pollution, introduction of exotic and invasive species, and climate change; habitat loss caused by land use changes in productive sites, threatening biodiversity, and ecosystem connectivity.

This, coupled with the existence of multiple barriers that communities and Indigenous peoples have faced in conserving and sustainably managing natural resources and improving their livelihoods.

¹ Project Document.

² *Idem*

The Seventh Operational Phase (OP7) came to attend these barriers and limitations.

1.3. Evaluation Ratings Table

1. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
M&E Plan Implementation	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Overall Quality of M&E	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
2. Implementing Agency (IA) Implementation & Executing Agency (EA) Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Effectiveness	Satisfactory (S)
Efficiency	Satisfactory (S)
Overall Project Outcome Rating	Satisfactory (S)
4. Sustainability	Rating
Financial sustainability	Likely (L)
Socio-political sustainability	Likely (L)
Institutional framework and governance sustainability	Likely (L)
Environmental sustainability	Likely (L)
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	Likely (L)

1.4. Concise summary of findings and conclusions and synthesis of the key lessons learned.

Main findings

The design of the Programme was appropriate and adhered to the quality standards of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Results Framework responded to the objectives of the Seventh Phase, which aimed to contribute to socio-ecological and economic resilience in 5 landscapes.

The Programme aligned with the priorities and strategies of UNDP Costa Rica and responded to international agreements against climate change, land desertification, biological diversity, and gender equality.

The SGP OP7 has been relevant for rural and Indigenous communities because it bridges the gap between ecosystems and livelihoods, strengthening social cohesion and developing mechanisms for community governance to sustain initiatives.

The Program's contribution to global environmental benefits included the restoration of 7,867.6 hectares, surpassing the target by 106%; the implementation of improved management practices on 8,843.8 hectares, corresponding to 107% of the target; and the mitigation of 3,438,881.0 metric tons of CO₂e, representing 90.5% of the target. Of the thirty-five supported initiatives, 16 were in the biodiversity focal area, 15 in the land degradation focal area, and 4 in the climate change focal area.

The Programme successfully funded 3 strategic projects that allowed for greater reach in terms of population, social, and environmental benefits, developing mechanisms for working with rural and indigenous communities.

Inter-institutional coordination was highly efficient, as evidenced by the SGP OP7 coordinating territorial actions with institutions and civil society organizations that contribute to improving the quality of life of rural families and benefiting environmental sustainability.

An important part of sustainability is the creation of alliances. The contribution of co-financing by institutions strengthens the Program's efforts, expanding social, environmental, and economic benefits. The ownership of SGP OP7 by beneficiary groups and MAG technicians, who have formed a strong partnership, enables the sustainability of community initiatives.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance

The Programme was relevant for the GEF focal areas of land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change, under the approach of gender equality and intersectionality, enabling a catalytic effect on community processes transformed into models of sustainable development, ensuring global environmental benefits from the grassroots level.

Conclusion 2. Relevance

The Programme promoted the development of community projects where women have been a fundamental part of the initiatives. The promotion of gender equality at the community level was strengthened, with a watershed moment being the development of a Situational Analysis of Women and an Action Plan for Gender Equality from the design phase.

Conclusion 3. Relevance

The design of OP7 from the outset was through participatory planning methodologies, field visits, meetings with national, state, and municipal government institutions, and with the population at the territorial level, including both women and men. In line with the 30-year working experience of the SGP, OP7 has led to coherence throughout the implementation process.

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness and Efficiency

The Programme successfully completed 100% of the 35 subsidized initiatives, achieving a general benefit for the global environment through the restoration of 7,867.6 hectares, surpassing the target (106%); it implemented improved management practices on 8,843.8 hectares, exceeding the target (107%); and it managed to mitigate 3,438,881.0 metric tons of CO₂e, reaching 90.5% of the target.

Conclusion 5. Efficiency

The landscape approach, under the watershed vision, has allowed the results of the initiatives to have a broad impact on the territory through the efforts of community organizations, NGOs, national, regional, and municipal government institutions, as well as educational institutions and university centers. These have become territories for management and coordination mechanisms at the landscape level.

Conclusion 6. Effectiveness and Efficiency

The development of strategic projects proves to be highly effective and efficient as it combines actions aimed at expanding the scale, strengthening initiatives over a larger territory, encompassing a greater number of communities, and benefiting a larger population.

Conclusion 7. Effectiveness and Efficiency

The SGP OP7 strongly promoted the strengthening of capacities and skills of both women and men within each beneficiary community organization and NGO.

Conclusion 8. Effectiveness

The Programme successfully established bio-enterprise networks as a local market strategy in coordination with municipalities, NGOs, and institutions. These networks enable community groups to have direct sales channels for their fresh and value-added products, leading to improved family economies and the stimulation of the local economy. It will be important in the next phase to continue strengthening bio-enterprise networks at the regional and national levels.

Conclusion 9. Effectiveness

A fundamental part of the sustainability actions that were promoted was the strengthening of organizations. Support was provided for the creation and strengthening of second and third-level organizations, creating platforms for territorial management for decision-making, and promoting community governance.

Conclusion 10. Efficiency

The monitoring and tracking carried out by the Program Management Unit (PMU), through reports, minutes, field data collection visits, and data entry into an Excel database, have proven to be effective. However, there are areas that could be improved for the implementation of OP8.

Conclusion 11. Efficiency

An important part of the Program's knowledge management has been the generation of information such as strategies, systematizations, evaluations, stories, photographs, among others. This material has been shared through various channels, which has proven to be efficient. It will be important to have updated information moving forward.

Conclusion 12. Gender equality and women empowerment.

The Programme ensured the participation of rural and indigenous women in vulnerable situations through a gender-sensitive, transformational methodology, employing a participatory approach that efficiently directed resources by working directly with women's groups and mixed groups. The Programme has strengthened the capacities and empowerment of women for strategic decision-making.

Conclusion 13. Sustainability

The SGP OP7 was designed under sustainability principles. From the outset, initiatives were conducted according to the needs and priorities of community groups, with the strengthening of each project by rallying supporting institutions around the initiatives. This involved providing training on gender issues, strengthening organizational, technical, productive, commercialization, sales, and marketing capacities, among others.

Lessons learned

Strengthening initiatives focused on food security and nutrition helped address issues impacting the health of families and communities by promoting new habits of healthy and nutritious eating. The pandemic demonstrated the benefits of local production through the development of short supply chains.

The focus on youth will need to be further reinforced in subsequent phases by improving quality of life, with a focus on creating green jobs using clean technologies for young people, as they represent the generational succession of initiatives in the coming years.

Community initiatives undergo maturation processes that extend beyond the project's completion time. However, the Programme has fostered a network of institutions operating in the region, enabling beneficiaries to collaborate, thus strengthening initiatives.

Allocating a percentage of grants to women's groups has facilitated their integration into productive life and has empowered them to autonomously manage resources. The active participation in decision-making processes within these initiatives has had a transformative impact on their lives, enhancing their empowerment and generating direct benefits for their families.

1.5. Recommendations Table

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Time frame
1	<p>The Programme successfully measured Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with international standards and specific needs. This measurement was conducted using the same analysis framework established in the ProDoc, ensuring the availability of final data. For future phases, it is recommended to continue working with this methodology.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
2	<p>Young women and men have actively integrated into the work of OP7 through community organizations and NGOs, playing a fundamental role in the development of initiatives and the achievement of goals and results. However, it is recommended that in the next phase, a similar exercise be conducted to the one carried out with women to highlight the incorporation of young people within the initiatives. This can be achieved through the allocation of a percentage of resources for youth groups and the development of a survey of established groups involved in sustainable development. Possibly, youth initiatives could be linked with the BIOFIN initiative, which the PMU has been exploring, with the possibility of further integration into SGP initiatives in subsequent phases.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
3	<p>The monitoring and evaluation of the Programme through a spreadsheet has been efficient in OP7. However, it is important to consider its automation to take advantage of generating reports that can aid decision-making. It would be beneficial for the PMU to learn about successful experiences of the SGP monitoring system in other countries and have the possibility to adapt it for Costa Rica. For example, Mexico has a monitoring system called monALISA (Monitoring of Agreements, Baseline, Impact, Follow-up, and Administration), which could serve as a model for adaptation.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
4	<p>The landscape approach under the watershed vision has been fundamental in SGP OP7, consolidating management strategies at the territorial level under the integrating axis of water, which is interconnected with social, natural, and economic elements. Therefore, it is recommended that in subsequent phases, work on the upper basin be considered to enhance the efforts being developed in both the middle and lower basin.</p> <p>The development of landscape strategies are management tools that could continue to be promoted in OP8. Additionally, it is recommended to develop a landscape strategy for the Grande de Tárcoles River basin that includes the upper basin as a reference.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
5	<p>An important aspect of productive initiatives is marketing strategies, which influence the income of producers. OP7 developed coordination mechanisms for local-level platforms; however, to continue reaping benefits and ensure economic sustainability in subsequent phases, it will be crucial to expand benefits to regional and national markets:</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8

	<p>i) Encouraging the development of agreements with tourism sector companies such as hotels, restaurants, eco-friendly shops, gourmet stores, among others.</p> <p>ii) Facilitating connections among OP7 SGP initiatives to establish a network of SGP bio-enterprises.</p> <p>iii) Strengthening initiatives with the production of a virtual online sales catalog with a direct link for purchase, with the incorporation of businesses being crucial to these efforts.</p> <p>iv) Recommending the incorporation of a seal or brand distinctive to the region, which could be a collective brand having a greater impact at the regional and national levels.</p>		
6	<p>It is recommended to continue providing financial support for strategic projects, as they have demonstrated the benefits and scalability for achieving goals, results, and social, environmental, and economic benefits. Furthermore, in subsequent phases, a strategic project focused on biodiversity conservation could be promoted based on the work carried out in biological corridors in OP7, in line with the general management plans of the Protected Natural Areas (PNA) of the region. This project could be linked with the environmental public sector. It is also recommended to continue replicating proven models in renewable technologies, energy-efficient initiatives, and circular economy projects, including waste collection programs for solid waste and legacy plastics (tragic plastics) as well as valorization of recyclable waste.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
7	<p>In the realm of gender equality and women's empowerment, it is recommended to continue promoting the Gender Equality Plan and to address topics outlined in the plan, such as masculinity, domestic violence, financial education, and microcredit. Additionally, it should be updated to address the needs of incorporating the new territory of OP8. Similarly, incorporating the Gender Unit of UNDP into the National Steering Committee (NSC) as technical support in the gender issue is recommended. While the Petit Committee has been relevant, their permanent participation in the NSC will be important. Furthermore, it is crucial for the PMU, with the support of UNDP, to coordinate actions with the Gender Units of MAG, National System of Conservation Areas (NSCA), MINAE, INDER, and INAMU.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
8	<p>SGP OP7 has accumulated a wealth of information and methodologies disseminated in various spaces. However, it would be important to gather and update the information generated in the Programme's repository on its official website to integrate valuable information for institutions, universities, and the SGP itself in Costa Rica and other countries where the SGP operates.</p> <p>Additionally, developing a quarterly newsletter for the SGP, targeted at governmental institutions (national, state, municipal), organizations, and universities, is recommended. This newsletter could be produced by university interns through professional internships or community service programs.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8

2. Introduction

2.1. Evaluation Purpose

The present Termination Evaluation has the main purpose of determining whether the Programme has achieved the planned results of the SGP in its Operational Phase 7 and extracting lessons that can enhance the sustainability of benefits and contribute to the overall improvement of UNDP programming.

Additionally, this evaluation process is expected to confirm the implementation (or lack thereof) of the recommendations issued in the Mid-Term Review (MTR) conducted in 2022 and the audit findings conducted in 2023.³

The evaluation contributes to:

- Promoting accountability and transparency.
- Synthesizing lessons that can help improve the selection, design, and implementation of future initiatives.
- Assessing and documenting the results of the Programme and its contribution to achieving the strategic objectives of the GEF aimed at obtaining global environmental benefits.
- Measuring the degree of convergence of the SGP OP7 with other priorities within the UNDP Country Programme, including poverty reduction, strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, disaster risk reduction, and vulnerability, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and support for human rights. In accordance with UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, all large and medium-sized projects funded by the GEF and supported by UNDP must undergo a Final Evaluation.

2.2. Evaluation Scope

The Terminal Evaluation followed the guidelines outlined in the document "Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Finance Projects⁴," in accordance with the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1), and involved institutions, organizations, community beneficiaries, and stakeholders responsible for the execution and implementation of the UNDP and UNOPS Programme. The evaluative exercise covered the design, implementation, and results of the Programme, focusing on the following three categories:

1. Design/Formulation, which included the following subcategories: Analysis of the Results Framework: logic and strategy, indicators; assumptions and risks; lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into the design; planned stakeholder participation; and links between the Programme and other interventions within the sector.

2. Implementation, which included the following subcategories: Adaptive management (changes in the Program's design and results during implementation); genuine stakeholder participation and partnership agreements; project financing and co-financing; monitoring and evaluation: initial design, implementation, and overall assessment; UNDP implementation/supervision and Partner Implementing Entity execution, overall implementation/execution, coordination and operational matters, and risk management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards).

3. Results and impacts, including the following subcategories: Progress towards objective and expected results; relevance; effectiveness; coherence; overall Programme outcome; efficiency; sustainability: financial, socio-political, institutional and governance framework, environmental, and overall sustainability likelihood; national ownership; gender equality and women's

³ Terms of Reference (ToR). (See Annex 1)

⁴ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf

empowerment; cross-cutting issues; GEF additionality; catalytic effect/replication and progress towards impact.

The Evaluator followed a participatory and consultative approach, ensuring close collaboration with UNDP, UNOPS, institutions involved in OP7, as well as direct beneficiaries. Considering the approach in addressing cross-cutting themes such as gender equality, human rights, persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups, poverty, environment, disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation, and adaptation.

The Terminal Evaluation report also includes the Evaluation Ratings Table, as well as the rating scales (See Annex 2).

2.3. Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) standards for quality evaluation⁵, the GEF Evaluation Guidelines, as well as the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)⁶ Evaluation Norms and Standards. According to the Terms of Reference (ToR), the Final Evaluation considered the criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Coherence, Efficiency, Sustainability, Gender Equality, and Women's Empowerment.

Overall, the evaluation followed a mixed methods approach including document review, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field visits, and direct observation for the collection and analysis of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data. This approach allowed the evaluator to formulate credible findings and relevant recommendations based on solid evidence.

A participatory approach was employed, focusing on utilization to increase ownership of the evaluation by its users and maximize the likelihood that the results would help strengthen new initiatives. Additionally, a gender-sensitive approach was used to assess the logic, relevance, and coverage of the interventions to understand how the Program has reached women, youth, and men in a differentiated manner.

Similarly, evidence of gender analysis was reviewed at the design stage and during implementation. The evaluation included a specific criterion for gender equality and women's empowerment, and questions on gender equality were integrated into each evaluation criterion, allowing for the mainstreaming of gender perspective throughout the evaluation process.

The achievement of results was documented, and the extent to which the Program has met its objectives, goals, and indicators was evaluated. Additionally, a theory-based approach was used, allowing the evaluation to identify key factors that may have enabled or hindered the achievement of results and extract lessons learned. Data collection was conducted through a detailed review of documentation, such as the Project Document (ProDoc), which served as the basis for this evaluation, outlining the work guidelines for achieving the results of SGP OP7. As part of the document review, documentation generated during implementation was also examined, including the Project Implementation Report (PIR), quarterly reports, minutes from the National Steering Committee (NSC), the Mid-Term Review (MTR), work plans, records, videos, baseline data, reports, budgets, project reports, final evaluations, and financial reviews of reports from community initiatives, among others.

⁵ OECD Development Assistance Committee (2010) Quality standards for development evaluation. CAD Guidelines and Reference Series. Secretary General of the OECD, available at <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

⁶ United Nations Development Group (UNDG). (2016) http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914_y
<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/22>

The mentioned sources provided information on the Program from its design stage through implementation. The purpose of the document review was to provide consolidated secondary data from the project, along with the primary information collected. Additionally, gender-disaggregated data were identified, and data triangulation was performed, allowing for the development of conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned in this report.

The Terminal Evaluation process followed a collaborative and participatory approach, ensuring close collaboration with key stakeholders of the OP7 Programme, including the PMU, UNDP, UNOPS, local, regional, and national government counterparts, NGOs, communities, among others.

On January 23, 2024, an initial meeting was held to kickstart the final evaluation, with the participation of the PMU, UNDP, UNOPS, and the Evaluator. During this meeting, the specifications of the evaluation requirements, as well as the main milestones and dates of the evaluation process, were agreed upon.

The Terminal Evaluation used “purposive sampling”⁷ to identify stakeholders who were consulted through virtual interviews and mixed working groups, including groups specifically involving women. The sampling was designed in consultation with the PMU, UNDP, and UNOPS. This sampling method met the needs of the Final Evaluation, involving the identification and selection of individuals or groups with knowledge of the Program. It allowed for the participation of various institutions and individuals involved in the development of OP7, in an equitable and balanced manner, with the participation of women and men.

The chosen sample for collecting primary data was methodologically in line with the requirements of purposive sampling, being relevant for generating knowledge and a deep understanding of OP7. Primary data was collected through hybrid methods, including both in-person interviews and working groups, as well as virtual interviews. This stage proceeded as planned, with a high availability of individuals to participate in the interview and working group processes.

During the evaluation exercise, a total of 79 people participated, of whom 43 were women and 36 were men (see Annex 4). Of these, in the virtual stage, 34 people were interviewed, including 19 women and 15 men. Among these, 10 were young people, affiliated with the following institutions: UNDP, UNOPS, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), Tropical Apicultural Research Center (CINAT, UNA), and NGOs.

During the field mission stage (see Annex 3), 11 projects were visited, with the participation of 45 people, including 24 women and 21 men. Among these, 20 were young people. With the collected information, an analysis was conducted on the reported progress, triangulating data using qualitative and quantitative information obtained from document reviews generated by the Programme, institutional guiding documents, interviews, working groups, and field observations, ensuring data reliability.

2.4. Data collection and Analysis

The Evaluation Criteria Matrix (see Annex 5) served as the framework for addressing the evaluation criteria, through questions defined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Finance Projects. In the Evaluation Criteria Matrix, the adopted indicators, data sources, data collection procedure, and data analysis were clarified. Questions were

⁷ “The logic and effectiveness of intentional sampling are based on the selection of information-rich cases for an in-depth study. The cases rich in information are those in which you can learn a lot about topics of central importance for the purpose of research, therefore, the term intentional sampling. The study of cases rich in information allows obtaining knowledge and a deeper understanding instead of empirical generalizations.” Patrón MQ. Qualitative research and evaluation methods. Publicaciones 3rd Sage; Mil robles, California: 2002

tailored to the scope of participation within the SGP OP7 for each interviewee (see Annex 6) based on their background.

Information sources were selected based on their coherence and reliability. For instance, the validated evaluation matrix used was an instrument that collected homogeneous information and provided data that enriched the understanding of the Programme.

The participation of stakeholders during the interview stages and field missions was broad and enriching, covering the interest groups of OP7. This has contributed to ensuring that the information and results reflect the perspectives of women and men who have had a direct relationship with the Program.

The initial findings were presented to the SGP team, UNDP, and UNOPS on February 29th 2024, and feedback was received from the team.

2.5. Ethics

The Terminal Evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct for evaluations in the United Nations System of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).⁸ The Evaluator strictly adhered to the ethical obligations outlined in these guidelines: independence, impartiality, conflict of interest, honesty and integrity, competence, and responsibility.

Confidentiality and anonymity protocols were used during the data collection process, particularly during interviews,⁹ this represented safeguarding the integrity of each person interviewed, following the principle of "do no harm." Interviewees were informed of the purpose of the evaluation, and their participation was voluntary and consensual.

Participants, both women and men, were informed that they had the right to refrain from answering any questions. They were also informed that the information provided would be completely anonymous and confidential, and that their names would not appear in any specific comments. The Evaluator adhered to the code of conduct and has signed it (see Annex 7).

2.6. Limitations

One of the limitations identified from the Initial Report was conducting virtual interviews, which reduces the interaction between the interviewees and the interviewer. However, to address this limitation, at the beginning of each interview, a cordial relationship was promoted to build trust, which helped conduct the interviews and obtain relevant information. Nevertheless, within this hybrid method of work, it allowed for a greater number of interviewees, both women and men, as virtual interviews reduced travel times in the field, facilitating more robust participation that aided in data collection and triangulation.

Due to time constraints, it was not possible to visit all 35 projects implemented in OP7. Therefore, criteria for geographic and thematic coverage were applied to select the 11 projects visited in coordination and with the support of the PMU, making the sample representative.

⁸ UNEG. 2008. https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=134773

⁹ UNEG, Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020

3. Project Description

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Costa Rica was established in 1993, during the global pilot phase of the SGP (1992-1996). Since then, seven operational phases of the Program have been implemented in Costa Rica, and this year, the Eighth Operational Phase (OP8) will be implemented starting in the second semester of the current year.

The Final Evaluation focused on the SGP OP7, which concludes in early July 2024. The SGP OP7 was implemented in the following five landscapes: i) Jesús María Watershed and ii) Barranca Watershed; iii) Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor (CBMA), iv) Lower and Middle Watershed of the Grande de Tárcoles River, and v) Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor (CBPL). The total area covered by these landscapes is approximately 199,627 hectares.¹⁰ These landscapes cover the following 12 cantons: Santa Ana, Mora, Turrubares, Puriscal, Atenas, San Mateo, Orotina, Naranjo, Palmares, San Ramón, Esparza, and Garabito.

The intervention area combines non-forest activities, mainly coffee and human settlements, with significant forest patches and varied ecosystems, grasslands, protected areas, and other land uses. Grazing lands constitute nearly 35% of land use coverage, while natural forest categories combined comprise 46.6%.

According to the ProDoc, the implementation area of the SGP OP7 was classified into 7 types of coverage, which are as follows: Mature Forest (23.8%), Secondary Forest (17.2%), Deciduous Forest (5.6%), Mangroves (0.9%), Plantations (0.7%), Grazing lands (34.6%), and non-forest (17.1%). The CBMA and CBPL connect a significant network of protected areas that conserve and protect endemic and vulnerable species, and they also provide ecosystem services, making them of great importance for biodiversity. This is the territory where the SGP OP7 worked under a participatory approach for landscape planning and management.

The SGP OP7 addressed a series of challenges in terms of development in an intervention area where more than 420,000 people live, with human settlements combining productive systems and a variety of ecosystems, agricultural production, grasslands, protected areas, biological corridors, and other land uses. According to the analysis of the Situation of Women in the ProDoc, it highlights that "significant gender inequalities persist, which create a situation of disadvantage for women and limit the fulfillment of their rights".

These gender inequalities contribute to the income differences observed in the country, which are further accentuated in rural areas. Women face inequalities in the labor market, such as lower participation rates, higher unemployment rates, lower average wages than men, and an additional burden of unpaid domestic and caregiving work, which limits their ability to generate decent incomes for rural and peri-urban women. Gender gaps are considered high and increase due to limitations in access to the formal market, the invisibility of domestic, community, and land work, coupled with a lack of fair opportunities for social, economic development, access to services, and active participation in decision-making from the community to the local level".¹¹

"In addition to the unequal distribution of land for women, this limits their influence on agricultural decisions and subjects them to institutional, social, and cultural obstacles that restrict their right to land ownership, use, and control as landholders, where men hold 84.4% and women 15.6% in the SGP OP7's area of influence. This is considered a wide gap, despite legal recognition that men and women are entitled

¹⁰ Project Document (ProDoc)

¹¹ Calderón, G. 2020. Paso de las Lapas Biological Corridor landscape strategy. UNDP-SGP.

to land rights; women are still not recognized as producers but rather as helpers with ancillary roles in rural production".¹²

Unemployment and underemployment also affect rural landscapes, leading young family members to migrate to urban centers because they cannot generate sufficient income on their family farms.¹³

The main threats identified at the beginning of SGP OP7 were the progressive degradation of natural resources due to changes in land use, exploitation, pollution, introduction of exotic and invasive species, and climate change; habitat loss caused by changes in land use in productive sites, threatening biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity.

This, coupled with the existence of multiple barriers that rural communities and indigenous peoples have faced to conserve and sustainably manage natural resources and improve their livelihoods. Within the ProDoc, it was identified that local communities lacked information, technical knowledge, and skills to plan strategic interventions to improve or restore ecosystem services.

Additionally, resources to implement landscape resilience strategies are limited among community organizations because they lacked information and the necessary structures to access strategies that can improve and restore ecosystem services within their territory. Therefore, SGP OP7 came to address these barriers and limitations.

In this phase, the Program, through a Public Call for Proposals and with the approval of the National Steering Committee (NSC), supported by technical assistance (for specific cases) from the National Commission on Land Degradation (CADETI), managed to select 35 projects and directly deliver grants to community organizations and regional and national NGOs through three disbursements upon submission of reports, within seven thematic areas: community rural tourism, biological corridors, sustainable production, fire management, water resource management, indigenous territories, and renewable energy-energy efficiency through local projects and strategic projects, through community initiatives in coordination with institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), CADETI, Municipalities, Universities, among others.

In its OP7, the SGP addressed the challenges of biodiversity loss, land degradation, and climate change through work with strengthened community organizations, improving landscape governance for resilience and global environmental benefits. OP7 focused on food security and livelihoods of the local community by promoting agroecological practices and cropping systems, participatory land use planning, livelihoods based on conservation¹⁴, land restoration, promotion of innovative technologies and processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promotion of low-cost and energy-efficient cooking fuels, and renewable energy measures.

Local communities contributed to a low-carbon local economy, both directly and through the dissemination of evidence-based lessons for decision-makers and policies.

Regarding gender equality and women's empowerment, the Program built on the lessons learned from OP6, where priority was given to 7 specific gender projects, allocating 20% of the grant portfolio. Women's groups achieved significant progress in improving their participation in local planning and decision-making bodies, increased their knowledge and application of organizational and technical processes, including environmental and rural development. Therefore, OP7 expanded the strategy to address these groups, consolidate initiatives, and continue strengthening initiatives for women's empowerment.

¹² *Idem*

¹³ Project Document (ProDoc)

¹⁴ Project Identification Form (PIF). 2018

Interinstitutional coordination has been a cornerstone of the SGP, so the strategy of OP7 was to continue promoting coordinated work among institutions, local representative bodies, and local community and NGO initiatives. Additionally, the involvement of the private sector was achieved as an integral part of multi-stakeholder partnerships supporting initiatives.

OP7 of the SGP has aimed to consolidate long-term solutions through collective action and adaptive management by community organizations for the social, economic, and ecological resilience of the three most degraded river basins in the country and two biological corridors that provide vital ecosystem services and ecological connectivity between a network of public and private protected areas.

The financing from the GEF provided small grants to community organizations and NGOs to support and consolidate management strategies and implement community projects aimed at achieving landscape-level strategic outcomes related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, landscape restoration, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the integration of water resource management¹⁵ under a gender equality and intersectionality framework.

OP7 of the SGP contributed to national priorities, aligning with the National Development and Public Investment Plan (PNDIP) 2019-2022 and the PNDIP 2023-2026; the National Policy on Climate Change Adaptation of Costa Rica 2018-2030, and the National Decarbonization Plan, the National Biodiversity Policy 2015-2030, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2025).

It also aligned with the priorities and strategies of UNDP Costa Rica, contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018-2022 and 2023-2027; the Country Programme Document (CPD) for Costa Rica 2018-2022 and 2023-2027; the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, the 2030 Agenda and SDGs 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 15, the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2022; the Regional Gender Equality Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2025, and the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025.

3.1. Project start and duration, including project cycle milestones

Start Date: July 2nd 2020

- Initial Workshop: September 24, 2020
- Mid-Term Review: September-November 2022
- Terminal Evaluation: January-March 2024
- Planned End Date: Early July 2024
- Project Duration: 48 months

3.2. Development context

As mentioned earlier, the SGP OP7 was implemented in five landscapes, covering an area of approximately 199,627 hectares:

- i) Jesus María River Basin (37,775 ha)
- ii) Barranca River Basin (48,162 ha)
- iii) Aguacate Mountains Biological Corridor (69,051 ha)
- iv) Lower and Middle Basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River (52,400 ha)
- v) It's important to note that the Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor (PLLBC) (56,200 ha) crosses three hydrographic basins, and approximately 45% of the lower basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River

¹⁵ *Idem*

is covered by it. This underscores the importance of the territorial vision of SGP OP7 through implementation under the watershed management approach.¹⁶

The PLLBC connects with the Carara and La Cangreja National Parks; the Fernando Castro Cervantes Wildlife Refuge (mixed ownership), Sutubal Wildlife Refuge (private), Cacyra Wildlife Refuge (private), Rancho Mastatal Wildlife Refuge (private), and Finca Hacienda La Avellana Wildlife Refuge (private); as well as the Cerros de Turubares Protected Zone. Within the corridor lies the Zapatón Indigenous Territory (3,558 ha), covering 6% of the total area of the PLLBC.¹⁷ Furthermore, it hosts three bird species that are critically endangered according to CITES criteria,¹⁸ The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), which is a migratory species, the scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*), and the yellow-naped parrot (*Amazona auropalliata*) are among them).¹⁹

The CBMA fosters connectivity between different Protected Wildlife Areas (PWA), starting from the Alberto Manuel Brenes Biological Reserve, the Peñas Blancas Mixed National Wildlife Refuge, and the Monte de Oro, Cerros Atenas, Río Grande de Atenas, and Cerro El Chompipe Protected Zones.

A total of 538 bird species have been recorded, including emblematic species such as the Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*), the Umbrellabird (*Cephalopterus glabricollis*), and 38 species of hummingbirds, which are one of the most important and determining groups in the pollination process of plant species in ecosystems such as cloud forests. Within the corridor, the endemic species found in a very restricted area in Costa Rica is the Coppery-headed Emerald (*Elvira cupreiceps*).²⁰

The productive landscapes are highly relevant for ecosystem integrity, yet face challenges such as recurrent prolonged dry periods, effects of climate change due to environmental pollution, rising temperatures in the region, inappropriate agricultural practices, extensive grazing on hillside lands, illegal logging in forested areas leading to soil compaction or exposure to erosion, conversion of fragile lands to other uses, and fires and vegetation burning in fragile areas, among other issues.

The predominant form of land tenure in Costa Rica is private ownership. According to the IV National Agricultural Census 2014, 87.1% of land is owned by individuals (of which 15.6% are owned by women), and 11.7% are managed by distinct types of societies. Conservation of ecosystem services is crucial since the resilience of productive landscapes directly depends on communities' capacities to implement actions aimed at protecting and developing sustainable productive practices.

3.3. Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers addressed

According to the ProDoc, the identified issues were changes in land use and progressive degradation of resources due to overexploitation, pollution, and climate change; loss of habitat for species in productive landscapes; threats to biodiversity; land degradation; loss of connectivity and continuity of natural ecosystems; deforestation and forest burning; introduction of exotic and invasive species; pollution of seas, mangroves, and rivers; and desiccation of wetlands, among others.

¹⁶ Within watershed management, water serves as the integrating axis of the territory, linking and interconnecting natural, social, and economic elements. Watersheds constitute suitable territorial units for the planning and management of natural resources. Fuente: Cotler H. 2007.

¹⁷ Calderón, G. 2020. Paso de las Lapas Biological Corridor landscape strategy. UNDP-SGP.

¹⁸ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

¹⁹ Diagnosis of the Paso de las Lapas Biological Corridor. SINAC- GIZ. 2018

²⁰ Plan for Strategic Management 2024-2029. SINAC-UNDP -SGP. 2023

According to the Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity of Costa Rica (2018), the main threats to biodiversity recognized for Costa Rica are habitat loss, overexploitation, pollution, climate change, and the presence of invasive exotic species.

The most developed productive activities in the territory, such as livestock farming and coffee cultivation, have impacted forest cover, leading to the fragmentation of continuous forest blocks. The loss of secondary forests along riverbanks, combined with the intensification of livestock farming and agricultural production using agrochemicals, has resulted in soil degradation and contamination of water bodies and springs.

The loss of species listed on the IUCN Red List, such as the emblematic Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*), is threatened by deforestation of forested areas, agricultural and livestock activities, as well as the extraction and trafficking of species.

Due to historical social and cultural norms, women are underrepresented in agriculture in the Program's region, as well as in decision-making bodies. Traditionally, they are excluded from the economic and social benefits derived from income-generating projects. Some women's groups are already challenging these norms, albeit with some difficulties.²¹

The barriers identified within the ProDoc were the following:

- a) Community organizations have limited or weak mechanisms of representation and participation within the formal inter-institutional administrative structures of the landscape.
- b) Community organizations lack the knowledge, long-term vision, and strategy for ecosystem and resource management at scale, and their capacities for adaptive management are weak, i.e., to innovate, try alternatives, monitor and evaluate results, and adjust practices and techniques to address challenges and generate lessons learned.
- c) Often, the administrative structures of community organizations are deficient. Additionally, in many cases, these organizations lack strategic management and planning tools, and their leadership is weak.
- d) Lack of access to financial and technical resources associated with innovative land and resource management practices.
- e) Community organizations lack capacities for adaptive management to innovate, diversify, and market goods and services as part of value chains that enhance landscape resilience.
- f) Knowledge derived from experience with innovation/experimentation is not systematically recorded, analyzed, or disseminated to political actors or other communities, organizations, and programs.

3.4. Immediate and development objectives of the project

The objective of SGP OP7 was to build socio-ecological and economic resilience in the river basins of the Jesús María and Barranca rivers, the middle and lower basins of the Grande de Tárcoles River, the Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor, and the Aguacate Mountains Biological Corridor in Costa Rica through community initiatives, aiming to achieve global environmental benefits and sustainable development.

SGP OP7 had two components, which are presented below:

Component 1:

Resilient territories for sustainable development and global environmental protection.

²¹ Project Document (ProDoc).

Component 2:

Territorial governance and adaptive management for scaling up and replication.

3.5 Expected Results

Below are the expected results for Component 1:

Result 1.1: Ecosystem services within specific territories are improved through multifunctional land use systems.

Result 1.2: The sustainability of production systems in target territories is strengthened through integrated agroecological practices.

Result 1.3: Community livelihoods in target territories become more resilient through the development of environmentally friendly small community enterprises and improved access to markets.

Result 1.4: Increased adoption (development, demonstration, and financing) of renewable and energy-efficient technologies at the community level.

Below is the expected result for Component 2:

Result 2.1: Establishment and operationalization of multi-stakeholder bio-entrepreneurship networks in selected areas for territorial governance and coordinated access to markets.

3.6. Key Partners involved in the project

The partners of SGP OP7 identified in the ProDoc were:

Civil Society: represented by communities and community members located in rural areas and towns in the basins of the Jesús María, Barranca, middle and lower parts of the Grande de Tárcoles rivers, and two biological corridors: CBMA and CBPL.

State Institutions: MINAE (Ministry of Environment and Energy), SINAC (National System of Conservation Areas), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), and CADETI, which are institutions that have directly participated in the implementation of OP5 and OP6 and are the main institutional partners of SGP OP7.

National Steering Committee: The ProDoc mentioned that this body was being reviewed and reorganized for OP7. As of the current date, the participants include: MINAE, Mideplan (Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy), UNED (National Distance Education University), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), CADETI, FUNDECOR (Foundation for the Development of the Central Volcanic Range), Aliarse Foundation, Costa Rican Chamber of Rural Women, CEDECO (Educational Corporation for Costa Rican Development), and the Costa Rican Network of Private Nature Reserves.

Academia: la Universidad Nacional (UNA), la Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR), la Universidad Técnica Nacional (UTN), la Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED) y las universidades públicas nacionales.

Private Sector: Meetings were held with the private sector company PEDREGAL, which has developed patented technology for the management and recycling of plastic waste that municipal or waste management authorities currently do not process.

3.7. Description of the project's Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) of OP7 identifies in a vertical and sequential manner the assumptions to achieve the results and generate changes in the target productive landscapes, building socio-ecological and

economic resilience with the participation of community organizations. The explicit adjacent assumptions promote the participation of women and men, with coordinated support from institutions.

The ToC succeeded in capturing the long-term changes of the Program, mainstreaming gender equality, respecting rural and Indigenous peoples, and developing strategies to strengthen technical and administrative capacities, the participation of organizations in governance structures, access to resources for diversified and value-added production to improve livelihoods, and achieve social and environmental benefits. The ToC was clear and valid throughout OP7, which did not undergo changes during its implementation.

4. Findings

4.1 Project Design/Formulation

4.1.a. Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators

The Results Framework logically establishes the long-term objective "Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in productive landscapes; improved land degradation neutrality; sustainable management of production systems and livelihoods; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions growth in target territories," supported by five major results, where the activities established in the ProDoc are evidenced. These activities aimed to generate, through small donations such as developed pilot models, impacts beyond the execution period of OP7. Successful demonstration leads other actors to consider and incorporate the observed changes in the pilots into their operations with confidence in achieving better results.

The Results Framework effectively identified the strategy of strengthening technical, administrative, and organizational capacities of community groups through knowledge exchange, training, and technical assistance, as well as the development of governance structures and initiatives for diversified production, innovative technology, and increased value-added to improve livelihoods and achieve social and ecological benefits.

The Program's Results Framework is clearly articulated towards achieving results, mainstreaming gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men in OP7 activities, identifying the baseline, as well as midterm and final objectives. Within its two major results, it included the improvement of ecosystem services within productive landscapes through land restoration and ecosystem protection, soil conservation and protection, protection of water resources, forest protection, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, protection of flora and fauna, promotion of governance and the creation of ecological community enterprises, creation of market spaces, creation of models for reducing plastic pollution in rivers and coasts, promotion of renewable and energy-efficient technologies, with active participation from women, men, and youth.

The indicators of the Results Framework were identified as SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. The objectives and components were aimed at achieving results aligned with national priorities and international agreements on biodiversity, land degradation, and climate change.

At the initial national workshop of SGP OP7 held on July 23, 2020, a review of the Results Framework was conducted, including adjustments such as the incorporation of gender sub-indicators, which are as follows: 11a. - Number of women with sustainable production systems; Indicator 11b - groups of women with nature-based sustainable solutions; Indicator 21a. - Role of women in natural resources governance (systematization).²² Indicator 16. "At least one women's group" was added. The inclusion of these gender sub-indicators has been significant and sets a precedent for incorporating gender indicators beyond those

²² Project Implementation Report (PIR). UNDP-PMU. 2022

that only indicate quantity. This has been a success in making visible the participation of women in the community initiatives of SGP OP7.

4.1.b. Assumptions and Risks²³

According to the PIF and the ProDoc, six risks were identified, as follows:

Chart 1. Risks

Risks
Risk 1: The Programme could perpetuate gender discrimination against women.
Risk 2: Program activities within or near critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, such as protected public areas and private reserves, could enable the exploitation of natural forests, development of plantations, or reforestation.
Risk 3: Significant extraction, diversion, or containment of surface or groundwater in productive units could affect water availability for other producers.
Risk 4: The potential outcomes of the Programme are sensitive or vulnerable to the possible effects of climate change, including extreme weather conditions, which could lead to increased vulnerability to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, and floods.
Risk 5: The installation and management of renewable energy and low-carbon technologies could cause minor injuries and/or fire hazards.
Risk 6: Indigenous peoples located in the Programme areas may impact the rights, lands, natural resources, traditional livelihoods, and cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples present in the Programme areas.

Here are the assumptions of the Theory of Change:

Chart 2. Assumptions

Assumptions
Men and women in the target area communities are willing to participate in the proposal and selection of the grant.
Women are not discriminated against, and they can freely participate in the Project's activities.
The Program does not negatively affect the rights of indigenous peoples, their lands, natural resources, traditional livelihoods, and cultural heritage.
State institutions are willing to provide technical assistance.

The risks helped develop mitigation strategies through Environmental and Social Safeguard mechanisms, which allowed for the proper integration of activities to mitigate risks and generate greater ecological and environmental benefits.

The Program formulated actions aimed at socio-ecological and economic resilience, with initiatives that helped address externalities such as climate change, economic crisis, and political changes, within specific territories, under an agroecological approach, protecting and conserving connectivity in biological corridors, and restoring landscapes for the development of sustainable production. At the political level, during the implementation of OP7, the government underwent changes in its cabinet, leading to adjustments in institutions that had regional repercussions. However, each grant received specific monitoring from the PMU at the territorial level in coordination with institutions.

4.1.c. Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design.

The SGP OP7 was designed to consolidate, improve, and expand the positive outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned during OP5 in the Jesús María River basin and the CBPL, and OP6 in the CBMA and the Jesús María and Barranca River basins. This involved adopting a multifocal and multisectoral approach driven by community organizations and guided by technical assistance from state entities, universities, and the private sector.²⁴ Thus, the SGP OP7 came to consolidate community strategies, developing a multiplier effect by including landscapes from OP5 and OP6, and incorporating a new landscape such as the lower and middle basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River. This was a fundamental strategy for biodiversity conservation and natural resource protection work, as this inclusion has allowed initiatives developed in the middle basin to have greater benefits and be protected in areas of the lower basin where actions or strategies are correlated at the landscape level, and the benefits are long-lasting at the watershed level. This watershed vision helped ensure that the results of initiatives had a broad impact on the territory, through the efforts of community organizations, NGOs, national, regional, and municipal government institutions, as well as educational institutions and university centers. This work enabled territorial management and the development of coordination mechanisms at the landscape level.

In OP6, work was carried out with the Community Aqueduct and Sewer System Administrators Associations (ASADAS) to reduce water loss and improve the technical and administrative management efficiency of ASADAS.²⁵ Furthermore, the learnings from the project "Strengthening the capacities of ASADAS to address climate change risks in water-stressed communities in northern Costa Rica" (UNDP-AyA) were taken into account,²⁶ which implemented ecosystem-based adaptation actions in the northern region of the country.

According to the ProDoc, since 2000, the SGP has incorporated a gender approach into all its projects, which have generated significant lessons learned and best practices. These were considered in the Gender Analysis and Action Plan for OP7. In this phase, there was also a push for the strengthening of women's groups with a specific percentage of economic resources allocated to them, which helped reduce the gender gap and enabled women to participate in decision-making.²⁷

The landscape strategies developed in OP7 were crafted through public consultation workshops, utilizing the methodology of the Community Development and Knowledge Management Program for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS), which had been employed in OP5 and was resumed in this phase. This approach facilitated the development of participatory workshops aimed at "understanding and supporting natural environments with human influence for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being".²⁸

Incorporating lessons learned from previous phases of the SGP, such as continuing to work at the watershed level in the same territory and expanding actions to the middle and lower basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River, strengthened the processes of OP5 and OP6. This allowed for a foundation of community organizations and NGOs in the region that have been working on the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, strongly supported by MAG, SINAC, and the National Institute for Women (INAMU), among others.

Within OP7, meetings were also established with other projects and programs under the portfolio of the UNDP's Environment, Climate, and Energy division, with a notable mention of the BIOFIN initiative with

²⁴ Project Document (Prodoc).

²⁵ *Idem*

²⁶ Instituto Costarricense de Acueductos y Alcantarillados (AyA)

²⁷ *Idem*

²⁸ <https://www.pequenasdonacionescr.org/cofinanciamiento/proyecto-de-desarrollo-comunitario-y-administracion-de-conocimiento-para-la>

SINAC to develop a program similar to RAÍCES in Biological Corridors. Two biological corridors were identified for piloting, one of which was CBMA. This partnership is strategic, as both SINAC and grassroots organizations in the area are key actors that can benefit from or partner with the initiative developed by BIOFIN. The Incubation Program and support for entrepreneurship can also be used as a methodology to support SGP projects in Operational Phase 8.²⁹

4.1.d. Planned stakeholder participation

The ProDoc, in its annex 4, incorporated the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, which was based on the principles of consultation and participation, considered extensive with the involvement of national, regional, municipal entities, organizations, and companies. Emphasis was placed on the participation of women and youth in landscape planning and management processes.

Additionally, consultations were held with organizations and women's groups from the Zapatón Indigenous Territory. Collaboration with landscape governance platforms of local committees from CBMA and CBPL was also highlighted. The Program's National Steering Committee was identified as the decision-making body. The stakeholder engagement plan identified strategic allies for the implementation of OP7. Importantly, the plan included the identification of actions for each of the components and results of the SGP OP7, thus establishing a defined roadmap.

The trajectory of the SGP in Costa Rica over the past 30 years has allowed it to establish deep roots and credibility, both nationally and at the territorial level. Institutions are actively involved in the region, and SGP funds that go directly to community groups and national and regional organizations have had a wide-ranging impact as a support entity for vulnerable groups.

During the initial negotiations of OP7 with stakeholders, some committed through a letter of intent for co-financing, expressing their interest in participating and co-financing activities to strengthen initiatives. Among the stakeholders that provided a letter of intent for co-financing were: AyA, CADETI, Costa Rican Institute of Electricity (ICE), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), MINAE, UNDP, National University of Costa Rica (UNA), among others.

4.1.e. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

The ProDoc identified the link with the National Program for Biological Corridors, led by MINAE and SINAC, where the SGP OP7 contributed to the development of the Management Plan of the CBPL and the Five-Year Strategic Plan of the CBMA. Another initiative identified by the ProDoc was the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action Program (NAMA³⁰) led by the MAG, coincided with the intervention of the SGP OP7 in the cantons of San Ramón, Palmares, Naranjo, Atenas, and Turubares. Therefore, the interventions in these cantons had alliances with this program, where initiatives from previous phases have also been supported under this concept in the region, promoting coordination of efforts.

Additionally, the Environmental Services Payment Program (PPSA) and the National Forestry Financing Fund (FONAFIFO)³¹ Within the biological corridors, the SGP has supported initiatives in previous phases that finance activities for small and medium-sized producers related to afforestation and reforestation, restoration of degraded lands, agroforestry systems, technological changes, and sustainable use of forest

²⁹ Quarterly Progress Report. Small Grants Programme. UNDP. January 15, 2024

³⁰ The concept is based on the implementation of technologies that allow the coffee sector to improve its competitiveness by applying measures that contribute to the mitigation of GHGs, while also generating a series of social, economic, and environmental co-benefits that promote the adaptation of production systems to climate change. https://www.cac.int/sites/default/files/MAG%2C_Costa_Rica._NAMA_caf%C3%A9_una_herramienta_para_el_desarrollo_bajo_en_emisiones._2013.pdf

³¹ *Idem*

resources. Especially in OP7, continuity was given, and beneficiaries were encouraged to continue with these supports in the implemented activities.

4.1.f. Gender responsiveness of project design

Women in community organizations, indigenous communities, and rural areas play an essential role in biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, rural development, food production, and poverty eradication. Without gender equality, sustainable development is not possible. Therefore, the design of the SGP OP7 was considered with a gender marker GEN2.³²

Women play a vital role in food production, diversification, and food security, in value chains, and in managing family economies, but they still face barriers to accessing the benefits and services of nature.³³ The SGP has promoted the development of community projects where women have been a fundamental part of the initiatives, and the promotion of gender equality at the community level has been strengthening.

In this OP7, there has undoubtedly been a turning point, with the development of a Situational Analysis of Women and an Action Plan for Gender Equality within the SGP. The ProDoc considered the allocation of financial resources aimed at eliminating and/or reducing gender gaps through the prioritization of specific initiatives led by women. It was suggested to include a gender focal point within the CDN; however, a Gender Petit Committee was established, bringing together institutions such as Mideplan, CEDECO, UNED, MINAE, Rural Women's Chamber (CMR), with technical support from the PMU³⁴ And to strengthen management capacities and skills to develop initiatives that impact the sustained use of biodiversity, promote income generation, and achieve greater financial independence, as well as tangible social benefits, such as increased food availability. The ProDoc also highlights capacity building for officials in the institutions closely related to the Program.

The design of the SGP OP7 aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), emphasizing that significant barriers and gaps still exist in ensuring women's equality, and as such, the recognition of women's real or potential contributions to overall development goals remains limited.³⁵

Similarly, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, is a forward-looking agenda for the empowerment of women, adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women held in September 1995 in Beijing, China. It covers the following 12 areas: poverty, violence against women, power and decision-making, education and training, health, armed conflict, economy, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, media, environment, human rights. Following this conference, governments agreed on additional measures to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action and ensure commitments to gender equality, development, and peace.³⁶

The SGP OP7 aligned with national policies and strategies on gender equality, specifically aligning with the National Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men (PIEG) 2018-2030, of the National

³² In GEN2, gender equality is an important and significant objective. This means that there is evidence of gender analysis being conducted and an anticipated change in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, with indicators in place to measure it. The difference between a GEN2 and GEN3 product lies in the fact that in the former case, the gender approach has been adequately mainstreamed, while a GEN3 entails specific gender interventions. This implies, in both cases, not only working with women or girls but also the substantive transformation of their conditions and positions within the project's development context, thereby transforming power relations between genders.

³³ Project Document (ProDoc).

³⁴ Acta Petit Comité de Género. September 30th 2020

³⁵ *Idem*

³⁶ [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(acnur.org\)](http://Beijing.Declaration.and.Platform.for.Action.acnur.org)

Institute for Women, in its four substantive axes: 1. Culture of rights for equality; 2. Time distribution; 3. Wealth distribution; and 4. Power distribution.³⁷ It also aligned with its Action Plan 2019-2022 (Adjusted in 2020 in the context of the health emergency),³⁸ contributing to the promotion of equal rights, equitable distribution of wealth through women's autonomy and access to resources, and women's empowerment.

The SGP OP7 mainstreamed gender perspective by developing the Women's Situation Analysis and a Gender Equality Action Plan. This allowed for the formulation of a strategy focused on women to support women's groups from the proposal solicitation stage, facilitating the hiring of consultancy services to identify, map, and support potential women's groups within the intervention area.

Through this effort, 23 women's groups were identified, and after a selection process based on compliance with program requirements, 12 groups prepared project proposals submitted to the National Steering Committee (NSC) with the assistance of external technical support.³⁹ This affirmative action facilitated the active and equitable involvement of women in processes to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, as well as improve livelihoods, promote women's empowerment, and create income-generating opportunities.⁴⁰

Likewise, the inclusion of gender sub-indicators further allowed for the visibility of women in OP7 activities. During the program implementation, 3,454 women were direct beneficiaries, representing 50% of the total supported individuals. 57% of approved projects were led by women, marking the highest percentage in SGP history. Additionally, over 197 women have sustainable production systems, and 5 local community markets for product sales were established, directly managed by women.⁴¹

Furthermore, it is crucial to highlight that the UNDP office in Costa Rica achieved the highest certification in the Global Gender Equality Seal, obtaining the Gold Seal,⁴² by successfully integrating gender equality across all aspects of its work, UNDP Costa Rica has also taken on the role of coordinating the United Nations Inter-Agency Gender Group. This group has been instrumental in promoting an immediate response for women facing Covid-19 and has guided, from an intersectional gender perspective, the United Nations Costa Rica's Framework for Social and Economic Impact Response to Covid-19.⁴³

Similarly, the support from the Gender Unit of UNDP to the SGP OP7 has been fundamental in achieving the gender equality approach and an intersectional and rights-based approach, where women, girls, boys, youth, adults, elderly people, indigenous individuals, and persons with disabilities have been included in the initiatives.

³⁷ https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/politica_nacional_para_la_igualdad_efectiva_entre_hombres_y_mujeres_-_pieg_2018-2030.pdf

³⁸ <https://www.comex.go.cr/media/8863/plan-de-acci%C3%B3n-2019-2022-de-la-pol%C3%ADtica-de-igualdad-y-equidad-de-g%C3%A9nero-pieg.pdf>

³⁹ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2022

⁴⁰ *Idem*

⁴¹ Financing Women's Economic Autonomy through Environmental Sustainability: The Experience of the Seventh Phase of the SGP in Costa Rica. UNDP-SGP

⁴² The Seal encourages UNDP country offices to integrate gender equality into all aspects of their development work. By completing a series of standards and indicators, participating offices can earn a gold, silver, or bronze level certification. By committing to the Seal, offices are better positioned to support government partners, civil society, the private sector, and businesses in accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP.

⁴³ <https://www.undp.org/es/costa-rica/comunicados-de-prensa/pnud-costa-rica-alcanza-la-maxima-certificacion-en-el-sello-global-de-igualdad-de-genero>

This has ensured the recognition of their rights by promoting actions aimed at empowering women and youth, strengthening and highlighting the work they carry out in the planning and development of community strategies.

4.1.g. Social and Environmental Safeguards

Within the ProDoc, the Social and Environmental Screening Process (SESP) was integrated, identifying 6 risks, which were classified as moderate importance. (See section 4.1.b. Assumptions and risks). Subsequently, within the Initial Implementation Plan, Covid-19 was appropriately incorporated as another risk, as the design of OP7 was before the Covid-19 pandemic, which was as follows: Risk 7. Covid-19 may delay project implementation, affecting the health of beneficiaries, limiting the areas where the project can be implemented, restricting in-person consultations among stakeholders, and further limiting the rights of those with limited access to resources and technology. It was assessed as a moderate risk. Additionally, the incorporation of a social and environmental risk detection checklist into the SESP is considered efficient.

Similarly, the design of the SGP OP7 included conducting an assessment of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) to ensure that human rights, environmental, land, and customary rights were respected and safeguarded within potentially affected communities, and to maintain inclusive decision-making processes to ensure equitable consideration of diverse perspectives sustained within them. During the design stage, consultations were held with leaders from the Zapatón Indigenous Territory to listen to their voices and understand their willingness to develop projects aligned with the Program's objectives.

Regarding environmental issues, the ProDoc indicates that during the project design, a climate change mitigation analysis and action plan were conducted. This plan identified technologies that could be applied during implementation to safeguard the environment and ensure compatibility with the program's objectives.

To safeguard areas near critical habitats with species of flora and fauna in some conservation status and reduce impacts, it was decided to conduct an assessment of potential project impacts. Additionally, during the design phase, an evaluation of these areas for possible reforestation was carried out, and priority areas were established. Similarly, during the design, an assessment of programs that could affect water resources was conducted. All these actions were discussed with local authorities in the Program's area of influence, with participation from SINAC, MAG, and local committees of the biological corridors.⁴⁴

4.2 Project Implementation

4.2.a. Adaptive management

One of the first adaptive management actions that the PMU had to undertake was the design of the SGP OP7. Initially, this task had been assigned to an external consultant who conducted field visits for data collection. However, the document was not delivered on time, and the deadline for submission was approaching. Consequently, the National Coordinator at that time had to take on the task of designing the ProDoc. Nevertheless, this constraint turned into an advantage due to the National Coordinator's extensive knowledge and experience regarding the country's reality, the execution of the SGP, and the practical insights of the UNDP in Program implementation. Therefore, the ProDoc and the design are based on well-articulated knowledge of the context, technical studies, and the identification of strategic partners.⁴⁵

As previously noted, (see section 4.1.a. Analysis of the Results Framework: Project Logic and Strategy, Indicators), the only adjustment to the Results Framework was the integration of gender sub-indicators,

⁴⁴ Project document (ProDoc).

⁴⁵ Mid-Term Review of the Small Grants Programme. UNDP 2022

which were incorporated during the initial implementation meeting of OP7. This helped to generate more information about the participation of women and decision-making within the initiatives.

Additionally, one of the adaptive management actions undertaken by OP7 was in response to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Through national decree No. 42227-MP-S, a state of national emergency was declared throughout the territory of the Republic of Costa Rica, due to the health emergency situation caused by the disease, on March 16th, 2020.⁴⁶

Similarly, in response to recommendations from the Costa Rican government and the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP followed a contingency plan. This involved implementing virtual work actions to prevent and reduce the spread of infections. In communities, measures were taken to restrict activities and prevent contagion.⁴⁷

However, according to the interviews conducted, work continued at the territorial level and through electronic means of monitoring. Meetings had to be conducted virtually, as well as training sessions for the SGP OP7 groups and consulting via WhatsApp and phone. In the first quarter of 2021, the PMU managed to visit communities with limited internet access, following current health protocols and sanitary measures; subsequently, various meetings continued to take place virtually. This adaptive management that had to be implemented allowed for the continuation of support and monitoring work and demonstrated the capacity for adaptation.

Within the implementation of the Program, specifically in March 2023, there was the departure of the National Coordinator, leaving only the Technical and Administrative Assistant of the Program on the team. However, to mitigate the impact, the outgoing coordinator supported the development of a transition plan that was presented to the PMU.⁴⁸ This phase of absence of a coordinator lasted for 5 months, during which adaptive management was necessary to continue with the implementation of activities of the SGP OP7. A key part of this transition was the commitment of the Technical and Administrative Assistant and her knowledge beyond administrative matters, the support from UNOPS, various areas of UNDP, the Technical Specialist in Local Action and Enhanced Country Programs of the SGP-UNDP in New York, as well as the decision to hire a specialist consultant for field information collection. This enabled the development of the Project Implementation Report (PIR) 2023 and the SGP Annual Monitoring Report Survey 2023. All these coordination actions allowed for the continuity in implementation.

A fundamental part of the projects' success has been adaptive management within the implementation of grants according to the needs and challenges of each organization and NGO. When a project required adjustments, the group contacted the PMU for approval, and once approved, the group made the necessary adjustments to achieve the results. This aspect has been crucial in the territory, especially because there are changing factors at the community level. For example, after the Covid-19 pandemic, the prices of inputs, machinery, and tools increased, directly affecting community organizations and NGOs. However, the allowed adjustments towards adaptive management were recognized by the interviewed individuals.

4.2.b. Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

The SGP at the national level is an important actor, and the interviewed individuals considered the SGP OP7 as a program of great relevance at the community level, with projects that can be replicated nationally and internationally. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) has undoubtedly been a strategic ally at the territorial level. Within the SGP OP7, it was wisely mandatory for project proposals to allocate resources for specific technical assistance according to the needs and priorities of each project.

⁴⁶ https://www.imprentanacional.go.cr/pub/2020/03/16/ALCA46_16_03_2020.pdf

⁴⁷ <https://www.undp.org/es/costa-rica/press-releases/sobre-la-declaratoria-de-emergencia-en-costa-rica>

⁴⁸ Quarterly Progress Report. Small Grants Programme. UNDP. April 15, 2023.

In parallel, MAG technicians have been able to achieve synergies with each project, strengthening local initiatives comprehensively by bringing MAG programs closer and acting as a bridge for other institutions to facilitate training processes, such as the National Institute for Agrarian Development (INDER), National Institute of Learning (INA), National Women's Institute (INAMU), among others. Some municipalities were strategic partners for the SGP OP7, being close to beneficiary groups and offering technical assistance and follow-up on actions, impacting the improvement of initiatives and facilitating support.

The level of coordination of the SGP OP7 has been able to achieve and exceed the expected co-financing, which was USD 5,390,000.00. As of the evaluation date, a co-financing of USD 6,543,403.00 (see Table 4. Co-financing) has been reported, composed of a variety of donors such as private sector institutions, NGOs, and communities. This represents trust and credibility towards the SGP OP7, confirming its relevance for the development of the region. It represents a good path for the sustainability of grants in the medium term, where donors are committed.

The commitment to the SGP OP7 not only stemmed from grants, which are the tool for the development of community initiatives, but also coordinated actions to strengthen capacities. The exchange of experiences generated synergies with institutions and organizations in the region, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), the National Institute of Learning (INA), the National Women's Institute (INAMU), the Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers (AyA), higher education institutions such as UCR, UNEG, UNA, the National Council of 4S Clubs (CONAC 4 S), CINAT-UNA, Integral Development Association (ADI), Water Boards (ASADAS), among others.

The SGP OP7 has undoubtedly involved the participation of multiple parties,⁴⁹ a characteristic of the SGP in this OP7, where multi-actor participation has developed a strong bond with community organizations and NGOs driving local and regional initiatives, has undoubtedly been a factor of success and support for the consolidation of local initiatives. It has allowed for a conglomerate of institutions to strengthen the skills and capacities of women and men working on initiatives promoting environmental and social benefits.

In this phase, the strengthening of second and third-level organizations was intensified, enhancing community governance. The development of a Gender Equality Action Plan permeated an approach of gender equality, intersectionality, and human rights, from the initial proposals of the groups to working with institutions, allowing for the visibility of the work of women and young women integrating into community initiatives.

The development of OP7 was carried out systematically and appropriately tailored to the needs of community groups and civil society organizations, starting from the publication of the call for proposals,⁵⁰ for which extensive dissemination was carried out through various channels, such as direct invitations (via email and WhatsApp), as well as the utilization of websites and Facebook profiles of the SGP, UNDP, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), among other relevant actors.

At the territorial level, the PMU promoted the call for proposals through various radio spaces, with the collaboration and support of MAG technicians, SINAC, and some municipalities. This dissemination strategy allowed for broad coverage and ensured active participation from communities and organizations.

⁴⁹ Since the project launch event, which took place publicly on August 26, 2020, being held virtually and livestreamed via Zoom and the SFP's Facebook page, it garnered the participation of 160 individuals. Source: Quarterly Progress Report. Small Grants Programme. UNDP. October 8th2020.

⁵⁰ September 9th, 2020.

⁵¹ *Idem*

The deadline for submitting project idea proposals was around 3 months. Project formats included a section on gender mainstreaming, inclusion, and participation, allowing for inclusive proposals and the participation of rural women, men, and youth, as well as indigenous and peri-urban individuals. The Program promoted social inclusion and the promotion of human rights during its implementation.

The PMU's monitoring stood out for its punctuality and remained open to dialogue and the needs of both female and male beneficiaries. This approach allowed for the effective addressing of problems and challenges that arose during implementation, as well as the necessary flexibility to make adjustments according to the particularities of each initiative.

For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, the adaptability of the PMU was evident. According to information gathered from interviews with working groups, some experienced delays due to the Covid-19 health situation. In response to these circumstances, they requested extensions for the submission of initial reports, which were approved by the PMU. However, it is worth noting that all groups stated that they did not experience delays in completing their projects.

It is important to highlight that the work of the PMU was highly valued by the interviewees, who emphasized its ability to address queries and provide support via phone calls, messages, emails, as well as through project visits. This level of attention and commitment significantly contributed to the success in implementing the Program.

The approved initiatives have successfully brought together the government sector, private sector, middle and higher education institutions, civil society organizations, and communities. This allowed the SGP OP7 in Costa Rica to be a highly valuable initiative for the country, due to the diversity of institutions supporting initiatives in the territory and enabling environmental and social benefits to be promoted in other regions of the country. This indicates a degree of sustainability by having organizational structure around the initiatives.

The contribution of institutions working in the project's area of influence, and the co-financing they provided, has been crucial for strengthening the initiatives of the SGP OP7 and providing comprehensive management focused on results. The SGP OP7 directly supported community groups and NGOs, and according to the final evaluations and financial reviews of each initiative, resources were transparently allocated, all under the international standards of the GEF, UNDP, and UNOPS.

Within the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR), the need to continue efforts in building relationships with institutions was identified, through a more structured coordination with key partners such as the National Institute for Women (INAMU), National Institute for Agrarian Development (INDER), and Fundecooperación. However, regarding INAMU, it was difficult to coordinate in a timely manner, resulting in delays in management, and coinciding with the inability to include joint activities with the SGP in INAMU's annual work plans. Additionally, funds such as INAMU's Women's Fund (FOMUJER) only operate for women who have never received financial support. It is worth noting that local initiatives receive support from INAMU through workshops and training sessions that have strengthened initiatives. Actions were strengthened with Aliarse and with the National Institute of Learning (INA) through the PMU of the Program.⁵²

In the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR), it was also recommended to hold a meeting with entities such as the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), representatives of the GEF, National Implementing Entity (NIE), and Technical Assistance Unit (CADETI) to explain the nature and structure

⁵² Quarterly Progress Report. Small Grants Programme. January 15th, 2024.

of the SGP funds. However, no further issues were reported in this regard. As the project is in the closing phase, the role of CADETI personnel is clear.⁵³

Similarly, this issue did not arise in the evaluation, primarily due to two factors: 1) officials from institutions have retired or changed regions due to government adjustments in the country; and 2) the phase of proposal assessment and resource allocation was more intense in the early years. Therefore, during the interviews, it was not considered a problematic issue. The interaction among stakeholders has been highly relevant to the planned activities. The cohesive work carried out by the SGP OP7 at the territorial level, with the support of UNDP as an international organization providing institutional support, has successfully brought together efforts from various areas.

The comparison of stakeholders' engagement with what was planned in the ProDoc exceeds the effective interaction of institutions such as MAG, AyA, INDER, INAMU, higher education institutions such as UNA, UCR, UNEG, municipalities, among others.

Regarding the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan in OP7, it is considered highly appropriate. This is particularly significant because it is the first time such a strategy has been implemented in the SGP, despite the wealth of knowledge and support for women in previous phases. The plan draws on the SGP's experience and translates it into specific actions that directly impact reducing the gender gap and promoting gender-specific initiatives. The allocation of a percentage of resources specifically targeting women's groups was also important, as it helped strengthen work with women and increase their visibility.

It is worth noting that young people, both women and men, participate in community initiatives, at the family level, in NGOs, and in local committees of the Community-Based Environmental Management and Community-Based Livelihood initiatives. However, it will be essential to develop strategies that highlight this work and continue to promote projects involving youth in subsequent phases. This can foster community engagement and help reduce youth migration.⁵⁴

4.2.c. Project Finance and Co-finance

The funds from the SGP OP7 were used efficiently to carry out activities by UNOPS. Grants were directly disbursed to beneficiary groups with legal status and bank accounts in the organization's name, making this mechanism transparent.

For each completed project, an external and independent final evaluation of the project was conducted, along with a review of the budget execution, where supported organizations demonstrated their investment in each initiative through bank statements, invoices, or notes. This mechanism transparently demonstrates the use of resources and responsible fund management. Below is Table 3. Financing of the Program according to the ProDoc plan.

Chart 3. Program Financing According to the ProDoc.

Year	Result 1 (USD)	Result 2 (USD)	Project Management (USD)	Total (USD)
1	123,389	7,617	24,000	155,006
2	1,003,634	227,222	25,000	1,255,856
3	395,067	63,831	25,039	483,937
4	153,545	8,500	25,101	187,146

⁵³ PMU. 2024

⁵⁴ According to the Migration and Integration Report of Costa Rica. 2012. The young migrant population between 20 and 39 years old represents the largest group, whose most important motivator is the search for better economic conditions. <https://www.sdgfund.org/es/estudio-de-caso/juventud-empleo-y-migraci%C3%B3n>

Total	1,675,635	307,170	99,140	2,081,945
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Source: UNOPS. 2024

Regarding the Program budget versus actual execution, revisions were made to the budget, which could be adapted to investment needs, as observed in Chart 4. The first three years saw higher execution, corresponding to investments in community initiatives.

Chart 4. Program Budget vs Actual Execution (in dollars)

Year	Prodoc Budget		Budget Approved		Total execution	Cumulative Execution	
	USD \$	%	USD \$	%	USD	USD \$	%
1	155,006	7.45%	782,934	37.61%	668,223.34	688,223.34	32.10%
2	1,255,856	60.32%	535,102	25.70%	680,855.85	1,349,079.19	64.80%
3	483,937	23.24%	479,376	23.03%	450,839.84	1,799,919.03	86.45%
4	187,146	8.99%	284,533	13.67%	180,276.15	1,980,195.18	95.11%
TOTAL	2,081,945	100%	2,081,945		1,980,195.18		

Source: UNOPS. february 2024

As of the final evaluation date, OP7 had an execution of USD 1,980,195.18, representing 95.11% of the planned amount.

Of this, for Component 1, the execution was USD 1,430,462.85, representing 68.70% of the total; for Component 2, the execution was USD 465,304.32, corresponding to 22.34% of the total. Additionally, the executed amount in Program management was USD 84,428.01, representing 4% of the total OP7. (see Chart 5)

Chart 5. Program Execution (in dollars)

Year	Result 1	Result 2	Project Management	Total (cumulative)
1	289,852.32	375,110.65	23,260.37	688,223.34
2	668,658.86	-25,011.76	17,208.75	1,349,079.19
3	334,859.66	89,776.05	26,204.13	1,799,919.03
4	137,092.01	25,429.38	17,754.76	1,980,195.18
Total	1,430,462.85	465,304.32	84,428.01	

Source: UNOPS. March 2024

Chart 6. Co-financing (in dollars)

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP financing		Government		Partner Agency		Total	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants		5,000			1,040,000		1,040,000	5,000
Loans / concessions								
In-kind support	200,000	200,000	2,350,000	2,350,000	1,800,000	3,941,403	4,350,000	6,491,403
Other						47,000		47,000

Total	200,000	205,000	2,350,000	2,350,000	2,840,000	3,988,403	5,390,000	6,543,403
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Source: Project Management Unit. 2024

Chart 7. Confirmed Sources of Co-Financing at TE Stages (in dollars)

Name of Co-finance	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Cumulative
UNDP	50,000	50,000	50,000	55,000	205,000
MINAE	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
MAG	281,250	281,250	281,250	281,250	1,125,000
CADETI	62,500	62,500	62,500	62,500	250,000
AyA	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	100,000
UNA	18,750	18,750	18,750	18,750	75,000
Pedregal	0	0	12,000	0	12,000
COMDEKS	35,000	0	0	0	35,000
Grants	0	1,313,801	1,313,801	1,313,801	3,941,403
Total co-finance	672,500	2,647,693	2,659,693	2,652,693	6,543,403

Source: Project Management Unit. 2024

The Program managed funds according to UNOPS policies and manuals. An audit was conducted, but the report and recommendations were not available at the time of the evaluation.

A fundamental element within GEF projects is co-financing, which is defined from the design phase. Co-financing allows supported initiatives to have a greater reach, become demonstrative models, and be replicated. Co-financing exceeded the planned amount by 121.3%, demonstrating the significant achievement of inter-institutional coordination in OP7.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight the level of involvement and commitment shown by beneficiary groups, who actively contributed to each initiative. This commitment has been essential in achieving project ownership by communities and NGOs.

4.2.d. Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry, implementation, overall assessment of M&E M&E design at entry

The ProDoc defined the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, which was in line with the UNDP's Programs and Operations Policies and Procedures, as well as the UNDP Evaluation Policy and the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. UNDP was responsible for ensuring full compliance with all requirements regarding supervision, quality assurance, risk management, and program evaluation.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of the SGP OP7 considered relevant elements for tracking and evaluating the Program, such as the Results Framework, which integrated baseline data and SMART-type indicators. The most important element for monitoring and evaluation purposes, the Results Framework, was complemented with gender sub-indicators that went beyond simply counting women as beneficiaries. This was well-articulated, clear from the beginning of implementation, and included the main GEF indicators, identifying global benefits throughout the process.

Within the tools and activities to carry out Monitoring and Evaluation, the following elements were considered:

- Introductory workshop and initial report
- Implementation report
- Measurement of baseline indicator values (included in the Logical Framework)

- Monitoring progress towards the Results Framework goals
- Conducting regular field visits
- Systematically collecting indicator measurements from project sites
- Conducting periodic progress reviews and presentations to the National Steering Committee
- Facilitating, analyzing, and tracking external Monitoring and Evaluation (Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation)

Finally, the Monitoring and Evaluation System was focused on achieving results and identifying progress towards the attainment of indicators and goals.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
Design of Monitoring and Evaluation at the outset	Highly Satisfactory (HS)

M&E implementation:

The UNDP Evaluation and Monitoring Office directly supported the Program, ensuring supervision, quality, and risk management. The SGP OP7 had a National Steering Committee (NSC), which served as the institutional figure for transparent and plural decision-making. Within the Monitoring and Evaluation System instruments, the Annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) was developed, serving as a mechanism for the funder to track progress. For the PMU, it served as an accountability tool and helped redirect actions through decision-making in required areas.

The Program's monitoring was carried out by the PMU using an Excel-based tool with the results framework indicators, fed with data reported by each grant and collected by the PMU. This monitoring and evaluation system is considered effective. However, it will be necessary for the Excel database to migrate to an automated system compatible with the project's needs, capable of generating progress reports automatically. For now, in OP7, it fulfilled its purpose.

Another Monitoring and Evaluation tool that facilitated tracking was the integration of quarterly reports developed by the PMU and presented to UNDP, with 4 reports per year. This process proved to be of great value as it provided timely progress updates. Additionally, the Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted in October 2022, providing recommendations for improving Program implementation.

UNDP implements annual quality evaluations from the beginning to the end of activities, guiding continuous improvement efforts.

In terms of investments, UNOPS has an efficient system that allows real-time visualization of investments and generates agile and detailed financial reports. Moreover, audits were conducted to ensure proper resource management. The financial monitoring conducted by UNOPS during Program implementation was undoubtedly of high quality and met international standards.

The budget for the Monitoring and Evaluation System implementation of the Program is considered adequate to meet the needs for grant monitoring visits.

Program reports were prepared by the PMU in coordination and with approval from the UNDP Nature, Climate, and Energy Officer and the Technical Office in Local Action and Enhanced Country Programmes of the SGP in New York. They collaborated closely to develop reports according to UNDP and GEF quality standards.

The National Steering Committee (NSC) has been essential in decision-making. OP7 encouraged the development of monitoring tours where committee members, both men and women, participated. This allowed them to witness project implementation and progress firsthand.

The PMU was highly dedicated to implementing and monitoring activities, engaging with beneficiaries daily through various means such as visits, WhatsApp, and accompanying meetings and training sessions to ensure compliance with narrative and financial reporting requirements. Initially, beneficiary groups found it challenging to prepare reports, but with PMU support and training, they found the process easier over time.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
Plan Implementation	Highly Satisfactory
M &E General Quality	Highly Satisfactory

4.2.e. UNDP implementation/oversight, Implementing Partner execution and overall assessment of implementation/oversight and execution

The Programme was implemented following the guidelines of the SGP at a global level, with day-to-day management carried out by the PMU in close coordination with UNDP and UNOPS. According to the ProDoc, UNDP was responsible to the GEF for its implementation. Through execution supervision, UNDP ensured implementation in accordance with agreed-upon norms and provisions, supporting NSC coordination to ensure the participation of a wide range of institutions and civil society organizations,⁵⁵ UNDP provided support in negotiations with stakeholders in the country, supervised OP7, assisted in the review of the PIR report, and consistently promoted the exchange of learning and experience among the project portfolio.

It is important to mention that the PIR reports were submitted on time and received satisfactory ratings. Interviewees expressed recognition for UNDP at the national level as a United Nations agency. During the Program implementation, UNDP played a crucial role in risk management and conducted semi-annual and annual reviews.

This collaboration included providing risk monitoring, which allowed for the identification and addressing of actions aimed at mitigating risks at the territorial level. As mentioned earlier, UNDP also significantly contributed to the integration of the SESP, providing timely monitoring throughout the implementation process.

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

As the implementing partner, UNOPS provided its services efficiently in the execution of the Program. It managed resources in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures of the SGP UNOPS, leveraging its extensive experience working in various countries to continuously improve its operational systems. This accumulated experience has enabled UNOPS to optimize its working practices, facilitating effective implementation. A notable example in this OP7 was the development of the ONE UNOPS system, which significantly contributed to streamlining work processes.

⁵⁵ CNP PARTNERS: UNDP, MINAE, Mideplan, CADETI, UNED, FUNDECOR, CEDECO, Rural women Chamber CMR, Aliarse, Reserve Network and SGU PMU OP7 as technical support.

Furthermore, UNOPS was tasked with disbursing financial resources to each of the 35 subsidized projects. According to interviews with beneficiaries, they expressed that there were no delays in the disbursement of funds, which was highly appreciated as it allowed them to achieve the goals and indicators of their projects within the estimated time frame. UNOPS' performance has been outstanding, especially considering the work that had to be carried out during the pandemic. In coordination with the PMU, who maintained direct contact with the UNOPS office, they provided guidance and expedited administrative processes to successfully conclude OP7.

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

4.2.f. Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

According to section (4.1.b. Assumptions and Risks) of the ProDoc, six risks with moderate ratings were identified. However, the pandemic began during the first quarter of 2020, and Covid-19 was included as a moderate risk during the initial workshop, which could impact implementation. This risk persisted throughout the implementation period, initially with greater intensity. Nevertheless, the prompt response helped the PMU to take necessary measures to mitigate risks. The PMU adhered to country restrictions and UNDP regulations, transitioning to virtual work and developing communication skills via WhatsApp, phone, email, and remote conferences, which enabled direct interaction with grant recipients.

When field visits resumed, the PMU followed health and safety protocols to minimize the risk of contagion. Subsequently, no new risks affecting the implementation of OP7 were identified.

One of the factors influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic was the increased costs of supplies and equipment. However, in coordination with the PMU and with UNOPS authorization, adjustments were made to accommodate the new prices for donations that required purchases of materials, supplies, or equipment. In some cases, acquisitions had to be reduced to comply with the investment lines of each donation.

During interviews and working group sessions, participants expressed that the Covid-19 pandemic did not impact the quality and implementation of their projects, allowing them to conclude successfully. Another important aspect was the exchange rate, given the use of two currencies (Colones and US Dollars), which, according to interviewers and working groups, experienced a slight increase (in most cases). This helped initiatives to acquire materials or carry out complementary activities with the approval of the PMU and UNOPS.



4.3 Project Results and Impacts

Chart 8.

Project Objective: To build the socio-ecological and economic resilience of the Jesús María and Barranca River basins, the lower and middle basins of the Grande de Tárcoles River, and the Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor in Costa Rica, through community initiatives for global environmental benefits and sustainable development.

Objective and results indicators	Objetivo al final del proyecto	Avances a la evaluación final marzo 2024
Mandatory indicator 1: Number of direct project beneficiaries, broken down by gender (individuals)	3,000 beneficiaries in the target landscape, of which 50% are women	The SGP OP7 directly benefited 3,220 people, which represents 115% of the goal. 1,578 were men (49%) 1,692 were women (53%)
Mandatory indicator 2: Number of indirect beneficiaries of the project, broken down by gender (individuals):	15,000 indirect beneficiaries in the target landscape, of which 50% are women	The indirect beneficiaries were 19,137 people (127.5% of the goal). Of which 50% were women and 50% were men. Likewise, a data greater than 528,703 is considered, which represents 3,524.6% of the goal. This last expanded data was given by the results of the projects of the Avina Foundation, Madre Verde Foundation and Adafarses, which had an impact at the municipal level. ⁵⁶
Mandatory indicator 3: Restored land area. GEF Leading Indicator 3	7,390 ha. restored	7,867.6 ha. dedicated to restoration, which represents 106% of the goal, which was exceeded.
Mandatory indicator 4: Increase in area (hectares) of landscapes under improved practices (GEF Core Indicator 4.1+ 4.3)	8,250 ha. under improved management practices in the target landscape	The surface area under management practices was 8,843.8 ha. of which represents 107% of the goal. Being surpassed.
Mandatory indicator 5: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO2e). GEF Leading Indicator	3,796,259 t.m. of CO2e less	3,438,881.0 t.m. were reduced. of CO2e. (90.5% of goal)

⁵⁶ See Annex 11. List of Subsidies.

Component 1: Resilient Landscapes for Sustainable Development and Global Environmental Protection		
Result 1.1: Ecosystem services within selected landscapes are enhanced through multifunctional land use systems.		
Indicator 6: Number of protected freshwater springs.	At least 140 freshwater springs protected in the target landscape.	149 springs were protected (106% of the goal). The goal was exceeded.
Indicator 7: Volunteer community brigades against forest fires trained, equipped and active.	At least 2 brigades trained and equipped in the target landscape	5 brigades were trained and equipped (250% of the goal). Goal surpassed.
Indicator 8: Implementation of community supervision programs and national protocol for indicator species.	2 community supervision programs developed in 2 biological corridors (Montes del Aguacate and Paso de Las Lapas).	Two community supervision programs were carried out in the Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor and the Paso de las Lapas Biological Corridor. Goal achieved 100%.
Result 1.2: The sustainability of production systems in target landscapes is strengthened through integrated agroecological practices.		
Indicator 9: Number of ranchers who use best practices in productive livestock systems.	180 ranchers use best practices in productive livestock systems	240 livestock farmers developed best practices in their livestock systems. (133% of the goal), the goal was exceeded.
Indicator 10: Number of dryland reservoirs installed and that supply climate-smart irrigation systems.	30 tanks installed and in operation	64 tanks were installed and operational (213% of the goal). Goal surpassed.
Indicator 11: Number of women's groups that adopt sustainable production systems. 11a. Number of women with sustainable production systems. 11b. Number of women's groups with nature-based solutions	At least 6 women's groups (90 women) adopt sustainable production systems	12 groups adopt sustainable production systems (200% of the goal), goal exceeded. 177 women participated (197% of the goal) 10 groups were integrated with nature-based solutions (100% of the goal)
Result 1.3: Livelihoods in target landscapes become more resilient through the establishment of small-scale ecological community enterprises and improved market access.		
Indicator 12: Creation of value chain strategy and platforms between producers	At least 4 production companies with value chain strategies and platforms.	12 companies with value chain strategies and

and the private sector. 12a. Number of green entrepreneurship with women.		platforms (300% of the goal). The goal was surpassed. 8 ventures were with a group of women
Indicator 13: Introduction and testing of models for the transformation of serious plastic pollution of rivers and coasts.	Testing, supervision and systematization of the 1 scheme.	2 testing, supervision and systematization schemes for serious transformation of plastic pollution (200% of the goal). The goal was surpassed.
Indicator 14: Number of women trained in financial education, linked to value chains, market access and microfinance mechanisms.	200 women trained	149 women were trained in financial education topics linked to value chains and access to markets (75% of the goal).
Result 1.4: Increased adoption (development, demonstration, and financing) of renewable and energy-efficient technologies at the community level.		
Indicator 15: Number of participatory feasibility studies for alternative and energy-efficient technologies that benefit communities and producer associations.	At least 4 participatory feasibility studies.	23 participatory feasibility studies were developed for energy efficient technologies (575% of the goal). The goal was surpassed.
Indicator 16: Number of innovative technology pilot projects implemented, supervised, documented, and disseminated. (at least a group of women)	At least 4 pilot projects implemented, supervised, documented and disseminated.	9 innovative technology pilot projects were carried out (225% of the goal). Goal surpassed.

Component 2: Landscape governance and adaptive management for scaling up and replication.		
Result 2.1: Strengthening multi-stakeholder governance platforms to enhance governance of target landscapes for participatory and effective decision-making, aiming to improve socio-ecological resilience.		
Indicator 17: Number of landscape strategies developed through public consultations, based on respective landscape management plans.	4 landscape strategies implemented and evaluated at the end of the project.	4 landscape strategies were implemented (100% of the target). Target achieved.
Indicator 18: Number of ASADAS strengthened through technical, administrative, and organizational training, management tools, support to second-level organizational structures, and direct investment.	Support to 60 ASADAS	62 ASADAS were strengthened in technical, administrative, organizational, and management topics, among others (103% of the target). Target exceeded.
Indicator 19: Young people and women (including indigenous communities) benefited from training scholarships in community landscape planning and project design.	10 young people and women have completed the training and have submitted community projects.	26 young people benefited from training scholarships (260% of the target). The target was exceeded.
Indicator 20: Environmental education program to enhance socio-ecological resilience in schools/communities, with the support of SINAC.	At least 10 schools benefit from environmental education activities.	16 schools were benefited in environmental education activities (160% of the target). Target exceeded.
Indicator 21: Case studies systematizing landscape experiences, with the support of university students, as part of a broader SGP communication strategy. Indicator 21a - Women's role in natural resource governance (systematization).	Systematization and dissemination of 23 case studies and 1 landscape-level assessment.	25 case studies were conducted through experience systematization (109% of the target). Target exceeded.

4.3.a. Relevance

The SGP OP7 was aligned with the PNDIP 2019-2022⁵⁷ to its national biodiversity target, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and effective gender equality, as well as to the National Development and Public Investment Plan 2023-2026,⁵⁸ Aligned with its sectoral objectives of strengthening the country's actions in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as the fair and equitable participation in benefits derived from its use.

Also, it contributed to the National Climate Change Adaptation Policy of Costa Rica 2018-2030,⁵⁹ contributing to its overall goal of transitioning to a resilient development model and contributing to the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations. Also, to the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022-2026⁶⁰ contributed to its axis 3, Biodiversity management, ecosystems, watersheds, and coastal areas for adaptation.

The program contributed to the National Decarbonization Plan in its Axis 7, waste management; Axis 8, efficient agri-food systems generating low-carbon local consumer goods; Axis 9, livestock models based on productive efficiency and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and Axis 10, rural, urban, and coastal territory management oriented towards conservation and sustainable use, increasing forest resources and ecosystem services through nature-based solutions.

Additionally, it aligned with the National Biodiversity Policy 2015-2030⁶¹ Through its Policy Axis 1: biodiversity resilience, safeguarding the integrity of ecosystems, and species; Policy Axis 2: socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development; Policy Axis 3: reduction of vulnerability of less favored populations in areas with essential, threatened, and high ecological value ecosystems; and Policy Axis 4: intersectoral and institutional management linked to biodiversity and its ecosystem services.

Additionally, SGP OP7 strengthened the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2025), contributing to its global targets by 2025 for ecosystem protection and restoration, conservation and sustainable use of diversity, and reduction of adverse impacts of productive activities on biodiversity.

The SGP OP7 aligned with the priorities and strategies of UNDP Costa Rica (United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018-2022 and 2023-2027; Country Programme Document 2018-2022 and 2023-2027; UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025; Agenda 2030 and SDGs 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 15; UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2022; UNDP Regional Gender Equality Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2025; and UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025).

The program responded to international agreements: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and United Nations Framework

⁵⁷ <https://da.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Plan-Nacional-de-Desarrollo-e-Inversiones-P%C3%ABlicas-2019-2022.pdf>

⁵⁸ [https://observatoriplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-nacional-de-desarrollo-e-inversion-publica-2023-2026-de-costa-rica#:~:text=El%20Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Desarrollo%20e%20Inversi%C3%B3n%20P%C3%ABlica%202023%2D2026,\(SNP\)%20y%20la%20participaci%C3%B3n%20ciudadana.](https://observatoriplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-nacional-de-desarrollo-e-inversion-publica-2023-2026-de-costa-rica#:~:text=El%20Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Desarrollo%20e%20Inversi%C3%B3n%20P%C3%ABlica%202023%2D2026,(SNP)%20y%20la%20participaci%C3%B3n%20ciudadana.)

⁵⁹ <https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Politica-Nacional-de-Adaptacion-al-Cambio-Climatico-Costa-Rica-2018-2030.pdf>

⁶⁰ https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NAP_Documento-2022-2026_VC.pdf

⁶¹ <https://www.conagebio.go.cr/sites/default/files/2022-11/POLITICA-NACIONAL-DE-BIODIVERSIDAD-2015.pdf>

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It aligned with the GEF-OP Programming Guidelines and was relevant to the focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation.

During the implementation of SGP OP7, there were national elections in 2022, resulting in a change of government, including changes in the presidency, vice presidency, and the Legislative Assembly. These changes did not directly affect the program implementation. However, according to interviews, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) experienced personnel changes and a reduction in positions. As a result, there was a period where a greater number of cantons had to be attended to by the remaining technical staff in the region. The direct field support provided by the Program Management Unit (PMU), combined with the support of technical staff hired by each beneficiary group or NGO receiving grants, helped mitigate the impact of this situation.

Within the aspects that have contributed to achieving the objectives of SGP OP7, the outstanding work of the Program Management Unit (PMU) stands out, both initially with one coordinator and later with the integration of a new coordinator. The direct support to beneficiary groups and the timely resolution of issues with each of them have made a difference. Inter-institutional coordination has been highly relevant, allowing for the pooling of efforts in both human and economic resources, thus strengthening initiatives and making them replicable models.

The backing of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has provided credibility to institutions, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. According to interviews conducted, transparency in resource management is considered remarkable.

Another aspect has been the fieldwork with technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), who have developed an extraordinary amalgamation with SGP OP7. They have taken ownership of the Program and provided tools and technical assistance directly and punctually. Likewise, the presence of personnel from the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) in the area of influence has been essential for developing institutional synergies and strengthening the grants within the Biological Corridor of the Pacific Lowlands (CBPL) and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (CBMA).

An important part is the working experience that the SGP has supporting community strategies, and the piloting of previous phases, mainly OP5 and OP6, has been able to consolidate in this OP7. The integration of the gender equality approach and intersectionality and equal rights approach has created spaces for women who have taken ownership of their projects, actively participate in local representation spaces, and have been strengthened through training and awareness strategies.

The credibility of the National Development Commission (CDN) as a representative body tasked with guiding the actions of SGP OP7 in a pluralistic manner and under the norms of the global SGP has been of great value.

As a result, SGP OP7 has played a crucial role in integrating and consolidating initiatives previously tested in earlier phases. Additionally, it has incorporated new initiatives with an inclusive approach that involves women and youth. This approach has been essential for achieving the proposed objectives and surpassing the majority of the established targets, together with institutional efforts, consultancies that played a decisive role in the operation of SGP OP7, and the commitment of community groups and NGOs that carried out specific actions at the local and regional levels.

This joint effort has generated significant benefits at the family, community, and global levels, highlighting the importance of comprehensive and coordinated collaboration for the success of sustainable development initiatives.

SGP OP7 contributed to the three pillars of the GEF-OP's comprehensive approach to sustainable development: environmental protection, livelihood development, and community empowerment, which recognizes the links between the environment and human development. The initiatives developed in the region are relevant because they are community models for the production, conservation, and sustainable use of resources, which are models to be replicated nationally and internationally.

SGP OP7 responded to the needs of the rural and indigenous population of the region, contributing to the resilience of the 5 landscapes through community initiatives and to the resilience of the watersheds and the 2 biological corridors through the coordination of mobilizing human, economic, and in-kind resources through co-financing, which strengthened each of the grants and achieved successful and replicable models.

The work carried out in this OP7 to conduct a Gender Analysis through the identification of the situation of women and a Gender Equality Action Plan is deemed relevant. Additionally, the identification of women's groups, who were able to submit proposals to compete in the OP7 SGP Call for Proposals, these affirmative actions helped reduce gender gaps.

The push for the integration of women in this OP7 has undoubtedly been significant. Likewise, the Program promoted gender equality, intersectionality, and a rights-based approach, enabling comprehensive work throughout the cycle. The inclusion of women and young women is of great value due to the visibility they have gained and the contribution they provide at the social level. These strategies could continue in subsequent phases.

According to interviews, SGP OP7 was highly appreciated by the population and institutions, making it a program that reaches communities in conditions of poverty and social and environmental vulnerability. It is an initiative that has managed to bring together experience, and each phase incorporates lessons learned, and this is no exception.

4.3.b. Effectiveness

SGP OP7 has been effective in achieving results and expected objectives, most of which were exceeded. It managed to implement 35 initiatives,⁶² Completing 100% successfully. It has been effective regarding the strategic priorities of the GEF, directly benefiting 3,220 people, representing 115% of the target, of which 1,692 were women (53%) and 1,578 were men (49%).

In terms of global environmental benefits, 7,867.6 hectares were restored, representing 106% of the target; improved management practices were implemented in 8,843.8 hectares, representing 107%. Additionally, 3,438,881.0 metric tons of CO₂e were mitigated, representing 90.5% of the target.

Of the 35 initiatives, 16 initiatives were in the biodiversity focal area; 15 initiatives in the land degradation focal area, and 4 initiatives in the climate change focal area.

⁶² See Annex 11. List of grants.

In Component 1, Resilient Landscapes for Sustainable Development and Global Environmental Protection, under Result 1.1, ecosystem services within the selected landscapes are enhanced through multifunctional land use systems.

SGP OP7 successfully protected 149 water springs (106% of the target). Protection measures included: fencing off water sources to prevent deforestation and the entry of livestock, promoting natural soil regeneration through conservation practices, and establishing stables, feeders, and watering points for livestock as part of sustainable livestock initiatives, which helped protect the water sources.⁶³

Similarly, through the implementation of the Comprehensive Assistance Center for Water Sustainability (CAISA) to support the ASADAS, their capacities for integrated water resource management were strengthened across the five landscapes. Activities such as maintenance, restoration, and protection of water areas; river and beach protection through waste collection and transformation; use of water-saving technologies such as drip irrigation systems; rainwater harvesting; and water networks, reforestation, among others, were carried out.

The capacity of 5 voluntary forest fire brigades was successfully strengthened (250% of the target), with training and equipment provided. Community brigade capacities were enhanced, with participation from both women and men, in areas such as fire management, water management against fires, and strengthening through firefighting equipment. The population was sensitized on aspects of agricultural burning and basic techniques for addressing forest fires.⁶⁴ A Regional Forest Fire Management Center was successfully established to serve the entire ACOPAC Conservation Area, covering 526,000 hectares.⁶⁵ Within this conservation area, there are 5,640 plant species, with an average of 1,014 species per 1,000 km², which is 5.76 times higher than the average reported for all of Costa Rica, reaching 176 species per 1,000 km². Of the approximately 10,000 endemic species in the country, ACOPAC reports 5,000, with over 76% of the timber species endangered. Additionally, it hosts 201 mammal species out of the 238 existing in Costa Rica, including the 4 primate species reported for Mesoamerica, the 6 species of large felines, and the largest in the Neotropics (*Panthera onca*), as well as the Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), which represents the largest terrestrial mammal reported in Costa Rica. ACOPAC also boasts the presence of 746 bird species, representing 83.6% of the 892 established for Costa Rica, along with over 14,000 species of lepidopterans and 11 out of the 18 endemic species of freshwater fish.⁶⁶ Therefore, the implementation of initiatives supported by SGP OP7 to protect areas of high biodiversity in coordination with SINAC and MAG has been crucial.

Two community monitoring programs were successfully carried out in the CBMA and CBPL areas, utilizing participatory community sampling with camera traps in 36 stations (farms), with the participation of SINAC and MAG. This effort led to the identification of the presence of 4 out of the 6 feline species present in the country: (*Puma concolor*), ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*), margay (*Leopardus wiedii*), and

⁶³ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2023

⁶⁴ Second Report. Fundación Madre Verde. May 26th 2022

⁶⁵ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2023

⁶⁶ SINAC.

<https://www.sinac.go.cr/ES/ac/acopac/Paginas/default.aspx#:~:text=Ubicada%20en%20la%20parte%20central,sur%20del%20Valle%20Central%20y>

oncilla (*Leopardus tigrinus*), all of which are endangered due to various causes such as habitat loss and decline in their prey populations, caused by human activities.⁶⁷

In addition, there is the presence of medium and large mammals such as tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), peccaries (*Dicotyles tajacu*), deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), coatis (*Nasua narica*), agoutis (*Dasyprocta punctata*), among others. These species are of great importance for forest conservation and play a significant role in the food chain.

Associated with this work, the installation of electric fences, lights, and motion sensors as an anti-predatory strategy on two farms was achieved. This has enabled the zoning of the farm (pastures), resulting in increased productivity and better livestock management.⁶⁸ Additionally, monitoring actions for the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) were carried out along the main connectivity routes of the CBPL, using participatory methods and community education.⁶⁹ Community involvement has been crucial in biodiversity conservation, understanding the territory as a socio-ecosystem.

“With the camera traps, we observed many animals like the puma, which we had never seen before, only its tracks, and they were taking away our animals. With the project, we were able to install an electric fence that I didn't believe was good before. Now, with this technology, my stable is secure from animals, and there are many benefits we have had with the SGP”. Beneficiary of the SGP OP7

Similarly, in the CBMA, a network of sustainable rural tourism was strengthened, encompassing more than 55 enterprises that offer services such as accommodation, local cuisine, birdwatching, and adventure activities, achieving the development of an online platform called "Explore Occidente."⁷⁰ In conjunction with strategic partners at the national and international levels, and in alliance with the Costa Rican Tourism Institute, communities are committed to conserving habitats of endangered and threatened species while simultaneously generating economic income from sustainable tourism activities.⁷¹ Translate to English: Tourism networks in the buffer zone of La Cangreja National Park were also strengthened, developing conservation strategies, community monitoring of species, strengthening of local enterprises where entrepreneurial families from the Zapátón Indigenous Territory have been incorporated. The groups have been strengthened through training and exchange of experiences, as well as coordination among institutions working in the region.

“We used to hunt animals before, but now we conserve them so that people can come and take tours. Here, there are more than 100 different birds. Now, our practices are in harmony with nature.”
Beneficiary of the SGP OP7

⁶⁷ Felines of Costa Rica: compendium of research carried out in the UNA/editores Reinaldo Amián Gutiérrez, Kinndle Blanco Peña, Carlos Morera Beita. 1. ed. Heredia, C.R. Universidad Nacional, Dirección de Investigación, 2015.

⁶⁸ Third Progress Report of Project Panthera. Costa Rica. August 01, 2023.

⁶⁹ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2023

⁷⁰ <http://exploreoccidentecr.com/>

⁷¹ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2023

Outcome 1.2: The sustainability of production systems in the target landscapes is strengthened through integrated agroecological practices.

240 male and female livestock farmers benefited, who developed improved practices in production systems (133% of the target). Agroconservation practices were carried out, including production of organic bioinputs, establishment of live fences, planting of forage banks with resilient grasses, contour farming, stabilization of areas with steep slopes, and implementation of good livestock practices in their production systems such as improving feeding and organic fertilizer production,⁷² protection of aquifer recharge zones, safeguarding of water sources, establishment of electric fencing for livestock management to prevent soil compaction, and rational use of pasture areas,⁷³ implementation of water reservoirs, installation of irrigation systems, and installation of animal watering troughs,⁷⁴ practices that help livestock farmers build resilience.

The Program promoted sustainable livestock practices by promoting strategies for protection, conservation, and restoration, which are allowing for increased productivity on livestock farms and, consequently, an improvement in family income.

A total of 64 water reservoirs were installed, supplying climate-smart irrigation systems (213% of the target). These reservoirs have storage capacities ranging from 1,000 to 200,000 liters, depending on the needs of the farms. These water reservoirs are favoring productive activities and helping to build resilience against the effects of climate change⁷⁵ due to the droughts that occur in the region, mainly during the months of October to March.

Similarly, 12 women's groups adopted sustainable production systems (200% of the target), with direct participation from 177 women, corresponding to 197% of the target. Of these groups, 10 are working with nature-based solutions, such as vegetable production in protected environments using organic agriculture principles, tilapia production in aquaponics systems (which utilize clean energy) for the production and availability of protein-rich food, vermicomposting, production of natural cosmetics, production of medicinal plant extracts as sustainable use of natural resources, diversification of productive and economic options under good agro-environmental practices through chemical-free ginger and turmeric production for transformation, among others. These initiatives are aimed at food security, as well as the creation and strengthening of nature-based micro-enterprises.

“It sounds like you've got a good handle on managing accounts and taking orders for selling your products! It's fantastic that both the UNDP and small donations are supporting your efforts. Participating in the sustainable agriculture market, ongoing training, and modernization efforts are all excellent steps forward. Keep up the great work!” . Beneficiary of the SGP OP7

⁷² Progress Report of ASONALAC Project. June 2022.

⁷³ Third Project Report. APEMEGO. August 2023.

⁷⁴ Terminal Evaluation Report. APAECTU. June 2023.

⁷⁵ Costa Rica declares a yellow alert (level two out of four) due to the forecast of drought caused by the “El Niño” phenomenon. October 19, 2023 <https://www.france24.com/es/minuto-a-minuto/20231018-costa-rica-declara-alerta-amarilla-ante-previsi%C3%B3n-de-sequ%C3%ADa-por-el-ni%C3%B1o>

Result 1.3: Livelihoods within the target landscapes become more resilient through the creation of small-scale ecological community enterprises and improved market access.

Value chains were promoted through the establishment of 12 green enterprises (300% of the target). Out of these enterprises, 8 are with women's groups, who are developing products such as stingless bee honey, sustainable tourism, dairy product processing, fruit tree production systems, aquaponics systems with solar power for tilapia production, production of golden milk with chemical-free ginger and turmeric, horticultural plants, traditional medicine plant production, natural cosmetics production, production of herbal tinctures and oils, production of blackberries and cape gooseberries, production of vegetables under shade houses, and organic fertilizer production.

Indicator 13: Introduction and testing of models for the transformation of severe plastic pollution in rivers and coastlines. 2 schemes (200% of the target)

Through the implementation of a grant with the organization Mareblu, the SGP supported the establishment of a solid waste recovery center on beaches, contributing to the development of environmental conservation initiatives through beach cleaning and volunteerism. This, along with awareness-raising activities about environmental issues with schools and communities.

Efforts were focused on beach cleaning with community participation, involving girls, boys, youth, women, and men from nearby communities. Additionally, plastic waste from the cleaning and participating families was collected at the Beach Cleaning and Volunteer Center. The Pedregal company processed the tragic waste, transforming it into eco-blocks for construction, enabling the creation of a circular economy from the collection of recyclable plastics and tragic plastics.

Within the volunteer actions, 18 campaigns were conducted with companies such as Walmart, Mayca, DHL, Mabe, Stewart Title, Universidad para la Paz (3 universities from the USA), Arkose Labs, West Monroe, Grupo Induni, Textiles JB, TLA Logistics, Coca-Cola, recovering 11,366 kg of solid waste just during 2023.⁷⁶ The organization Mareblu holds the distinction of the Blue Flag Ecological Program, which allows collaboration under quality standards and continues efforts in their work.

A 75% target was achieved for women trained in financial education, linked to value chains, market access, and microfinance mechanisms, where they received training for product sales and marketing with the support of the agreement between SGP OP7 and INA to strengthen women's groups. This indicator did not meet the target due to the period of absence of national coordination, which impacted key negotiations and discussions with INAMU and INA,⁷⁷ In addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, which necessitated the suspension of activities and the development of virtual work mechanisms, delaying agreements with institutions, the SGP OP7 incentivized the development of alternative and energy-efficient technologies that benefited communities and producer associations. This resulted in the establishment of 9 pilot projects (225% of the target), such as: biodigesters, leachate tanks or biol for organic fertilizer production, installation of photovoltaic systems, construction of efficient wood stoves, installation of solar pumping systems, and systems utilizing the internet for beehive monitoring with the installation of weight and temperature sensors.⁷⁸

The results have been significant, such as the reduction in electricity consumption billing, reduction in the consumption of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), reduction in the purchase of fertilizers, savings in firewood consumption, decrease in the number of trees not harvested, avoided biogenic CO2 emissions

⁷⁶ Second Progress Report of Project. Mareblu. December 12, 2023.

⁷⁷ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2023

⁷⁸ Third Project Progress Report. Biomatec Foundation. September 2023

(tons/year), waste management, amount of saved and not revalued water.

The projects developed serve as pilot initiatives for decarbonization at both national and international levels, representing innovative examples in the adoption of technologies that contribute to reducing the carbon footprint in the economy.⁷⁹

23 participatory feasibility studies were conducted on alternative and energy-efficient technologies that benefit communities and producer associations, representing 575% of the target. Out of these, 8 projects were implemented in the field with community groups, who have adopted the technologies. During the evaluation mission, they reported saving on their electricity bills and reducing the use of fuels such as gasoline. The use of renewable technologies has therefore impacted environmental improvement and reduced production costs, leading to savings in family economies.

Component 2 Landscape Governance and Adaptive Management for Expansion and Replication

Outcome 2.1: Strengthening of multi-stakeholder governance platforms to improve governance of target landscapes for participatory and effective decision-making, aiming to enhance socio-ecological resilience.

Four landscape strategies and management plans were developed through public consultations, based on the respective landscape management plans, completing 100% of the target. These landscape strategies were validated documents by the communities and serve as management instruments for governance bodies, institutions, and territories.

SGP OP7 successfully strengthened governance structures at the community level, reinforcing 62 ASADAS (Water and Sanitation Administrations)⁸⁰ (103% of the target), through the establishment of the Sustainability Center, which develops and provides a range of services to ASADAS in water resource management across the 12 cantons covered by SGP OP7. This center was strengthened through training, statutes, and a Board of Directors. Additionally, it is in the process of being formally established before AyA as a confederation that will be the legal entity administering and operating the Sustainability Center. Gender mainstreaming within the work of CAISA is relevant, where it has been strengthened through a gender diagnosis and gender equity awareness processes, permeating through the work and public service provision.

Likewise, an empowerment and plumbing workshop was conducted, where women gained skills in pipe and water pump repair, as well as knowledge related to water systems for water pumping. CAISA functions as a water business center, formed through participatory planning processes, with its scope of work at the regional level. Similarly, the development of a participatory business plan was completed, with meticulous financial record-keeping and intense promotion in the region, supported by sector institutions. The support of institutions such as AyA, the Regional Offices of Community Aqueducts (ORAC-AyA), AyA's Department of Gender Equality and Equity, the Public Services Regulatory Authority (ARESEP), UTN, the Ministry of Health (MinSA), INAMU, and MINAE has been fundamental, strengthening their presence in the region.

⁷⁹ Calderón, G. Final Evaluation Report. Biomatec Foundation. August 2023

⁸⁰ The ASADAS are local bodies constituted as associations that, by delegation from the Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers (AyA), administer, operate, maintain, and develop aqueduct and sewer systems in those communities where neither the AyA nor the respective municipality provide drinking water supply and sanitation services. [Source: Manual for ASADAS, Costa Rica. UNDP-AyA. 2013]

Additionally, 26 young people (260% of the target) benefited from training scholarships in community landscape planning and project design. They were trained in basic financial education, gender, and climate change adaptation. Women who received scholarships participated in the "Sustainable Livelihood Initiative" program implemented by Bean Voyage in collaboration with the Starbucks Foundation and ICAFE, developing small businesses.⁸¹

Similarly, 16 schools (160% of the target) benefited from the environmental education program to improve socio-ecological resilience among children and youth in schools. Environmental education workshops were conducted on topics such as biological connectivity and Costa Rican felids, local wildlife species, and sustainable practices, using playful and pedagogical activities.⁸²

With support from SINAC and UCR, schools were sensitized to the issue of environmental problems on beaches, such as legacy or non-valuable (tragic) plastics, where they participated as volunteers in collection and recycling campaigns. Environmental education with school children has been crucial, as they have shown interest in learning about, conserving, and protecting ecosystems in their region, actively participating in recycling campaigns, river and beach clean-ups, school garden implementation, nature drawing contests, among others.

Additionally, 25 case studies (109% of the target) were developed, which systematize the experiences within SGP OP7 across the 5 landscapes. The systematizations are substantial and align with the Program's Communication Strategy. The materials mainly consist of videos developed by initiatives supported by OP7, which have been disseminated through social media, beneficiary organizations' websites, and platforms by PMU, UNDP, and GEF, as well as allied institutions. This approach has proven to be highly effective.

Through supporting initiatives, the SGP influenced the strengthening of skills and capacities of community groups where women and men participated in local initiatives aimed at strengthening and achieving expected goals and outcomes. Each of these initiatives helped generate employment and develop livelihoods in vulnerable sectors through sustainable production initiatives (*See Result 1.2: The sustainability of production systems in the target landscapes is strengthened through integrated agroecological practices*).

The work of SGP OP7 in previous phases has driven the inclusion of women in initiatives. This learning from previous phases was crucial for supporting rural and indigenous women's groups in this seventh phase. It expanded the attention strategy, consolidated initiatives, and continued to strengthen them for empowerment. According to interviews, women expressed feeling more secure, better able to express themselves, capable of making decisions, and having income and food that they themselves produce.

The watershed approach in five landscapes has allowed for greater territorial resilience, where rural communities have managed the territory with a focus on sustainable development and environmental protection.

The SGP OP7 contributed to the strategic priorities of the GEF, particularly its biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation programs (See Chart 9).

⁸¹ Project Implementation Report. UNDP-PMU. 2023

⁸² Calderón, G. Final Evaluation Report. Panthera Corporation. August 2023.

Chart 9. Environmental and Global Benefits

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity	
Basic Indicator 4. Area of Landscape under Improved Practices	
Target	Target Achieved at the End
8,250.0	10,288.9
Indicator 4.1 Area of Landscapes under Improved Management for the Benefit of Biodiversity	
Target	Target Achieved at the End
2,750.0	6,074.0
Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) or other forest loss avoided (select from dropdown menu)	
2,500.0	1,376.9
Sustainable Land Management and Restoration	
Basic Indicator 3. Land and Ecosystem Area under Restoration	
7,390.0	8,178.9
Indicator 3.2 Area of Natural Grasslands and Forests under Restoration	
2,500.0	2,565.0
Indicator 3.4 Area of Wetlands (including estuaries and mangroves) under Restoration	
390.0	242.9
Indicator 4.3 Area of Landscapes under Sustainable Land Management in Production Systems	
3,000.0	2,838.0
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction	
6.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (Metric Tons CO2e)	
3,796,280.0	3,438,881.0
Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (in megajoules)	
84.368.143	1.257.226
Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Capacity of Renewable Energies by Technology (in megawatts)	
Solar Photovoltaic: 0.001	0.019
Biomass: 0.071	0.160

Among the most significant limiting factors and risks faced by the Programme, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic stands out. This situation restricted the activities of SGP OP7 in its territorial implementation. To counteract this challenge, it was necessary to implement mitigation actions through remote work, including virtual meetings, grant monitoring, advice, and support. Once restrictions for field visits were lifted, the PMU rigorously complied with safety and health protocols to prevent contagion.

Additionally, a coordination gap lasting approximately five months resulted in delays in interinstitutional coordination actions. This issue was addressed by hiring a coordinator, which allowed for the restoration of coordination among the various institutions involved in OP7.⁸³

SGP OP7 mostly met the results and goals, even exceeding most of them outstandingly (see 4.3 Project Results and Impacts). Land was recovered through sustainable agricultural and livestock practices, soil regeneration and improvement, reforestation activities, protection, use, and management of natural resources, improvement, and protection of water bodies, species protection through conservation actions and fire protection, reducing the impact of climate change through adaptive landscape management strategies at the community level locally and regionally, generating environmental, social, and economic

⁸³ Quarterly Report. Year 2023. Small Grants Program. UNDP-PMU. January 15, 2024.

resilience in the Jesús María and Barranca river basins, the lower and middle basins of the Grande de Tárcoles River, and the CBPL and CBMA.

SGP OP7 successfully developed food security strategies and livelihoods for beneficiary groups through participatory land use planning and livelihoods of local communities based on conservation and sustainable use, creating governance platforms and market spaces influencing a circular economy. SGP OP7 promoted the use of innovative technologies and processes that helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to a low-carbon local economy.

One of the key elements that contributed to exceeding the planned targets was the inter-institutional mobilization carried out by SGP OP7 at the watershed level, achieving the expected co-financing and the coordination of technical, human, and material efforts towards a common goal. This helped build resilience for both families and the environment, providing local and global benefits.

In this OP7, it was essential to continue strengthening initiatives that originated in previous phases and achieved greater reach in this OP7. These initiatives have the potential to scale up nationally and internationally. The inclusion of the middle and lower basin of the Tárcoles River has been crucial as it amalgamates all the work done in previous phases and sets the stage for work in OP8.

The strengthening of decision-making structures in the biological corridors and 62 ASADAS at the territorial level provided an organizational framework for decision-making through community governance, allowing greater autonomy in decision-making. The integration of women and young women's groups has incentivized reducing the gender gap and has empowered women by providing opportunities for participation in projects and decision-making with equal rights towards democratic governance.

Among the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (MTR), prioritizing actions supporting entrepreneurial development strategies such as market studies and marketing was identified. However, the period without coordination affected activities; when the new coordination was resumed, projects were already in the closing phase, and some were closed. Nevertheless, efforts were made on a case-by-case basis with the initiatives, encouraging market strategies and integrating them into established markets.⁸⁴

The SGP OP7 contributed to UNDP's strategies as described in section 4.3.a. Specifically, it contributed to the United Nations Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 across its four strategic priorities:

- 1) Inclusive Costa Rica: SGP OP7 ensured the full exercise of rights, gender equality, and intersectionality, empowering women and inclusive of rural and indigenous communities.
- 2) People-centered governance and rights: It promoted spaces for local and regional governance participation.
- 3) Shared prosperity: The program generated local initiatives focused on generating economic income through the conservation and sustainable use of resources, fostering a circular economy for local and regional benefit, including women and vulnerable populations.
- 4) Resilience to adversity: It fostered territorial synergy with resilient practices to prevent, mitigate, and respond to multiple risks and reduce the impact of climate change.

SGP OP7 contributed to the UNDP's Country Programme Document for Costa Rica 2023-2027 by reducing inequalities among vulnerable groups, developing sustainable economic activities that generate

⁸⁴ PMU. 2024

employment and benefit traditionally marginalized regions, promoting democratic governance with an intersectional gender approach, and respecting human rights.

Additionally, it contributed to Indicator 1.3.1. in the reduction of metric tons of CO2 equivalent avoided; as well as to Indicator 1.3.3. in reducing plastic pollution with an intersectional gender perspective. It also contributed to Result 2.1. by facilitating formal employment opportunities in green, circular enterprises with an intersectional gender perspective, in rural and indigenous communities in vulnerable conditions, including people with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendant populations.

Likewise, it contributed to Result 2.2. by strengthening capacities for promoting a green and circular economy and mitigating climate change; to Result 3.2. The SGP OP7 helped increase ecosystem-based adaptation strategies with a gender perspective and the consolidation of social inclusion. To Indicator 3.2.1, where the SGP OP7 supported mitigation efforts and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity with a gender perspective and social inclusion as adaptation measures. To Indicator 3.2.2, the SGP OP7 contributed to the increase in forest cover or restoration, contributing to ecosystem-based adaptation; to Outcome 3.3, the SGP OP7 improved water resources management through community-based adaptation measures and multiple risk management.

The SGP OP7 contributed to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 15. As well as to the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2022; Regional Gender Equality Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2025; UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025.

The Programme, in terms of achieving indicators, highlights that out of 21 indicators, 19 were met and 2 indicators reached between 75% and 90% of their target, demonstrating that the SGP OP7 has been successful and serves as a replicable model at the regional, national, and international levels.

The approach of the SGP OP7 through the landscape strategy under the watershed focus has been crucial for influencing at the territorial level and contributing to the conservation, restoration, protection, and sustainable management of natural resources, within a territory where various institutions and organizations converge.

The gender and intersectional approach and the respect for human rights transversally from its design and in management instruments, budget with a gender perspective, calls for access to grants, work reports from supported organizations and NGOs, communication materials, reports to UNDP, among others, have allowed the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as rural and indigenous women, and young women and men, who have joined initiatives and are having spaces for decision-making, income generation through productive activities that generate social and environmental benefits, as well as family and community recognition.

Institutions' gender capacities were strengthened in coordination with UNDP, sensitizing the National Development Council (CDN), officials, and staff on gender equity. A Gender Committee of the SGP OP7 was formed, and the Gender Plan of the SGP OP7 was implemented, identifying gender sub-indicators in the Results Framework. Working under the equality and intersectional approach and human rights allowed a multidimensional view of poverty within community organizations, where women strengthened social ties around their initiatives, promoting local management through participation in representative bodies and decision-making processes that ensure sustainability in the medium and long term.

4.3.c. Efficiency

Interinstitutional coordination has undoubtedly been the cornerstone of the initiatives of the SGP OP7, where coordinated work and institutional agreements have been paramount. UNDP and UNOPS have

been the institutions that support all the work carried out by the PMU. A major achievement of the SGP OP7 was the continuation and consolidation of coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), specifically with the agricultural extension technicians of MAG's extension agencies, who represent the program's technical force in the region.

The call made within the first months of program implementation was effective in initiating on-the-ground grants. The CDN is an institutional representative body and has played a crucial role as the highest decision-making body within the OP7. The committee has demonstrated efficiency in its actions and has ensured transparency in the processes of the SGP OP7. Another aspect that also denotes efficiency is the incorporation of a permanent technician in each community initiative, allowing for follow-up and the realization of initiatives with the program's beneficiaries.

The advisory role of CADETI in this OP7 has been timely, as well as challenging, especially at the beginning of OP7, to consolidate a multidisciplinary group with a vision that projects are intended for the population with fewer resources and less institutional support, aligned with a regional strategy and adhering to SGP guidelines at a global level.

During the interviews, UNOPS was highly praised for its administrative work, agility, transparency in procedures, and continuous improvement of its platforms. The field grants did not experience any administrative delays across the 35 projects.

Similarly, the UNDP enjoys worldwide and national recognition. According to interviews, it is considered an institution with a long-standing and highly valued reputation, serving as a backbone for the SGP OP7 in institutional management.

Despite having only 2 members, the PMU has been identified as highly efficient. This is evident both in office work and in the field. The close engagement with communities, continuous support for male and female beneficiaries of grants, and precise project advisory were essential parts of the success of the SGP OP7. Additionally, the ongoing support from UNDP and UNOPS in management has been highly valued by community groups.

The adaptive management undertaken during the absence of a national coordinator proved to be an efficient strategy to resolve work issues and ensure continuity. The role played by the administrative assistant was outstanding due to her involvement in both technical and administrative aspects, complemented by the consultancy hired to conduct the information gathering for the Project Implementation Report (PIR) 2023 and the SGP Annual Monitoring Report Survey 2023. Additionally, the support provided to the SGP by UNDP Costa Rica and UNDP New York has been efficient. The shorter learning curve of the new coordination was crucial for continuing implementation and successfully concluding the project.

The involvement of CDN and CADETI members in field visits has been effective in making them feel part of the SGP and recognizing the implementation region and its issues. The knowledge exchange tours promoted by the SGP OP7 were fundamental for acquiring insights from similar initiatives, fostering successful practices or innovations, and facilitating peer-to-peer training in a straightforward manner with on-field demonstrations. These experiences are undoubtedly considered highly beneficial by beneficiaries.

In order for community groups and NGOs to present their progress and results, the SGP OP7 encouraged the submission of 3 reports by the beneficiary groups during the authorized grant period. This mechanism

has proven to be highly effective. Additionally, the development of a financial evaluation and review demonstrates the transparency of resources and the results achieved by each grant.

The use of resources was efficient, and adaptive management has been crucial in achieving the results required by each component of the SGP OP7. Beneficiary community organizations and NGOs had the opportunity to adjust their budgets according to needs, with authorization from the PMU, especially after the pandemic led to price increases.

The recommendations from the MTR regarding communication included improving both internal and external communication of the Program, implementing and strengthening the communication strategy in the second half of OP7 implementation, as well as systematizing results and lessons learned to be shared at various levels.

To achieve this, a communication expert was hired, who collaborated on developing communication materials and implementing the Communication Strategy. Videos, images, and photo stories were produced, and active participation in commemorative events on social media was ensured. Results from beneficiary groups and organizations were effectively communicated through official websites and social media channels of the SGP and the UNDP.

Additionally, the outreach of the national television Channel 7 was utilized to broadcast reports on eight SGP projects, which continue to air nationwide. Furthermore, a publication titled "Financing Women's Economic Autonomy through Environmental Sustainability: The Experience of the Seventh Phase of the SGP in Costa Rica" was released in commemoration of the International Women's Day 2024.

The PMU also worked intensively on documenting the 30 years of the SGP, with the participation of a consultant, which is currently in the editing process and will be launched at a results presentation event, along with a video and testimonials from key institutional figures and SGP beneficiaries. The event will be broadcasted online and recorded for further dissemination.

The exchange of experiences has been highly effective in capacity development within beneficiary groups. The SGP OP7 incentivized community groups and NGOs to develop communication initiatives and systematize experiences, allowing them to communicate the benefits of the grants internally and externally. Therefore, knowledge management was effective.

The cost of SGP OP7 was efficient, with USD 234,860 allocated to women, representing 19% of the total budget and resulting in direct benefits to women's groups.

Of the total FMAM financing, 63.40% was channeled through direct grants to community organizations and NGOs. As of the date of this evaluation, the total executed amount is USD 1,980,195.18, which corresponds to 95.11% of the budget approved in the ProDoc.

*"With the SGP, we have experienced changes. They have trained our entire group, the technicians come to see us and help us a lot. I also thank the project team, the UNDP, and the SGP because they provide us with support and resolve all our doubts."
Beneficiary of the SGP OP7*

The SGP OP7 prioritizes vulnerable populations and the most degraded territories. The integration of young women into the initiatives has been of great value, representing the generational change. Additionally, the inclusion of families in project activities occurred organically, involving children,

youths, and young girls in conservation and protection work. This strengthened family unity around sustainable development strategies.

The SGP OP7 demonstrates efficient management both in project implementation and financial administration, complying with UNDP and UNOPS international standards and norms. Financial systems have been adequate for SGP OP7 management, with the UNOPS ONE system allowing for effective information generation.

The SGP in its OP7 has achieved a high level of co-financing through intense management during its implementation. A fundamental part has also been the collaboration strategies promoted by the groups from their initiative, as well as in the community governance platform, which have helped to generate inter-institutional coordination in the 5 territorial landscapes, thus enhancing the resources of the SGP OP7 and its scope with the contributed resources, demonstrating efficiency (see Chart 12). The strategic projects have proven to be efficient since their formulation, as they are focused on addressing specific issues and achieving a wide-reaching impact with a larger grant.

4.3.d. Coherency

The Program has been consistent with national policies, addressing the issues of the region where it was implemented, considered the region with the highest land degradation. The SGP OP7 responded to strategic programs such as the National Program for Combating Land Degradation and Drought (PAN) of CADETI through the prioritization of watersheds and community work.

Likewise, the SGP OP7 was consistent with the SINAC Strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of water resources 2001-2026, by establishing water resources as a human right and the principle of equity and social and intergenerational solidarity, contributing to its objective of developing management and coordination for the protection and conservation of watersheds.

Similarly, the Program was consistent with Costa Rica's Biodiversity Sector Adaptation Action Plan to Climate Change 2015-2025,⁸⁵ The SGP OP7 has been consistent with UNDP's policy and regulations, fostering synergies with projects such as the COMDEKS initiative, ASADAS projects, Productive Landscapes, and BIOFIN within the UNDP portfolio.

Additionally, the SGP OP7 has been consistent with UNDP's gender equality policy, specifically with the Gender Equality Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2025, and the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021, promoting gender equality as a human right and the necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world,⁸⁶ en donde se pone al centro del desarrollo a las mujeres para reducir las desigualdades, así como la Política de Igualdad de Género del FMAM y su Plan de Acción de Género, los cuales promueven la igualdad de género y empoderamiento de las mujeres permitiendo incrementar la eficacia de las inversiones a la hora de generar beneficios para el medio ambiente mundial.⁸⁷

4.3.e. Sustainability

Financial Sustainability

Working with local, regional, and national NGOs can bring together new initiatives around the grants and continue to strengthen them. Through the support of the SGP OP7 to community organizations and NGOs,

⁸⁵ MINAE. 2015

⁸⁶ UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021. <https://www.undp.org/es/costa-rica/publicaciones/estrategia-igualdad-de-genero-pnud>

⁸⁷ Gender Action Plan. GEF. 2014

they are strengthened, having legal personality, a bank account, and the skills and capacities that the SGP has created for them including organizational, administrative, financial, and technical skills. As a result, each organization will have advantages in terms of sustainability.

According to interviews and field visits, beneficiaries mentioned that they will continue working on their project activities because they have learned a new approach focused on landscape conservation and restoration, which provides them with benefits.

“We want to thank the SGP and UNDP for providing us with valuable learning through the project. We have learned new things, they have encouraged us to keep moving forward, not to give up as women. We will continue to work; we want our project to keep growing.” - Beneficiary of SGP OP7

The production and transformation of products have enabled both women and men to access fairs and established markets, promoting their merchandise and achieving sales. Local initiatives in OP7 have opened up marketing spaces in coordination with municipal authorities, ensuring a continuous presence in local markets. This presence generates income for producers and fosters economic sustainability by allowing them to reinvest profits in their products.

The strategic project of beach cleaning and volunteering promotes a model of production towards responsible consumption of a circular economy, through a sustainable ecological production model, minimizing waste generation. The population participates in the cleaning of beaches and rivers, and the sale of waste for recycling, and tragic waste for the production of ecoblocks, strengthening actions towards a circular economy focused on sustainable resource management.

Sociopolitical sustainability

One of the strengths of the initiatives of the SGP OP7 was the coordination and institutional support received. The legal framework, legislation, programs, and institutional strategies are aligned with the objectives of the initiatives and the institutions.

The incoming Costa Rican government in February 2019 launched the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050,⁸⁸ A 10-point roadmap aimed at generating a development model based on reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere, digitalization, and decentralization in energy production; the National Climate Change Policy 2018-2030 strengthens resilience capacities and conditions. Additionally, the Plan A, Climate Change Resilient Territories by the Costa Rican Government, seeks to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to climate change by strengthening capacities⁸⁹. Also, the Country Program for Carbon Neutrality aims to achieve zero emissions by 2050.⁹⁰ Therefore, the community initiatives supported in OP7 were aligned with national policy.

A crucial aspect for the sustainability of the initiatives has been that each of the proposals supported by the SGP OP7 originated from the grassroots of communities and NGOs, who have taken ownership of the initiatives, along with appropriation by technical institutions working at the territorial level such as MAG, CADETI, SINAC, AyA, INAMU, INDER, among others.

⁸⁸ <https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PLAN-NACIONAL-DESCARBONIZACION.pdf>

⁸⁹ <https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Politica-Nacional-de-Adaptacion-al-Cambio-Climatico-Costa-Rica-2018-2030.pdf>

⁹⁰ <https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PPCN%20Folleto%20general.pdf?t=1618521827>

The development of alliances that the SGP OP7 managed to consolidate, along with the coordination work with institutions, strengthened the seed capital provided by the Program, and with the results of each grant, they managed to develop sustainability strategies.

The strengthening of capacities and skills of community groups and NGOs within each of the initiatives developed allowed women and men to acquire greater organizational, administrative, productive, local and regional management skills, which will continue in the medium and long term with their initiatives. The demonstrated ownership of their initiatives will be crucial for the benefits in the medium and long term. Additionally, the involvement of families has provided added value that contributes to the sustainability of the Program.

Institutional framework and governance sustainability

It is extremely important for the Costa Rican government to continue the SGP, where the Operational Phase 8 has been confirmed, with financing from the GEF, and at the territorial level, it will continue to consolidate local and regional strategies already tested in OP7.

The fact that institutions are working directly with the initiatives supported by the SGP OP7, such as the MAG, SINAC, CADETI, INAMU, AyA, universities, NGOs, and community groups, is undoubtedly an incentive that will allow them to continue benefiting in the short term once OP7 ends. The appropriation of projects by technicians is a great asset for continuity and for subsequent phases.

The SGP's bet for sustainability has been the strengthening of organizations, where in this OP7, emphasis has been placed on the creation of these decision-making platforms and community governance. Strengthening the ASADAS, local committees of biological corridors, and coordinated work with government institutions, universities, and businesses, among others.

The SGP OP7 has empowered community groups through initiatives aimed at restoring, conserving, protecting, and sustainably using natural resources in 5 landscapes with nature-based solutions.

The Program had a sustainability model by training community groups, providing them with the tools and skills they needed for their activities, generating synergies among groups and others at the regional level through exchanges of experiences, and developing institutional agreements from globally recognized entities such as the UNDP and UNOPS. It is a proven model towards sustainability.

The push by SGP OP7 for the development and integration of rural and indigenous women's groups, working under the lens of equality and intersectionality, human rights, and vulnerable groups, including indigenous communities, aims to strengthen a fairer, more equitable society under the premise of leaving no one behind.

Environmental Sustainability

The initiatives of the SGP OP7 have focused on the restoration, conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources. Work at the watershed level has enabled integrated management of territorial planning and regional development across 5 landscapes. This includes the development of 4 landscape strategies and management plans, as well as coordination with the SINAC for the protection and conservation of biologically important corridors to maintain species connectivity.

This comprehensive approach allows for the continuation of environmental benefits and landscape planning. Through the strengthening of local committees within the biological corridors, which serve as

decision-making bodies involving communities, organizations, national and state government institutions, municipalities, as well as educational and research institutions, efforts can continue at the territorial level.

The environmental benefits facilitated by the projects during their implementation, such as greenhouse gas mitigation, restoration, protection of water resources such as springs, rivers, and water sources, and the conservation of species such as the Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), among others, are a fundamental part of sustainability. Through improved agricultural practices, sustainable silvopastoral management, beach conservation, and waste management, there is greater awareness and environmental conservation, resulting in global environmental benefits.

“We can produce sustainably. At first, it was difficult for us, but now we know the way and we received a lot of training on new practices to manage our livestock and our land. We already have requests from other communities that want to join these activities.” - Beneficiary of SGP OP7

The reduction of emissions, the strengthening of brigades to decrease forest fires, the promotion and installation of low-carbon technology, and the reduction of firewood consumption through efficient wood stoves have helped to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere, directly impacting strategies aimed at mitigating climate change.

General Sustainability Probability

The grants for initiatives in OP7 were allocated to sustainable production, protection, and conservation of ecosystems in biological corridors, income-generating services such as sustainable livestock farming, honey production, coffee, community-based sustainable tourism services, services to ASADAS, production of golden milk and dairy products, vegetable, legumes, fruit, blackberry, passion fruit, and cape gooseberry production, vermicomposting, tilapia, medicinal plants and tinctures, natural cosmetics, natural makeup, solid waste recycling, among others, contributing to the economic resilience of the beneficiaries and their families.

During the data collection in the working groups, women and men expressed plans to continue with the activities and benefits of their initiatives, which is of great relevance to the GEF, reflecting a high level of ownership of the initiatives by the beneficiaries, as well as the institutions that have collaborated in the 5 landscapes by developing coordinated strategies at a faster pace.

The strengthened local and regional community governance platforms in OP7 envision the continuation of strategies in the region aligned with sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life of the population. Likewise, the strategic projects involving second and third-level organizations and capacity development represent sustainability elements for the community initiatives of OP7.

Sustainability Assessment Summary

Sustainability	Rating
Financial Resources	Likely (L)
Sociopolitical	Likely (L)
Institutional Framework and Governance	Likely (L)
Environmental	Likely (L)
Overall Probability of Sustainability	Likely (L)

4.3.f. National Appropriation

The Program was grounded in national priorities and aligned with the National Development Plan for Indigenous Peoples (PNDIP) 2019-2022 and 2023-2026, focusing on policies, strategies, and actions aimed at decarbonizing the country. This alignment extended to the National Program for Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction, renewable energies, and sustainable livestock production, which were in line with the Livestock NAMA program and organic production systems. Additionally, it adhered to Costa Rica's National Climate Change Strategy (ENCC) and its Action Plan, as well as the National Policy for Adaptation and the National Action Plan to Combat Land Degradation (NAP). Consequently, the SGP OP7 responded to national priorities, and the institutions supporting the initiatives established collaborative agreements aimed at achieving national goals. As a result, they benefited from co-financing from these institutions and initiatives, strengthening each initiative and achieving regional and global benefits.

The Programme, by its very nature of community-based work, does not directly contribute to changes in national legislation. However, its relevance in this OP7 cannot be overstated. During interviews and field visits, remarkable institutional participation was identified, highlighting the national ownership of the SGP OP7 as an achievement in this phase. Additionally, community organizations and NGOs implementing initiatives have been the driving force behind the Program.

4.3.g. Gender equality and women's empowerment

The SGP OP7 has promoted gender equality and social inclusion as a fundamental right since its inception, by identifying the gender situation and condition through a Women's Situation Analysis and a Gender Equality Action Plan. The Program incorporated gender mainstreaming throughout the entire OP7 cycle, which allowed for greater visibility of women, achieving economic autonomy for rural and indigenous women through financing their initiatives linked to sustainable development.

The initiatives supported by the SGP OP7 promoted access, use, and control of resources. Although only a fraction of women have land ownership, it was crucial to develop strategies with some municipalities that supported women's groups. For example, one of the visited groups in the evaluation mission, in San Mateo de Orotina, which produces golden milk, gained access to a community space through a long-term loan or lease, which they will use as a meeting center for production, packaging, labeling, and storage. These actions benefit women, empower them to continue developing their activities, and simultaneously give them recognition at the family and community levels.

According to meetings and interviews with the working groups, women feel more capable of carrying out project activities and have higher self-esteem and confidence to participate in meetings, exchanges, and local and regional committees. They mentioned feeling supported by the PMU throughout the implementation of their project and by the institutions that supported their projects. This has led to the initiatives being embraced by women, who have developed short- and medium-term work plans, identifying the needs required to continue with their projects.

The SGP OP7 has encouraged the inclusion of mixed groups within its initiatives. The coordination with regional-level institutions such as INDER, INAMU, MAG, and SINAC has been significant, particularly due to their ongoing presence in the projects. This coordination has allowed for the development of comprehensive training plans to strengthen their capacities, leading to the achievement of results and the attainment of goals.

Women's participation in decision-making has promoted governance within their community, organizations, and local committees. Their leadership and empowerment are evident in their enthusiasm,

particularly highlighted in the projects visited during the mission, where they expressed eagerness to continue with the initiatives and strengthen their activities. The SGP OP7 has provided them with coordination mechanisms with national institutions.

The SGP OP7 has effectively contributed to closing gender gaps by identifying women's groups in the territory and allocating 19% of the small grants budget exclusively to women's groups. With the approval of 12 projects led by women, it promoted decision-making. There is also evidence of improved incomes through the sale of their products locally, benefiting themselves and their families overall. Additionally, women promote the sustainable use of resources and engage in activities supporting the environment, such as reducing firewood consumption, among others. This has led to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.⁹¹ The measures implemented, such as mitigation of climate change through protection of water bodies, reduction of waste impact through waste collection and recycling, and the development of community tourism and monitoring strategies, have helped protect local species, including those endangered.

Additionally, the involvement of both young women and men has had a significant impact on project development, strengthening family units through the participation of all family members in project activities, including children, adults, and elderly individuals.

"If we don't come together, we don't progress. UNDP came to help us, and we've shown that we can. They have given us the opportunity to produce and sell our products. We are women who support each other, we are sisterly women, we respect nature and animals." - Beneficiary of SGP OP7

Women have established themselves at the territorial level with initiatives focused on economic resilience, conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources, which is allowing them to generate income⁹² through the sale of their products in the community and local markets, fairs, and exhibitions, where they have permanent participation. Two sustainable product brands have been developed: 1) "BeeJagual" with the sale of shampoos, candles, honey, soaps, and deodorants, and 2) "APASARAT" with the production and sale of organic fertilizer. Similarly, women and groups that promoted food production such as vegetables, tilapia farming, among others, have managed to ensure food security, providing families with chemical-free and highly nutritious food, enabling the economic inclusion of women and young women. This has been crucial for the economic resilience of families in the post-pandemic period, which was difficult to navigate, especially for rural populations, where, according to interviews, there was limited availability of food due to low or no income.

"Before, I didn't speak in meetings. They invited me to participate in the women's group, and now I am different. I feel more confident and participate in all meetings, make decisions, and feel empowered. I enjoy attending exchanges; there we learn new things that we can do here in our community." - Beneficiary of SGP OP7

⁹¹ At the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), held in Paris in 2015, it was agreed upon the long-term goal of substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature rise to a maximum of 2°C this century, with efforts urged to limit the increase to just 1.5°C; To review the commitments of countries every five years and provide financing to developing countries so they can mitigate climate change, strengthen resilience, and enhance their capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The agreement included commitments from all countries to reduce their emissions and collaborate together to adapt to the impacts of climate change. <https://www.un.org/es/climatechange/paris-agreement>

⁹² 8 women-led projects have strategies to add value in: beekeeping, horticultural products, composting, waste recycling, and medicinal plant cultivation for the production of health articles and others. Source: PMU 2024

The SGP OP7 has promoted gender equality with an intersectional analysis, focusing on human rights, managing to include rural and indigenous populations, developing environmental and social safeguards as instruments to protect rural and indigenous populations, as well as the protection and conservation of natural resources.

A fundamental aspect has been the work that the SGP OP7 has been able to develop, with strong support from the UNDP Gender Unit, where the participation of women and the formation of the Gender Working Group have been promoted, serving as a body for participation and inter-institutional coordination.

4.3.h. Cross-cutting Issues

The SAP OP7 has been inclusive and has promoted human rights such as the right to food, the right to education by incentivizing training and knowledge exchanges in each of the approved projects. It has also promoted the right to health through the implementation of conservation practices, production of vermicompost, organic leachate, and healthy food production; thereby promoting the right to a healthy environment. Additionally, it has fostered gender equality as a right and the participation of indigenous populations. Furthermore, the inclusion of people with disabilities has been prioritized, making the SGP OP7 inclusive and aligned with the international norms of UNDP, UNOPS, international agreements, and national policies in Costa Rica.

Indigenous groups and vulnerable populations have been considered since the design phase, allowing for their active participation and the development of strategies to address the needs of women, young women, through training scholarships and the promotion of local initiatives throughout the implementation phase.

The work of land recovery and conservation through sustainable agroecological practices, agroforestry systems with proper management of forage grasslands, construction of water tanks for animal use, and development of renewable and low-carbon technologies has led to reduced production costs, soil improvement, and ecosystem services enhancement.

According to interviews and fieldwork groups, beneficiaries expressed that the SGP OP7 has allowed them to achieve better competitiveness in their productive units, particularly for vulnerable groups that previously lacked high production levels. Consequently, this has improved the economic resilience of families and the socio-ecological resilience in the 5 landscapes covered by the SGP OP7.

“We’ve implemented genetic improvement, enhanced farm management practices, and made significant changes with the help of SGP. Previously, we had very few livestock, but now we’re implementing strategies like rotational grazing and fencing to regenerate pasture and soil. SGP has transformed our activities; now we’re saving money because we’re no longer spending on chemicals. Instead, we’re making compost and reusing livestock manure, creating a sustainable cycle. We’re grateful to SGP for teaching us these new techniques” - Beneficiary of SGP OP7

Similarly, SGP OP7 incentivized climate resilience by integrating adaptation measures to climate change such as resilient crops, improved seeds, water harvesting, silvopastoral management practices, renewable and energy-efficient technologies, focusing on risk management like climate threats, vulnerability, promotion of good agricultural and livestock practices, climate resilience in productive systems, and adaptive capacity where producers have reduced risk through diversification and implementation of climate change adaptation measures. Therefore, SGP OP7 has promoted climate resilience and food security, increasing production levels and improving productive systems by reducing climate vulnerability on producers' farms, enhancing adaptive capacity through innovation and technology transfer of adaptation within agricultural and livestock production activities.

4.3.i. GEF Additionality

The Programme has fostered the consolidation of initiatives supported in OP5 and OP6 and expanded its scope by including new landscapes such as the lower and middle basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River, with support from the GEF in this OP7, serving as a catalyst contributing to the socio-ecological and economic resilience of beneficiary groups, thus yielding global benefits (see Chart 7: Environmental and Global Benefits). Consequently, the effect of additionality is evident, broadening the impact of the activities developed, serving as replicable models. This aligns with the priorities of the GEF, where the concept of additionality goes hand in hand with the co-financing requirements that must be met for an initiative to be funded.

The SGP OP7 has undoubtedly enabled community organizations and NGOs to access resources directly, with social, economic, and environmental benefits being reflected at the family, group, territorial, and global levels.

The SGP OP7 has been transparent, demonstrating how GEF funding has contributed to achieving the desired results in this phase and has met the majority of indicators. Additionally, the SGP OP7 tracked GEF indicators by integrating them into its Results Framework from the design phase. Progress was reported annually through PIRs, reporting instruments for delivering results, which have consistently been of high quality and received satisfactory ratings. Each grant has been evaluated, providing evidence of the results achieved.

4.3.j. Catalytic/Replication Effect

The SGP OP7 has promoted initiatives that are replicable and scalable at regional, national, and international levels. As part of strengthening the ASADAS, the AVINA Foundation, through the CAISA figure, created a competitive fund for financing environmental projects, allowing the ASADAS to submit proposals for the protection of areas of hydrological relevance and community awareness on socio-environmental issues. To ensure transparency in the proposal evaluation process, representatives from SINAC, AyA, AVINA, the Ministry of Health, and the SGP were involved. A memorandum of understanding was developed to formalize CAISA's donations to the ASADAS, and approved projects are required to submit interim and final reports, which will support the funding and activities carried out.

This initiative aims to promote a catalytic effect by strengthening new initiatives at the regional level. AVINA has been implementing the CAISA model⁹³ throughout the Latin American region, CAISA is supporting four Sustainability Centers in Costa Rica. It's worth noting that the CAISA operation involves the union of three organizations in the process of forming a federation: FEDEPACE, UNAGUAS, and UNARECE. Simultaneously, they are part of the Latin American Confederation of Community Organizations for Water and Sanitation Services (CLOCSAS), which operates in 15 countries across the region, including Costa Rica. CLOCSAS promotes capacity building, associativity, and recognition of community management of water and sanitation.⁹⁴

Regarding renewable energy, the Biomatec Foundation has developed a strategy for central banking deployment of technologies, which has been presented to institutions and private banking. The goal is to replicate the technologies proven in the project by deploying them through a robust platform built from the country's institutional networks. The network will be created with a catalog of technologies, an initiative generated with the support of the SGP OP7.

⁹³ Project Implementation Report. 2023.

⁹⁴ <https://clocsas.org/>

The experience of the Biomatec NGO within the Program helped propose a new project to the IICA-AECID and scale up the technologies promoted in OP7 to countries such as Guatemala, Colombia, Bolivia, and Costa Rica.

Another catalytic effect of the Program was the strengthening of volunteer fire brigades. In 2023, women and men brigadistas who participated in the SGP OP7 initiative were able to integrate into the national brigade to support Canada in combating forest fires, specifically in Alberta and British Columbia.⁹⁵

4.3.k. Progress to Impact

The SGP OP7 has contributed to the strengthening of community groups and NGOs through organizational capacity building, regional-level training, and knowledge exchanges. It has fostered the consolidation of working groups in sustainable rural development through community initiatives, leading to global benefits. The impetus of OP7 provides an opportunity for community groups to continue their work towards the conservation and valorization of natural resources. Sustainable land management practices, biodiversity conservation, and adaptation and mitigation of climate change were key elements for the sustainable development of their initiatives.

A crucial part of the SGP OP7 was the continuation of the landscape strategy through a watershed approach, and the development of management structures and decision-making processes involving community groups and multiple stakeholders working towards a common objective. This will allow for continued impact under community governance mechanisms, where women are now recognized as integral parts of the organizations and have a voice and vote in territorial planning and decision-making.

During the information triangulation and interview development, it was identified that the beneficiaries are convinced of the work they are carrying out and the contribution of their activities to the environment and the improvement of quality of life. They expressed their intention to continue with the activities supported by the SGP OP7, and during the field mission, it was observed that they were expanding their projects with their own resources, reinvesting their profits, or seeking external support, which demonstrates their ownership of their projects.

4.3.1. Project General Result

Result Evaluation	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Efficacy	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Overall Project Results Rating	Satisfactory

⁹⁵It's part of the agreements within a memorandum of understanding for mutual assistance and cooperation in forest fire management. MINAE. Source: <https://www.infobae.com/america/agencias/2023/06/14/costa-rica-envia-bomberos-para-apoyar-a-canada-en-el-combate-de-los-incendios-forestales/>

5. Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, Lessons Learned

5.1. Main Findings

The design of SGP OP7 was appropriate and aligned with GEF-UNDP quality standards. The Results Framework addressed the objectives of the Seventh Phase, which aimed to contribute to socio-ecological and economic resilience in 5 territories. As part of adaptive management actions, 3 gender sub-indicators were integrated into the Results Framework at the beginning of OP7, which have strengthened gender equality and women's empowerment.

OP7 was built upon lessons learned from OP5 and OP6, expanding the territory to include the lower and middle basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River. This expansion allowed for the continuation of processes achieved in previous phases and the consolidation of local initiatives, thereby expanding social, economic, and environmental benefits.

The SGP OP7 aligned with the priorities and strategies of UNDP Costa Rica (United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2018-2022 and 2023-2027; Country Programme Document (CPD) 2018-2022 and 2023-2027; UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025), as well as with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 15. It also adhered to UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2022, Regional Gender Equality Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2025, and Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025.

The Program responded to international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was in line with international instruments like CEDAW in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

The SGP OP7 has been relevant for rural and indigenous communities because it communicates the nexus between ecosystems and livelihoods, strengthening social cohesion, and developing mechanisms of community governance for the sustainability of initiatives.

The strategies developed during implementation for the inclusion of women are of great value due to the visibility they have gained and the contribution they provide at the social level, strategies that could continue in subsequent phases.

According to interviews, the SGP OP7 is highly appreciated by the population and institutions, making it a program that reached communities in conditions of poverty and social and environmental vulnerability. The SGP OP7 has been a successful model.

The programme successfully implemented 12 projects led and executed by women's groups, which adopted sustainable production systems and nature-based solutions, enabling women to access natural resources, have a say in decision-making, and gain recognition within their families and communities. Through these activities, the programme has impacted the improvement of their self-esteem and empowerment. In interviews and working group sessions, women stated that they now feel more confident, enjoy participating, and make decisions collectively.

The SGP OP7 achieved most of its goals, and some indicators even exceeded the established targets, developing conservation strategies, implementing good practices, and creating green enterprises with women's groups.

One of the global environmental benefits achieved by the SGP OP7 was the restoration of 7,867.6 hectares of land, implementation of improved management practices on 8,843.8 hectares, and mitigation of 3,438,881.0 metric tons of CO₂e.

The lack of coordination within the PMU for a period of 5 months posed a challenge to the program's implementation. However, coordinated efforts between the SGP's Technical Assistant, UNDP, and UNOPS enabled adaptive management of the situation, ensuring that it did not affect implementation, and consequently, its goals and results, which proved highly effective.

Among the indicators that achieved 90.5% and 75% of their targets were Indicator 5: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO₂e) (a mandatory primary indicator of the GEF); and Indicator 14: Number of women trained in financial education, linked to value chains, market access, and microfinance mechanisms, respectively. However, these achievements are considered highly valuable, especially given the challenges posed by the lack of coordination within the PMU, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated the suspension of activities and the development of virtual work mechanisms.

The programme successfully funded three strategic projects, allowing for greater reach in terms of population, social benefits, and environmental impact, by developing collaborative mechanisms with rural and indigenous communities through various initiatives:

- i) Renewable energy and low-carbon technologies enabled the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions from the productive activities of community-based organizations.
- ii) Strengthening of community water resource management through the creation of the CAISA model, which provides services to 12 cantons and involves approximately 169 ASADAS. This model is supported by the union of three organizations forming a federation, allowing for greater representation and outreach.
- iii) Silvopastoral livestock farming in the CBPL area, involving the incorporation of livestock producers who implemented silvopastoral production practices. This has led to environmental improvement and strengthened business management for livestock-producing families, resulting in enhanced livestock herds through sustainable practices, thus enabling environmentally responsible production. These have been successful models and can be replicated.

The inter-institutional coordination is highly efficient, as evidenced by the Program's ability to coordinate actions at the territorial level with institutions and civil society organizations that contribute to improving the quality of life of rural families and environmental sustainability.

The management of the Program's PMU is identified as highly efficient, achieving relevant inter-institutional coordination with the support of UNDP and UNOPS. The close engagement with community groups has been instrumental in closely monitoring the initiatives. According to interviews and work groups, the PMU provides concrete solutions during the implementation of grants.

The landscape approach, under the watershed vision, successfully brought together efficient coordination of human, technical, economic, and logistical efforts, supporting each of the SGP OP7 initiatives. It also allowed the results of the initiatives to have a broad impact on the territory through the efforts of community organizations, NGOs, national, regional, and municipal government institutions, as well as educational institutions and universities.

An important aspect of this OP7 was the work in the middle and lower basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River, which consolidates conservation, restoration, and sustainable management efforts from the mid-

sections. However, it will be essential to focus on work from the upper parts of the basins in subsequent phases.

The monitoring and evaluation system, along with the incorporation of environmental and social safeguards by UNDP, has been efficiently implemented.

The exchange tours have proven highly effective in providing beneficiaries, both women and men, with new knowledge about similar initiatives. According to the work groups conducted during the evaluation mission, participants expressed that these exchanges are very helpful and leave them motivated to continue with their projects.

A Communication Strategy was implemented successfully, particularly following the recommendation of the MTR. This involved creating valuable resources such as videos, images, photo stories, and reports. Eight initiatives produced reports that were broadcasted on national television channel 7. Additionally, a publication titled "Financing Women's Economic Autonomy through Environmental Sustainability: The Experience of the Seventh Phase of the SGP in Costa Rica" was released to commemorate International Women's Day 2024. The systematization of the SGP's 30-year history was also undertaken, among other activities.

The submission of three reports by community organizations and NGOs beneficiaries has proven highly effective, aligning with the global mandates of the SGP as part of accountability measures. Furthermore, the development of an administrative evaluation and review demonstrates transparency in resource allocation and the tangible results achieved by each grant, as well as the global environmental benefits.

A crucial aspect of sustainability is the creation of partnerships during OP7. The contribution of co-financing by institutions strengthens the efforts of the SGP OP7, resulting in the expansion of social, environmental, and economic benefits. Supporting these initiatives involves enhancing capacity, infrastructure, institutional support, internal organization, and governance structures at the local and regional levels, enabling initiatives to achieve sustainability.

The ownership of the Program by beneficiary groups and technical staff from the MAG, who have formed a strong partnership, facilitates the sustainability of community initiatives.

5.2. Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance

The SGP OP7 has been highly relevant, fulfilling its mission to contribute to socio-ecological and economic resilience in the 5 landscapes. It has adhered to national and international mandates, aligned with national and international policies through community initiatives. OP7 was instrumental for the focal areas of the GEF - land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change. Through a gender equality and intersectionality lens, it catalyzed community processes transformed into sustainable development models, ensuring global environmental benefits from the grassroots level.

Conclusion 2. Relevance

The SGP OP7 drove the development of community projects where women and young women have been a fundamental part of the initiatives. The promotion of gender equality at the community level and the development of a Situational Analysis of Women and Action Plan for Gender Equality from its design were groundbreaking. In addition to the mainstreaming of gender perspective, intersectionality, and human rights approach also from its design allowed recognizing inequalities and identifying groups of rural and indigenous women and young women to participate actively.

Conclusion 3. Relevance

The program's design from the outset through participatory planning methodologies, field visits, meetings with national, state, and municipal government institutions, and with the population at the territorial level, including both women and men, in line with lessons learned from previous phases and the 30-year implementation experience of the Program, has led to coherence throughout the implementation process of OP7.

This, coupled with the management capacity of the PMU coordinating efforts at the territorial level to materialize each of the approved community initiatives, has been highly effective. Similarly, the adaptive management carried out during its implementation, for example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the change of coordinator halfway through the project, and the minor adjustments made according to the needs in the community initiatives to improve their implementation, have contributed to the successful conclusion of SGP's OP7.

Conclusion 4. Efficacy and Efficiency

The Program successfully concluded 100% of the 35 initiatives that were funded, resulting in a general benefit for the global environment by restoring 7,867.6 hectares, implementing improved management practices on 8,843.8 hectares, and mitigating 3,438,881.0 metric tons of CO₂e.

Key factors that enabled the achievements of the SGP OP7 included the landscape approach, as well as the transparency mechanisms and quality standards of UNDP and UNOPS for implementing initiatives. The approval of proposals by the National Steering Committee (CDN), the issuance of calls for community-based proposal submissions, the advisory role of CADETI, the involvement of MAG technicians, the timely administrative and field monitoring by the PMU for each initiative, and the community groups' ownership of their initiatives were the main factors contributing to a high level of effectiveness and efficiency.

Additionally, mainstreaming gender perspective throughout the Program's cycle and implementing a responsive and transformative gender strategy focused on reducing gender gaps were crucial factors in achieving high levels of efficacy and efficiency.

Conclusion 5. Efficiency

The landscape approach under the watershed vision has allowed the results of the initiatives to have a broad impact on the territory through the efforts of community organizations, NGOs, national, regional, and municipal government institutions, as well as educational institutions and universities. An important aspect of this OP7 was the landscape strategies developed (CBPL, CBMA, Jesús María Watershed, Barraca Watershed). The incorporation of the middle and lower basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River in this phase helped consolidate conservation, restoration, and sustainable management efforts from the middle parts. However, it will be essential to work on the upper parts of the basins in subsequent phases.

Conclusion 6. Efficacy and Efficiency

The development of strategic projects proves highly effective and efficient as it combines actions aimed at scaling up with projects focusing on energy efficiency, the CAISA model for supporting ASADAS, and the promotion of agro-conservationist livestock practices. These initiatives strengthened projects over a larger territory, reaching a greater number of communities and beneficiaries, including women, men, and youth.

The initiatives supported in this OP7 tested new methods and innovative technologies such as electric fencing for livestock, tilapia production in bio-ponds with renewable energy pumping systems, biodigesters, photovoltaic systems, efficient wood-saving stoves, and beehive control systems with weight

and temperature sensors, among others. These initiatives were based on the needs of the population and have national and global reach. Therefore, it will be crucial to continue and replicate these initiatives in the next phase.

Conclusion 7. Efficacy and Efficiency

The SGP OP7 strongly promoted the enhancement of skills and capacities among women and men within each community organization and NGO beneficiary. They received intensive technical support and guidance from extension technicians of the Ministry of Agriculture (MAG), who served as the technical backbone of community initiatives. Additionally, they worked in conjunction with technicians hired by each initiative. The support from technical staff of the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) in the Biological Corridor Management Units (CBPL and CBMA) also played a crucial role. These collaborative efforts were instrumental in achieving the goals and outcomes of SGP OP7, resulting in strengthened organizations in terms of their structure, production systems, and decision-making processes.

Conclusion 8. Efficacy

The SGP OP7 successfully established bio-entrepreneurship networks as a local market strategy in coordination with municipalities, NGOs, and institutions. These networks enabled community groups to have direct channels for selling their products, either fresh or value-added, resulting in improved family economies and the acceleration of the local economy. It will be important in the next phase to continue strengthening bio-entrepreneurship networks at the regional and national levels.

Conclusion 9. Efficacy

A fundamental part of the sustainability actions promoted by SGP OP7 was the strengthening of organizations. Support was provided for the creation and enhancement of second and third-level organizations, creating platforms for territorial management and decision-making, promoting community governance where women and men actively participate. The program leaves strengthened the confederation of ASADAS, the Local Committee of CBPL, and the Local Committee of CBMA in coordination with government institutions, universities, and NGOs.

Conclusion 10. Efficiency

The monitoring and follow-up carried out by the PMU, through reports, meeting minutes, field information collection visits, and the maintenance of an Excel database, have been effective; however, there is room for improvement for the implementation of OP8. The tracking of the mandatory indicator 5 for GHG emissions was successfully accomplished, with the methodology and data measurement in place.

Conclusion 11. Efficiency

An important part of the Program regarding knowledge management has been the generation of information such as strategies, systematizations, evaluations, photo stories, photographs, among others. This material has been efficiently shared through various channels. It will be important to have updated information on the repository and/or website of the SGP.

Conclusion 12. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The program ensured the participation of rural and indigenous women in vulnerable situations through a gender-sensitive, transformational methodology, employing a participatory approach to efficiently channel resources by working directly with women's groups and mixed groups.

SGP OP7 has strengthened the capacities and empowerment of women for strategic decision-making across three fundamental dimensions:

1. *Facilitating Effective Women's Participation:* The programme has enabled women to take an active role in resource management, strengthening them and bringing about changes at the individual, group, family, and community levels.
2. *Promotion of Decision-Making and Recognition of Rights:* Throughout the programme, decision-making regarding natural resource management was encouraged, alongside the development of nature-based strategies ensuring the recognition and exercise of their rights. Efforts were made to transform power dynamics and gender roles by participating in a project that helped strengthen their capacities and skills for sustainable productive activities. This led to the incubation of community initiatives, the strengthening of social fabric by involving families, and the development of supportive and solidarity-based work groups.
3. *Recognition and Autonomy of Women:* As a result, women have gained greater self-recognition, improving their self-esteem, and actively participating in income-generating activities such as food production adapted to their diet and traditions. Additionally, they have emerged as leaders both within groups and in community settings, being recognized as producers and income generators.

Conclusion 13. Sustainability

The SGP OP7 was designed based on sustainability principles, with each of the approved initiatives being tailored to the needs and priorities of the community groups from the outset.

The strengthening of each project in organizational, technical, productive, commercialization, sales, and marketing aspects, among others, aimed to bolster each initiative and achieve socio-ecological, environmental, and economic resilience.

The work carried out through participatory methodologies, promotion of equality and human rights, allowed community groups to take ownership of their projects, which have contributed to revitalizing their economy post-COVID-19, promoting food self-sufficiency, and sustainable low-carbon production.

5.3. Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Timeframe
1	The Program successfully measured Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions according to international standards and the specific needs of OP7. This measurement was conducted using the same measurement and analysis framework established in the ProDoc, ensuring the availability of final data. For future phases, it is recommended to continue working with this methodology.	PMU/UNDP	OP8
2	As noted throughout the document, young women and men have actively integrated into the work of OP7, from community organizations and NGOs, and have played a fundamental role in the development of initiatives and in achieving goals and results. However, it is recommended that in the next phase, a similar exercise be carried out to the one developed with women, to make visible the incorporation of young people within the initiatives through the allocation of a percentage of resources for youth groups, to develop a prospecting of constituted groups that are in the field of sustainable development. Possibly, youth initiatives could be linked to the BIOFIN initiative, which the PMU has been exploring. This with the	PMU/UNDP	OP8

	possibility that they can continue to integrate into the SGP initiatives in subsequent phases.		
3	<p>The monitoring and evaluation of the Programme through a spreadsheet has been efficient in OP7. However, it is important to consider its automation with the advantages of having information that generates reports and aids decision-making.</p> <p>It would be important for the PMU to learn about successful experiences of the SGP monitoring system in other countries and have the possibility of adapting it for Costa Rica, such as Mexico, which has a monitoring system called monALISA (Monitoring of Agreements, Baseline, Impact, Monitoring, and Administration).</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
4	<p>The landscape approach under the watershed vision has been fundamental in OP7 of the SGP, consolidating management strategies at the territorial level under the water axis, which is interconnected with social, natural, and economic elements. Therefore, it is recommended that in subsequent phases, work on the upper watershed be considered to enhance the work carried out in both the middle and lower watershed.</p> <p>The development of landscape strategies is a management tool that could continue to be promoted in OP8. Likewise, it is recommended to develop the Landscape Strategy for the Grande de Tárcoles River Basin, which includes the upper part of the basin as a reference.</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8
5	<p>An important part of productive initiatives is marketing strategies that influence the income of producers. OP7 developed coordination mechanisms for platforms at the local level; however, to continue benefiting and ensuring the economic sustainability of initiatives in subsequent phases, it will be essential to expand benefits to regional and national markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The development of agreements with companies in the tourism sector such as hotels, restaurants, eco-friendly shops, gourmet stores, among others, could be promoted. ii) It will be important to facilitate connections between OP7 SGP initiatives to create a network of SGP bio-enterprises. iii) Initiatives could be strengthened with the production of a virtual online sales catalog with a direct purchase link, and the incorporation of companies into these efforts is essential. iv) Incorporating a distinctive seal or brand for the region, which could be a collective brand with a greater impact at the regional and national levels, is recommended. 	PMU/UNDP	OP8
6	<p>It is recommended to continue supporting financially strategic projects as they have demonstrated the benefits and scalability for achieving goals, results, and social, environmental, and economic benefits. Additionally, in subsequent phases, a strategic project focused on biodiversity conservation could be promoted based on the work carried out in biological corridors in OP7, in line with the general management plans of protected areas in the region, which</p>	PMU/UNDP	OP8

	could be linked to the environmental public sector. Furthermore, it is recommended to continue replicating proven models in the field of renewable technologies, energy efficiency, and circular economy with projects for the collection of hazardous and recyclable waste.		
7	In the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, it is recommended to continue promoting the Gender Equality Plan, addressing topics such as masculinity, domestic violence, financial education, and microcredit as outlined in the plan. Updating it to meet the needs of incorporating the new territory of OP8 is also advised. Additionally, it is recommended to involve the UNDP Gender Unit in the National Steering Committee (NSC) to provide technical support on the issue. The Petit Committee has been relevant; however, their permanent participation in the NSC will be crucial. Likewise, it will be essential for the PMU, with the support of UNDP, to coordinate actions with the Gender Units of MAG, SINAC, Mideplan, MINAE, INDER, INA, and INAMU.	PMU/UNDP	OP8
8	The Programme has a wealth of information and methodologies that have been disseminated in various spaces. However, it would be important to gather and update the information in the repository of the SGP OP7 on the official website, with the aim of integrating the information, which will undoubtedly be valuable for institutions, universities, and for the SGP itself in Costa Rica and other countries where the SGP is present. Additionally, the development of a quarterly newsletter of the SGP is recommended, targeting governmental institutions (national, state, municipal), organizations, and universities. This newsletter could be prepared by university interns through professional internships or social service programs.	PMU/UNDP	OP8

5.4. Lessons Learned

- The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant learning experience. OP7 had to adapt to restrictions and continued its implementation through virtual meetings and work, encouraging the continuation of field initiatives.
- The close relationship between the PMU and community groups has been the driving force behind achieving the results of initiatives supported by the PMU OP7, with continuous accompaniment and guidance provided to them.
- In a pandemic and post-pandemic environment, the productive initiatives of the SGP OP7 helped reduce the economic and social impact, making families more resilient.
- Through strategic projects, the SGPOP7 achieved innovation in low-carbon technology, strengthened the CAISA model for ASADAS assistance, and promoted silvopastoral systems that have bolstered the business systems of producer families while improving the environment. These experiences are undoubtedly replicable nationally and internationally.
- The partnership that the SGP OP7 fostered with the private sector for the transformation of tragic plastics into ecoblocks was undoubtedly an innovative approach that can continue to be replicated.
- Strengthening initiatives focused on food security and nutrition helped address issues impacting family and community health, promoting new habits of healthy and nutritious eating. The pandemic highlighted the benefits of local production through the development of short supply chains.
- Community-based sustainable tourism initiatives have promoted biodiversity conservation as an asset for rural community economies, with their integration into entrepreneurship networks providing a comprehensive solution benefiting all parties involved.
- The focus on youth can be further reinforced in subsequent phases by improving quality of life, emphasizing the creation of green jobs with the application of clean technologies for young people, as they represent the generational succession for initiatives in the coming years.
- Academic institutions such as universities have been an important part of the OP7 work process, engaging with communities by providing advice and linking improvement actions within the enterprises.
- Allocating a percentage of the grants to women's groups has allowed them to become involved in productive activities and to effectively manage resources. Being part of an initiative where they make decisions has been transformative, empowering them and providing direct benefits to their families.
- Community-level technical assistance is essential for the success of projects, and having technicians from the MAG as allies at the territorial level has been part of the success of the SGP OP7.
- The initial diagnostic work with community groups, the review and improvement of their proposals, the support provided by the PMU, the strengthening of capacities, and the involvement

of institutions around the initiative ensure that the initiatives are aligned with needs, incorporating elements of sustainability.

- The establishment of childcare facilities in safe spaces during workshops has been greatly supportive, allowing women to participate in training sessions while focusing on the activities. Additionally, offering training sessions during times when women have fewer work responsibilities has been a valuable learning experience.
- Exchange tours among producers have been highly valued by community groups as spaces for peer-to-peer learning.
- The selection of community groups through open calls and committee sessions, coupled with transparent resource management, has fostered credibility for the SGP OP7.
- The inclusion of both male and female livestock farmers in sustainable silvopastoral practices has transformed their perspective towards landscape protection and conservation.
- Communicating the progress and successes of community initiatives through social media platforms has been well-received by the population, resulting in greater visibility at the territorial level.
- Community initiatives undergo maturation processes that extend beyond the project completion time. Nevertheless, the SGP OP7 has fostered a network of institutions operating in the region, and beneficiaries are engaging in collaborative efforts, thereby strengthening the initiatives.
- Involving families in the initiatives has facilitated the ownership of community projects, with each family witnessing economic, environmental, and social benefits.
- Validating technology and agricultural practices through the implementation of demonstration models (such as: hive monitoring systems with weight and temperature sensors, electric fencing for livestock, renewable energy-powered pumping systems, solar-powered tilapia production in bio-tanks, biodigesters for electricity and organic fertilizer production, and photovoltaic systems) has served as a catalyst for the region's sustainable management. These models facilitate the exchange of experiences not only among the projects of the SGP OP7 but also among the institutions involved in the processes.

Anexos

Anexo 1. Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Individual Contractor Agreement)

Title: Project Management Support – Advisor
Project: MSP OP7 Costa Rica

Duty station: Home Based (with
travel to Costa Rica)**Section/Unit:** SGP
Costa Rica, GMS, SDC, NYPO **Contract/Level:**
ICS-11

Supervisor: Kirk Bayabos, SDC
Cluster Manager, P-5

General Background

UNOPS supports partners to build a better future by providing services that increase the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of peace building, humanitarian and development projects. Mandated as a central resource of the United Nations, UNOPS provides sustainable project management, procurement and infrastructure services to a wide range of governments, donors and United Nations organizations.

New York Portfolio Office (NYPO) supports the United Nations Secretariat, as well as other New York-based United Nations organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners in the delivery of UNOPS mandate in project management, infrastructure management, and procurement management. Sustainable Development Cluster (SDC) supports diverse partners with their peacebuilding, humanitarian and development operations.

It was formed by combining the following portfolios: Grants Management Services (GMS), UN Technology Support Services (UNTSS), Development and Special Initiatives Portfolio (DSIP) It provides Services to partners' programmes that are designed, structured, and managed with a global perspective and primarily serving partners that are headquartered in New York. The SDC has a footprint of approximately 125 countries. UNOPS has signed an agreement with the UNDO CO of Costa Rica to implement the project activities for the Small Grants Programme. In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full- and medium-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of the project. This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the TE of the full-sized project *Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Costa Rica* (PIMS 6251) implemented through the UNOPS as Implementing Partner. The project started on 02 July 2020 and is in its 3rd year of implementation. The TE process must follow the guidance outlined in the document 'Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects'¹. The incumbent of this position will be a personnel of UNOPS under its full responsibility.

¹ https://erc.undp.org/pdf/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf

The Seventh Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Costa Rica (July 2020-June 2024) is being implemented in five landscapes: The i) Jesus Maria and ii) Barranca river basins; iii) the Montes de Aguacate Biological Corridor (MACB), iv) lower Grande de Tarcoles river basin and the v) Paso Las Lapas Biological Corridor. The total area covered by these landscapes is approximately 199,627 hectares. The project aims to enable communities and organizations in these target landscapes to take collective action, through a participatory landscape planning and management approach, to enhance socio-ecological resilience by producing local and global environmental and sustainable development benefits. SGP is supporting specific community-based actions in each landscape by financing small-scale projects run by local community organizations and coordinating them within the priority landscapes to achieve landscape-scale impacts. This phase support a total of 35 projects (9 under implementation, 8 on evaluating and 18 closed)

The project is addressing a series of development challenges in an intervention area home to over 420,000 people, where human settlements are combined with substantial forest patches and varied ecosystems, agricultural production, grazing pastures, protected areas (PA) and other land uses. The main threats to be overcome and which are causing the rapid deterioration of socio-ecological resilience in the target landscapes are: Changes in land use and the progressive degradation of natural resources (biodiversity, habitat, soil, water, etc.) from over-exploitation, pollution, introduction of exotic invasive species and climate change; habitat loss, caused by land use changes in production landscapes, threatens biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity; traditional activities, such as extensive cattle ranching and coffee farming, historically, have heavily impacted forest cover in these landscapes, causing the fragmentation of continuous forest blocks, the propensity for forest fires and reduction in the quality and quantity of water resources for human and agricultural consumption. All these effects have impacted on agricultural productivity, income-generating options and the well-being of rural and peri-urban populations, especially affecting more marginalized groups with more limited access to land, ecosystem services, goods and benefits and reduced participation in decision-making bodies.

The project not only responds to these challenges, but is designed to consolidate, improve and scale-up upon the solid results, best practices and lessons learned during the last operational phases in GEF-5 (Jesus Maria river basin) and GEF-6 (Jesus Maria and Barranca river basins) engendering a multifocal and multisectoral approach driven by community organizations and with the guidance and technical assistance from state actors, universities and the private sector.

Main Objective: To build the socio-ecological and economic resilience of the Jesus Maria and Barranca watersheds, the lower and middle watershed of the Grande de Tarcoles river and the Paso Las Lapas Biological Corridor in Costa Rica through community-based initiatives for global environmental benefits and sustainable development.

The above objective will be achieved through five outcomes organized around two components, set out as following:

COMPONENT 1: Resilient landscapes for sustainable development and global environmental protection.

Outcome 1.1: Ecosystem services within targeted landscapes are enhanced through multi-functional land-use systems.

Outcome 1.2: The sustainability of production systems in the target landscapes is strengthened through integrated agro-ecological practices.

Outcome 1.3: Community livelihoods in the target landscapes become more resilient by developing eco-friendly small-scale community enterprises and improving market access.

Outcome 1.4: Increased adoption (development, demonstration and financing) of renewable and energy efficient technologies at community level.

PROJECT COMPONENT 2: Landscape governance and adaptive management for upscaling and replication

Outcome 2.1: Multi-stakeholder bio-entrepreneurship networks established and operational in the target landscapes for landscape governance and coordinated market access.

The total budget is USD 7,471,000, of which USD 2,081,945 is financed by the GEF and USD 5,390,000 in co-financing.

Purpose and Scope of Assignment

This TE responds to current evaluation plan of UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) in Costa Rica and the M&E project plan, which indicates that upon completing all the main products and project activities, the evaluation process must begin three months before operational project closure, in order to ensure that the evaluation mission will be carried out while the project team is still on site ensuring that project is close enough to completion for the evaluation to reach conclusions on key aspects such as project sustainability.

The objective of this final evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The final evaluation report promotes accountability and transparency, and evaluates the extent of the project's achievements. Likewise, it is expected that this evaluation process can corroborate the implementation (or not) of the recommendations issued in the mid-term review (MTR) that was carried out in 2022 and the audit finding that was carried out in 2023.

In accordance with the guidelines of the Guide for conducting final evaluations of projects supported by UNDP and financed by the GEF, this evaluation process should contribute to:

- Promote accountability and transparency;
- Synthesize lessons that can help improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF-funded and UNDP-supported initiatives; and improve the sustainability of benefits and support the overall improvement of UNDP programming;
- Evaluate and document project results and the contribution of these results to the achievement of GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits;
- Measure the degree of convergence of the project with other priorities within the UNDP country programme, including poverty reduction, strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change,

reducing disaster risk and vulnerability, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women's empowerment and support for human rights.

This evaluation must cover the entire project execution period since its implementation began in 2020 and must attempt to answer the following questions:

Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF Focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national level?			
1. To what extent was the project aligned with national development and stakeholder priorities?	Level of coherence between the project objective and the national priorities and the different interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project counterparts. Project documents, national policies or strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis. Interviews with interested parties.
2. To what extent did the project incorporate different interest groups at the local and national level in the development of the project?	Level of involvement of interest groups at the local and national level in the development of the project (work sessions, workshops, meetings, among others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff. Project counterparts. Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis. Interviews with interested parties.
3. Was the project aligned with the strategic priorities of UNDP in Costa Rica?	Level of coherence between the project objective and UNDP strategic priorities (UNDAF, CPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic priority documents. Project document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis.
4. To what extent did the project contribute to the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and their goals?	Links between the objective of the project and the elements of the convention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventions website. Project document. National biodiversity strategy of Costa Rica. 	Document analysis.
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
5. What have been the main results obtained by the project with respect to what was planned?	Level of progress in achieving the goals at the end of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff. Project counterparts. Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field view. Document analysis.
6. What were the main factors that contributed to the project results?	Level of documentation or management of risks, assumptions and factors of the project context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff. Project counterparts. Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field view. Document analysis.

7. What were the main risks and barriers faced in achieving the project objective and the impact on overall environmental benefits?	Presence, evaluation and management of project risks and assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
8. Have the planned products been delivered? How have these contributed to the expected effects and objective of the project?	Level of progress in the delivery of the products established by the project. Existence of the logical framework that allows identifying traceability between products, effects and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
9. Have unexpected results been achieved beyond those planned?	Existence of unforeseen results during project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
Coherence: Is the project compatible with other interventions in the country and with environmental and development policies at the local and national level?			
10. To what extent do other interventions or policies support or detract from the results sought by the project?	Level of coherence between the project objective and the national priorities and the different interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project counterparts. • Project documents, national policies or strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis. • Interviews with interested parties.
11. To what extent does the project support or detract from other interventions or policies?	Existence of unforeseen results during project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project counterparts. • Project documents, national policies or strategies. • Project staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in line with international and national norms and standards?			
12. To what extent has the project implementation and execution strategy been efficient and profitable?	Adequate implementation structure and mechanisms for coordination and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
13. What was the co-financing of the project?	Amount of resources reported as co-financing of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with project staff. • Document analysis.
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-political, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			

14. To what extent are the project results likely to depend on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that the necessary financial resources will be available to sustain project results once GEF funding ends?	Financial requirements to maintain project benefits Level of expected financial resources available to support the maintenance of project benefits Potential for additional financial resources to support the maintenance of project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
15. Do national counterparts have an adequate level of “ownership” of the results	Level of initiative and commitment shown by national counterparts in project activities and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
that ensures that the benefits of the project are maintained?			
16. Do national counterparts have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are sustained?	Level of technical capabilities displayed by national counterparts in accordance with the levels required to sustain the results and benefits of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
17. To what extent do the project results depend on sociopolitical factors?	Existence of socio-political risks that affect the sustainability of the results and benefits of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
18. Are there environmental risks that could undermine the future flow of project impacts and overall environmental benefits?	Existence of environmental risks that affect the sustainability of the results and benefits of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
Gender equality and women's empowerment: How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?			
19. How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?	Level of progress or advancement in the implementation of the project's gender plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.
20. To what extent did the project's gender outcomes contribute to the project's biodiversity outcomes?	Links between project objective and gender results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project staff. • Project counterparts. • Project documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field view. • Document analysis.

The TE will assess project performance against expectations set out in the project's Logical Framework/Results Framework (see ToR Annex A). The TE will assess results according to the criteria outlined in the Guidance for TEs of UNDP-supported GEF-financed Projects².

The Findings section of the TE report will cover the topics listed below. A full outline of the TE report's content is provided in ToR Annex C.

The asterisk “(*)” indicates criteria for which a rating is required.

Findings

- i. Project Design/Formulation
- National priorities and country driven-ness
 - Theory of Change
 - Gender equality and women's empowerment

² <https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/guidelines/gef-project-evaluation-guidelines>

- Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)
 - Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators
 - Assumptions and Risks
 - Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design
 - Planned stakeholder participation
 - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
 - Management arrangements
- ii. Project Implementation
- Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
 - Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements
 - Project Finance and Co-finance
 - Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (*), implementation (*), and overall assessment of M&E (*)
 - Implementing Agency (UNDP) (*) and Executing Agency (*), overall project oversight/implementation and execution (*)
 - Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)
- iii. Project Results
- Assess the achievement of outcomes against indicators by reporting on the level of progress for each objective and outcome indicator at the time of the TE and noting final achievements
 - Relevance (*), Effectiveness (*), Efficiency (*) and overall project outcome (*)
 - Sustainability: financial (*), socio-political (*), institutional framework and governance (*), environmental (*), overall likelihood of sustainability (*)
 - Country ownership
 - Gender equality and women's empowerment
 - Cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, improved governance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster prevention and recovery, human rights, capacity development, South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism, etc., as relevant)
 - GEF Additionality
 - Catalytic Role / Replication Effect
 - Progress to impact

Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- The Project Management Support – Advisor will include a summary of the main findings of the TE report. Findings should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data.
- The section on conclusions will be written in light of the findings. Conclusions should be comprehensive and balanced statements that are well substantiated by evidence and logically connected to the TE findings. They should highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project, respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important

problems or issues pertinent to project beneficiaries, UNDP and the GEF, including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Recommendations should provide concrete, practical, feasible and targeted recommendations directed to the intended users of the evaluation about what actions to take and decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation.
- The TE report should also include lessons that can be taken from the evaluation, including best practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success that can provide knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (programmatic and evaluation methods used, partnerships, financial leveraging, etc.) that are applicable to other GEF and UNDP interventions. When possible, the Project Management Support – Advisor should include examples of good practices in project design and implementation.
- It is important for the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the TE report to incorporate gender equality and empowerment of women.

The TE report will include an Evaluation Ratings Table, as shown below

ToR Table 2: Evaluation Ratings Table for Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Costa Rica

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating ³
M&E design at entry	
M&E Plan Implementation	
Overall Quality of M&E	
Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	
Effectiveness	
Efficiency	
Overall Project Outcome Rating	
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	
Socio-political/economic	
Institutional framework and governance	

³ Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, Implementation/Oversight & Execution, Relevance are rated on a 6-point scale: 6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated on a 4-point scale: 4=Likely (L), 3=Moderately Likely (ML), 2=Moderately Unlikely (MU), 1=Unlikely (U)

Environmental	
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	

Monitoring and Progress Controls

The TE report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The TE evaluator will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, project reports including annual, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The TE evaluator will review the baseline and midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at the CEO endorsement and midterm stages and the terminal Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the TE field mission begins.

The TE evaluator is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach⁴ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts, the UNDP Country Office, the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) officer, Project Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE⁵ Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Government of Costa Rica institutions as a Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), National System of Conservation Area (SINAC), Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (Mideplan), (Advisory Committee on land degradation (CADETI), Ministry of Agriculture (MAG)), senior officials and task team, local communities in their territories, women groups, key experts and consultants in subject area, National Steering Committee members (including UNDP Resident Representative and/or Deputy Resident Representative), academia and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the TE evaluator is expected to conduct field missions to communities linked to the project.

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

⁴ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

⁵ For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, virtual sessions, field visits and data to be used in the TE must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, and the Project Management Support – Advisor.

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

Duration of Work

The total duration of the TE will be approximately 30 days over a time period of 11 weeks starting on January 29th 2024. The tentative TE timeframe is as follows:

Timeframe	Activity
January 15 th 2024	Preparation period for the Project Management Support – Advisor(handover of documentation)
January 29 th 2024 (3 days)	Document review and preparation of TE Inception Report
February 7 th 2024	Finalization and Validation of TE Inception Report
12 days (included 7 days of field mission February 27 th 2024	TE mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits, etc.
March 1 st 2024	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings; earliest end of TE mission
10 days March 15 th 2024	Preparation of draft TE report
March 22 th 2024	Circulation of draft TE report for comments
March 27 th 2024	Incorporation of comments on draft TE report into Audit Trail & finalization of TE report
March 29 th 2024	Expected date of full TE completion

Options for site visits should be provided in the TE Inception Report.

Deliverables

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	TE Inception Report	Project Management Support – Advisor clarifies objectives, methodology and timing of the TE	No later than 2 weeks before the TE mission: January 15 th 2024	TE evaluator submits Inception Report to Commissioning Unit and project management

2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of TE mission: February 21 st 2024	TE evaluator presents to Commissioning Unit and project management
3	Draft TE Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on report content in ToR Annex C) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of end of TE mission: March 6 th 2024	TE evaluator submits to Commissioning Unit; reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP
4	Final TE Report ^{6*} + Audit Trail	Revised final report and TE Audit trail in which the TE details how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final TE report (See template in ToR Annex H)	Within 1 week of receiving comments on draft report: March 27 th 2024	TE evaluator submits both documents to the Commissioning Unit

*Drafts reports are expected to be presented in Spanish for the national stakeholder’s review. **The final TE report must be presented in Spanish and English.**

The principal responsibility for managing the TE resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project’s TE is the UNDP Country Office.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the Project Management Support – Advisor. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Project Management Support – Advisor to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

Payment Schedule

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft TE report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

⁶ All final TE reports will be quality assessed by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). Details of the IEO’s quality assessment of decentralized evaluations can be found in Section 6 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines access at: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-6.shtml>

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%⁷:

- The final TE report includes all requirements outlined in the TE TOR and is in accordance with the TE guidance.
- The final TE report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other TE reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

Travel

- Travel will be required to *Costa Rica* during the TE mission;
- The BSAFE course must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel;
- The Project Management Support – Advisor is responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when traveling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director.
- The Project Management Support – Advisor is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under: <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>

Qualifications and Experience

One independent consultant will conduct the TE - with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally. The consultant will be responsible for results of this TE, this includes overall design, definite and conduct methodological process and writing of the TE report, etc. Also, is responsible to include the gender perspective in all the TE process.

⁷ The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the Project Management Support – Advisor as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the Project Management Support – Advisor, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details:

https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default

The evaluator cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation and/or implementation (including the writing of the project document), must not have conducted this project's Mid-Term Review and should not have a conflict of interest with the project's related activities.

Education

Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in the areas of environment and sustainable development or other closely related fields. A Bachelor's degree in combination with two additional years' experience is acceptable.







Work Experience



- Minimum of seven (7) years of experience in environmental management, local sustainable development, biodiversity, climate change/adaptation, land degradation, or a related field;
- Minimum one (1) year of experience in evaluating projects for GEF/UNDP is required;
- Relevant experience with results-based management evaluation methodologies is desirable;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios is desirable;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to BD (biodiversity), CCM (climate change mitigation), and LD (land degradation) is desirable;
- Experience working in Latin America will be considered an asset;
- Experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis is required;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within the United Nations System will be considered an asset.

d. Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English and Spanish is required.

e. Key Competencies

	Develops and implements sustainable business strategies, thinks long term and externally in order to positively shape the organization. Anticipates and perceives the impact and implications of future decisions and activities on other parts of the organization.
	Treats all individuals with respect; responds sensitively to differences and encourages others to do the same. Upholds organizational and ethical norms. Maintains high standards of trustworthiness. Role model for diversity and inclusion.
	Acts as a positive role model contributing to the team spirit. Collaborates and supports the development of others. For people managers only: Acts as positive leadership role model, motivates, directs and inspires others to succeed, utilizing appropriate leadership styles
	Demonstrates understanding of the impact of one's own role on all partners and always puts the end beneficiary first. Builds and maintains strong external relationships and is a competent partner for others (if relevant to the role).
	Efficiently establishes an appropriate course of action for self and/or others to accomplish a goal. Actions lead to total task accomplishment through concern for quality in all areas. Sees opportunities and takes the initiative to act on them. Understands that responsible use of resources maximizes our impact on our beneficiaries.
	Open to change and flexible in a fast paced environment. Effectively adapts its own approach to suit changing circumstances or requirements. Reflects on experiences and modifies own behavior. Performance is consistent, even under pressure. Always pursues continuous improvements.

	<p>Evaluates data and courses of action to reach logical, pragmatic decisions. Takes an unbiased, rational approach with calculated risks. Applies innovation and creativity to problem-solving.</p>
	<p>Expresses ideas or facts in a clear, concise and open manner. Communication indicates a consideration for the feelings and needs of others. Actively listens and proactively shares knowledge. Handles conflict effectively, by overcoming differences of opinion and finding common ground.</p>

Contract holder (Name/Title):	
Signature	Date

Annex 2. Evaluation Grading Table and Evaluation Rating Scales

Terminal Evaluation Rating Scales

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, Implementation/Oversight, Execution, Relevance	Sustainability ratings:
6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS): exceeds expectations and/or no shortcomings 5 = Satisfactory (S): meets expectations and/or no or minor shortcomings 4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS): more or less meets expectations and/or some shortcomings 3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): somewhat below expectations and/or significant shortcomings 2 = Unsatisfactory (U): substantially below expectations and/or major shortcomings 1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe shortcomings Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment	4 = Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3 = Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks to sustainability 2 = Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks to sustainability 1 = Unlikely (U): severe risks to sustainability Unable to Assess (U/A): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability

Monitoring & Evaluation Ratings Scale

Rating	Description
6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no short comings; quality of M&E design/implementation exceeded expectations
5 = Satisfactory (S)	There were minor shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation met expectations
4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were moderate shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation more or less met expectations
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation was somewhat lower than expected
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings; quality of M&E design/implementation was substantially lower than expected
1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in M&E design/implementation
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design/implementation.

Implementation/Oversight and Execution Ratings Scale

Rating	Description
6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution exceeded expectations
5 = Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution met expectations.
4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution more or less met expectations.
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution was somewhat lower than expected
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings; quality of implementation/execution was substantially lower than expected
1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation/execution
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation and execution

Outcome Ratings Scale - Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency

Rating	Description
6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings
5 = Satisfactory (S)	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings
4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings
2 = Unsatisfactory (U)	Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.
1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements

Sustainability Ratings Scale

Ratings	Description
4 = Likely (L)	There are little or no risks to sustainability
3 = Moderately Likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability
2 = Moderately Unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability
1 = Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability
Unable to Assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability

Annex 3. Assessment Mission Itinerary

Misión de Campo			
Monday, March 18th	Tuesday, March 19th	Wednesday, March 20th	Thursday, March 21st
Visit Cantón Santa Ana:	Visit San Ramón-CBMA area:	Visit San Mateo Orotina area:	Visit cost CBPL and Esparza area:
UNDP Office. Information review.	FUBONO Sustainable Tourism Network of the Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor.	ASOMURO Women Producers of "Golden Milk".	Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Bijagual de Turrubares (BIJAGUAL).
Association for Development "Friendly Hands" La Promesa, Santa Ana Canton, Brasil District	Panthera Costa Rica Electric Fence Installation Project SINAC-MAG Working Group	Orotina Canton Agricultural Center / Esparza Canton Agricultural Center	ASOPENAS: Women in the Sustainable Use of Medicinal Plant Dyes
Santa Ana Sustainable Producers Association - APSSA		APEMEGO: Livestock Producers Association of Orotina	ADI Cerritos: Vegetable Production

Annex 4. List of people interviewed

Virtual Interviews

Monday February 5, 2024

1. Eduardo Lee. MAG
2. Nuria Mora. PAP
3. Saskia Rodríguez. Mideplan

Tuesday February 6, 2024

4. Paola Hernández. CINAT
5. Rosanna De Luca, UNOPS
6. Ingrid Sánchez. UNOPS

Wednesday February 7, 2024

- 7 Elena Vargas. PNUD
- 8 Gabriela Calderón. Consultora
- 9 Marlon Salazar. UNED

Thursday February 8, 2024

10. Carlos Montenegro
11. José Mario
12. Kifah Sasa

Friday february 9, 2024

13. David Carbajal
14. Karol Murillo
15. Aitor Llodo

Monday February 12, 2024

16. Carlos Espinoza
17. Marco Chaves
18. Rafaella Sánchez
19. Lil Soto
20. José Daniel

Tuesday February 13, 2024

21. Ariana Araujo
22. María Isabel Madrigal
23. Adriana Cecilia Méndez Cedreño

Thursday February 14, 2024

24. Pamela Campos
25. Warner Rodríguez
26. Charles Dixon

Friday february 16, 2024

27. Leda Ramos
28. Diana Salvemini

Field Mission

Febraury 19, 2024

- 29 Raquel Hernández. Municipalidad Santa Ana
30. Yuneski Castro. Municipalidad Santa Ana

Febraury 20, 2024

31. José Antonio González Ruiz. MAG
32. Ana Yanay Jiménez Cordero. SINAC
33. Jorge Aleno Vinda A. SINAC

Febraury 21, 2024

34. Enid Chaverri. MINAE

Work groups

Project 1.

Asociación por el Desarrollo Manos Amigas
La promesa, Cantón Santa Ana, Distrito Brasil

1. Elizabeth Elizondo Cordero Salazar
2. María Lourdes Cordero Salazar
3. Sidalí Elizondo Muñoz
4. Gilberto Granados Cordero

Project 2. APSA

5. Ana Carolina Duran F.
6. Jesús Castro López
7. Ana Ibis Cordero
8. Gladys Sandi Jiménez
9. Oona Jiménez Espinoza
10. Anabelle Azofeifa Sandí
11. Juan Miguel Córdoba Montoya
12. Héctor Azofeifa Ureño
13. Rodrigo Montoya Lazcares
14. Miguel Céspedes Castro
15. Karla Rodríguez Calderón
16. Nathalia Céspedes
17. Roger Moran Mora
18. M. Azofeifa Ureña
19. Heiwer Morales Ramírez
20. Oscar Uriel Obare G.

Project 3. Fubono

21. Hugo Villalobos
22. Erick Hernández
23. Luis Daniel Arias Anaya
24. Romáin Arias Arias

Project 4. Cabras de Phantera

25. Sandra Rodrigue Vázquez
26. José Luis Rodríguez

Project 5. ASOMURO

27. Alba Quiroz santa María
28. Nohemí María Carranza Chávez

Project 6. Centro Agrícola Cantonal de Orotina

29. Hubert Picado

Project 7. Centro agrícola cantonal de Esparza

30. Eduardo Badía Loria
31. Rori Moreno Sandín
32. Manuel Ávila
33. Rubén Ledesma

Project 8. APEMEGO

34. Sonia Serrano

Project 9. BIJAGUAL

35. Felipa Silverio Vázquez
36. Ariana Zamora Rodríguez
37. Johana Chevez Sandín
38. Ámbar Rubí Rubí
39. Sinia Chávez Chavarría

Project 10. ASOPENÑAS

40. Edith González Arroyo
41. Roxana Arroyo Soto

Project 11. ADI Cerritos

42. Maribel Hernández
43. Nohemí Gatgns
44. Rómulo Fernández
45. Víctor Salazar Moreno. MAG

Annex 5. The Evaluation Criteria Matrix

Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Project Design/Formulation			
Results Framework Analysis: Project Logic and Strategy, Indicators			
Was the project designed to address the country's priorities?	Evidence that the project addressed national priorities. Evidence that objectives and components were focused on results.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports, National Priorities.	Documentary Review
Were the objectives and components of the project clear, feasible, and achievable within its timeframe? Is the project's theory of change clearly articulated?	Identification of the project's theory of change.	ProDoc; Theory of Change, Results Framework; PIR; Reports.	Documentary Review
How were the indicators in the Results Framework, are they SMART?	Evidence of SMART Indicators.	ProDoc; Results Framework; PIR; Reports.	Documentary Review
Assumptions and risks			
How were assumptions and risks articulated in the PIF and project document?	Evidence of assumptions and risks in the project design documents.	ProDoc; Theory of Change, Results Framework; PIR; Reports.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Were the assumptions logical and sound? How did the identified risks help determine the planned activities and outcomes?	Evidence of assumptions and risks focussed on the project management	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports, National Priorities.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How did the project address externalities (such as climate change, economic crises, political changes, among others)?	Evidence that risks and assumptions helped mitigate issues related to externalities.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Incorporation of lessons from other relevant projects into the project design			
How were the lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into the project design?	Evidence of incorporation of lessons learned from other projects into the project design.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Planned Stakeholder Engagement			
Did the project design take into account those who would be affected by project decisions and those who could contribute?	Evidence of participation and identification of those who would be affected and those who could contribute.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings

Was there a stakeholder engagement plan, and how were the planned interactions with stakeholders organized?	Stakeholder engagement plan	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How were partnership agreements, roles, and responsibilities identified? Were there any negotiations with stakeholders before project approval?	Evidence of agreements with stakeholders.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review and Interviews
Links between the project and other interventions within the sector.			
Did the project establish links with other complementary interventions? Was there planned coordination with other relevant projects/initiatives funded by the GEF?	Evidence of links and coordination with other projects supported by the GEF.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review and Interviews
Gender Sensitivity in Project Design			
How were gender considerations integrated into the project design to promote gender equality and women's empowerment?	Evidence of a gender analysis in the project design. Gender action plan and implementation plan with budget from the project design.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review and Interviews
How was the project aligned with national policies and strategies on gender equality?	Alignment of the project with gender policies and strategies.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How were gender issues integrated into the project's strategy, logic, and theory of change, including how advancing gender equality and women's empowerment will improve the project's environmental results?	Evidence of the integration of gender issues in the project and how the project aimed to improve environmental outcomes.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
What gender expertise was utilized in the design and development of the project? Was it sufficient?	Evidence of the expertise utilized in gender in the design and development of the project (consultant/internal capacity).	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How realistic was the gender marker rating assigned to the project document by UNDP? Is it supported by the findings of the gender analysis?	Evidence of the gender marker being realistic.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Social and Environmental Safeguards			
Was any environmental and social risk identified in accordance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and the management measures described in the project or any management plan?	Environmental and social risks identified during the design and implementation of the project.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review and Interviews
Project Implementation Adaptive Management			
Was there adaptive management of the project during its implementation?	Changes implemented that improved the achievement of project results.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Evaluation; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings

Were there significant changes to the project as a result of the Mid-Term Review recommendations or as a result of other review procedures? Were the project changes articulated in writing and then considered and approved by the Project Board?	Changes in the project. Approval of changes by the Project Board.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review and Interviews
Participación real de las partes interesadas y acuerdos de asociación			
How did local and national government actors support the project objectives? What role did they have in the decision-making of the project? How did you support the implementation of the project?	Evidence of participation of institutions.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How does the actual stakeholder interaction compare to what is planned in the project document and Stakeholder Engagement Plan?	Participation plan. Evidence of real interaction. Signed agreements.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Financing and co-financing of projects			
Were there variations between planned and actual expenses, and the reasons for those variations? Were potential sources of co-financing identified?	Expense table Co-financing letters.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Co-finance Table; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
What were the main findings of the audits?	Audit review Response to audits.	ProDoc; Audits; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Have there been any changes in funding allocations as a result of budget reviews, the appropriateness and relevance of those reviews?	The project budget Budget reviews.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Budget; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Are there differences in the expected and actual level of co-financing?	Co-financing letters.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Budget; Co-finance Table; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How did the materialization of co-financing help the results and/or sustainability of the project?	Evidence of co-financing in project activities.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Budget; Co-finance Table; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Monitoring and Evaluation: initial design, implementation and general evaluation			
How was the M&E plan? Was it well conceived, practical and sufficient? Were you articulate enough to monitor results and track progress toward achieving goals?	Evidence of the implemented monitoring plan.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Monitoring Plan; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Did the M&E plan include a baseline, SMART indicators and data analysis systems, evaluation studies at specific times to evaluate results?	Evidence of tools used Evidence from evaluation studies.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Monitoring Plan; Indicators; Results Framework; Project Evaluations; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings

Do you think the M&E budget in the project document was sufficient?	Evidence of resources allocated to M&E.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Monitoring Plan; Results Framework; Project Evaluations; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Did the project provide monitoring of specific GEF indicators?	Evidence of indicator monitoring.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Indicators; Results Framework; Project Evaluations; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How were the perspectives of the women and men involved monitored and evaluated? How was the participation of relevant groups (including women, indigenous peoples, children, older people, disabled people and the poor) in the project and the impact on them monitored?	Gender Strategy and Plan	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Indicators; Gender Strategy and Plan; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Did the project require the Theory of Change to be reviewed and adjusted during implementation?	Evidence of Theory of Change adjustments	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Indicators; Theory of change; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Was the Project Board involved in M&E activities?	Evidence of the Board's participation in M&E activities.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
UNDP implementation/monitoring and Implementing Partner execution, overall project implementation/execution, coordination and operational issues			
How did UNDP support the project activities?	Supporting evidence from UNDP.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
What activities were strengthened by UNOPS activities?	Supporting evidence from UNOPS.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Risk management			
Were there any social, environmental, financial, operational, organizational, political, regulatory, strategic, security and other risks that emerged or evolved during the implementation of the Project?	Evidence of risks during project implementation.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Were new risks identified annually? How did those risks affect the implementation of the project? What systems and tools were used to identify, prioritize, monitor and manage those risks?	Evidence of other risks managed during project implementation.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Relevance			
To what extent was the project aligned with national development policies and stakeholder priorities?	Alignment between the project objective and national priorities.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; National Priorities.	Documentary Review

To what extent did the project incorporate different interest groups at the local and national levels in the development of the project?	Level of participation of local and national interest groups.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Was the project aligned with the strategic priorities of UNDP in Costa Rica? with the UNDP Strategic Plan, the CPD, the UNDAF, the SDGs, gender strategies, among others.	Alignment with national strategies, Sustainable Development Goals and UNDP Country Program, UNDAF. SDG, gender strategy, among others.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; UNDP priorities.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Is the project relevant in terms of the country's priorities and needs to address possible impacts on Costa Rica's biodiversity and ecosystems?	Alignment with national strategies, UNDP Sustainable Development Goals and Country Program	ProDoc; PIR; Results Framework; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
To what extent does the project contribute to the commitments of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and their objectives?	Links between the project objective and international agreements.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; International Agreements	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
What political, legal, economic, institutional changes, etc. was there during the implementation of the project? How did the project respond? Did adjustments have to be made?	Evidence of changes that led to adjustments to the project.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
To what extent did the components of the project, as well as its other characteristics, choice of partners, structure, implementation mechanisms, scope, budget, use of resources, allow the achievement of the objectives?	Evidence of scope of project objectives.	ProDoc; PIR; Results Framework; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How does the project support the biodiversity focal area and the strategic priorities of the GEF?	Alignment with the biodiversity focal area and GEF strategic priorities.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; GEF priorities.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Does the intervention correspond with the priorities and needs of the project partners and the beneficiary population?	Contribution to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary population.	ProDoc; PIR; Results Framework; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How did the project address gender issues from its design? Was a gender analysis carried out prior to implementation? How have gender and women's empowerment issues been addressed within the implementation of the Project?	Evidence of the inclusion of gender issues in the project and of gender analysis.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Indicators; Gender Strategy and Plan; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
How have human rights, disability and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion) issues been addressed and implemented?	Evidence of cross-cutting themes addressed in the project.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, and Meetings
Effectiveness			
What have been the main results obtained by the project with respect to what was planned?	Level of progress in achieving the objectives at the end of the project.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups

		Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	
What were the main factors that contributed to the project results?	Evidence of factors that contributed to project results.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What were the main limiting factors, risks and barriers faced in achieving the project objective and the impact on the overall environmental benefits?	Presence, assessment and management of project risks and assumptions.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
According to plan, have the products been delivered? How have these contributed to the expected effects and objective of the project?	Level of progress in the delivery of the products established by the project. Existence of the Results Framework that allows identifying traceability between products, effects and impacts.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Have there been unexpected results, was more achieved than planned?	Existence of unforeseen results during project implementation	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What changes could have been made (if possible) to the project design to improve achievement of the expected results?	Changes that improve the achievement of project results.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
How did the project contribute to the country program outcomes and outputs, SDGs, UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities and national development priorities?	Evidence of project contribution to UNDP and GEF strategies and priorities.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; GEF and UNDP Documents; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What is the degree of effectiveness of the project in terms of achieving the stated results and objectives?	Evidence of project achievements.	PIR; Results Framework; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What has been the involvement of the institutions with the project?	Evidence of involvement of institutions in the project.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Have differentiated results been obtained by region? Because?	Evidence of different results by region	ProDoc; PIR; Results Framework; Project Stakeholders.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups

To what extent have the intervention tools and mechanisms developed through the project included gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion)?	Evidence of strategies focused on encouraging gender equality, the empowerment of women, human rights, disabilities and attention to vulnerable groups.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
How was a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach incorporated into the design and implementation of the intervention? How did the project contribute to gender equality, women's empowerment and a human rights-based approach?	Evidence of gender and human rights sensitive approach during project design and implementation. Evidence of gender, empowerment and human rights-sensitive approach during design and implementation.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Coherence			
To what extent do other interventions or policies support or detract from the results sought by the project?	Level of coherence between the project objective and national priorities and different interest groups.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
To what extent was the project effective in coordinating its activities with institutions, NGOs and academic institutions, among others?	Degree of coordination with relevant partners, CSOs, NGOs and academic institutions and identification of their relative importance in achieving the project objectives.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What has been the benefit of the project by creating synergies with other interventions that support issues of gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion)?	Benefits of synergies with other interventions	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Efficiency			
To what extent has the project implementation and execution strategy been efficient and profitable?	Evidence of implemented project execution strategy.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Audits.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Was the project implemented efficiently in accordance with international and national norms and standards?	Level of adherence to UNDP and UNOPS standards.	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Audits; Budget.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Did the project comply with all activities in the project document? Am I missing something? Which was the reason? How did the project exceed its goals?	Evidence of project results	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Results Framework; work schedules.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Have the logical framework, work plans or any changes made to them been used as management tools during project implementation?	Evidence of use of the Results Framework and work plans	ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Budget; work schedules.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings

Have the financial and accounting systems been adequate to manage the project and to produce accurate and timely financial information?	Evidence of compliance with work plans	PIR; Quarterly Reports; Budget; work schedules.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Have progress reports been accurate and timely? Do they respond to reporting requirements? Do they include changes due to adaptive management?	Evidence of compliance with project reports	PIR; Quarterly Reports; work schedules.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Has the project's operational strategy been cost effective?	Evidence of compliance with work plans	PIR; Quarterly Reports; Budget; work schedules.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Have procurements been made in a manner that makes efficient use of project resources?	Level of adherence to UNDP and UNOPS standards.	PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Audits.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
How has the results-based management approach been used during the implementation of the project?	Evidence of results-based approach	Results Framework; ProDoc; Quarterly Reports; work schedules; UCP and UNDP.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Are the results consistent with investments in capacity development, implementation of in situ adaptation measures and monitoring? Are the results consistent with the originally stated objectives and goals?	Level of congruence between the results achieved and those proposed	Results Framework; ProDoc; PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Focus Groups; Interviews, and Meetings.
Has the project managed to enhance its resources and scope with the resources of its partners? As?	Evidence of resources available to project partners	PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Did the project have resources (funds, technical advice, time, among others) to address the gender perspective, women's empowerment, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion)?	Evidence of resources available to encourage gender equality and the empowerment of women; human rights, disability and care for vulnerable groups.	PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Sustainability			
To what extent are project outcomes likely to depend on continued financial support? What is the probability that the necessary financial resources will be available to sustain project results once funding runs out?	Evidence of project ownership by strategic partners. Evidence of appropriation of the project by male and female beneficiaries.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Have national counterparts taken ownership of the results that ensure the benefits of the project?	Evidence of project ownership by national counterparts.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Do national counterparts have the necessary capacity to ensure that project benefits are sustained?	Evidence of capabilities of national counterparts.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups

Are there environmental problems, risks that could undermine the future environmental impact and benefits in general?	Evidence of upcoming environmental problems.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Are there any social or political risks that could undermine the longevity of the project results?	Evidence of upcoming social or political risks.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Is there evidence that the project partners will continue the activities for the remainder of the project and beyond its completion? In particular, is there evidence that any institution (CADETI, MAG, etc.) is incorporating the results of the project into its flows and processes, with a view to its institutionalization?	Evidence of continuity by project partners.	Project Stakeholders; Institutional Documents and Reports from Project Partners.	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Is there a development of technical capabilities in these actors that allows them to continue with the actions promoted by the project?	Evidence of development of technical capabilities.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Notes (interviews and meetings)
National Appropriation			
Did the project concept have its origin within the national sectoral and development plans?	Evidence of project alignment with national strategies.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Have the results (or potential results) of the project been incorporated into national sectoral and development plans?	Evidence of incorporation of project results into national and sectoral plans.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Are relevant country representatives (e.g. government officials, civil society, etc.) actively involved in project identification, planning and/or implementation?	Evidence of participation and involvement of interested party representatives.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment			
How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?	Evidence of the project's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
How do the participating women perceive themselves once the project is finished?	Evidence of changes in women.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What changes do you identify in the power relations between men and women who participated in the project?	Evidence of changes in power relations between men and women.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What roles and capacities in equity were generated or reinforced in women and men during the project in reproductive, productive and social community issues?	Evidence of training developed, and actions reinforced during the project.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
To what extent did gender equality and women's empowerment advance as a result of the intervention?	Evidence of gender equality in implemented projects. And degree of empowerment.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders; Project Evaluation.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups

How do the strengthened capacities provide gender equality and empowerment for women and what will be the follow-up they give to women?	Evidence of training aimed at men and women on gender equality issues.	ProDoc; PIR; Informes anuales; Informes trimestrales; Actores de proyectos.	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
Cross-cutting issues			
What do you consider to be the positive or negative effects of the project on local populations?	Evidence of project effects on local populations.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
What have been the results of the project and how have they contributed to better preparedness to deal with disasters and mitigation and adaptation to climate change?	Evidence that the project contributed to climate resilience.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
How did vulnerable groups benefit from the project?	Evidence of changes in vulnerable groups	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
How did the project's environmental conservation activities contribute to poverty reduction and maintenance of livelihoods?	Evidence of improvement of beneficiary communities.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
How did the project contribute to a human rights-based approach?	Evidence that project implementation under a human rights-based approach.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews, Meetings, and Working Groups
GEF Additionality			
Is there quantitative and verifiable data that demonstrates increased environmental benefits?	Evidence from data demonstrating environmental benefits.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Do self-assessments provide evidence of results achieved in creating a more enabling environment as envisaged at the approval stage?	Evidence of self-evaluations where they establish the achievements of the project aimed at improving the environment.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Can the results be attributed to the GEF contribution as originally anticipated?	GEF indicators achieved	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Catalytic/replication effect			
Did the project have an effective exit strategy?	Evidence of project exit strategy.	ProDoc; ProDoc reviews; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
What needs remain to improve the scalability or replication of the project results?	Evidence of scalability or replication of the project.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
Progress to impact			

Was environmental stress reduced? (e.g. reducing GHG emissions, reducing waste discharge or indicating the scale at which stress reduction is being achieved)	Evidence of environmental improvement in the project area.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
What changes in the environmental state occurred with the implementation of the project? (e.g. change in population of endangered species, forest stock, water retention on degraded lands, etc.);	Evidence of changes in the project area.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings
How did the project contribute to changes at the socioeconomic level (income, health, well-being, among others).	Evidence of the socio-economic resilience of the beneficiary population.	ProDoc; Annual Reports PIR; Quarterly Reports; Project Stakeholders	Documentary Review, Interviews and Meetings

Annex 6. Questionnaire used

Was the project designed to address the country's priorities?

Were the objectives and components of the project clear, feasible, and achievable within its timeframe? Is the project's theory of change clearly articulated?

How were the indicators in the Results Framework, are they SMART?

How were assumptions and risks articulated in the PIF and project document?

Were the assumptions logical and sound? How did the identified risks help determine the planned activities and outcomes?

How did the project address externalities (such as climate change, economic crises, political changes, among others)?

How were the lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into the project design?

Did the project design take into account those who would be affected by project decisions and those who could contribute?

Was there a stakeholder engagement plan, and how were the planned interactions with stakeholders organized?

How were partnership agreements, roles, and responsibilities identified? Were there any negotiations with stakeholders before project approval?

Did the project establish links with other complementary interventions? Was there planned coordination with other relevant projects/initiatives funded by the GEF?

How were gender considerations integrated into the project design to promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

How was the project aligned with national policies and strategies on gender equality?

How were gender issues integrated into the project's strategy, logic, and theory of change, including how advancing gender equality and women's empowerment will improve the project's environmental results?

What gender expertise was utilized in the design and development of the project? Was it sufficient?

How realistic was the gender marker rating assigned to the project document by UNDP? Is it supported by the findings of the gender analysis?

Was any environmental and social risk identified in accordance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and the management measures described in the project or any management plan?

Was there adaptive management of the project during its implementation?

Were there significant changes to the project as a result of the Mid-Term Review recommendations or as a result of other review procedures?

Were the project changes articulated in writing and then considered and approved by the Project Board?

How did local and national government actors support the project objectives? What role did they have in the decision-making of the project? How did you support the implementation of the project?

How does the actual stakeholder interaction compare to what is planned in the project document and Stakeholder Engagement Plan?

Were there variations between planned and actual expenses, and the reasons for those variations? Were potential sources of co-financing identified?

What were the main findings of the audits?

Have there been any changes in funding allocations as a result of budget reviews, the appropriateness and relevance of those reviews?

Are there differences in the expected and actual level of co-financing?

How did the materialization of co-financing help the results and/or sustainability of the project?

How was the M&E plan? Was it well conceived, practical and sufficient? Were you articulate enough to monitor results and track progress toward achieving goals?

Did the M&E plan include a baseline, SMART indicators and data analysis systems, evaluation studies at specific times to evaluate results?

Do you think the M&E budget in the project document was sufficient?

Did the project provide monitoring of specific GEF indicators?

How were the perspectives of the women and men involved monitored and evaluated? How was the participation of relevant groups (including women, indigenous peoples, children, older people, disabled people and the poor) in the project and the impact on them monitored?

Did the project require the Theory of Change to be reviewed and adjusted during implementation?

Was the Project Board involved in M&E activities?

How did UNDP support the project activities?

What activities were strengthened by UNOPS activities?

Were there any social, environmental, financial, operational, organizational, political, regulatory, strategic, security and other risks that emerged or evolved during the implementation of the Project?

Were new risks identified annually?

How did those risks affect the implementation of the project?

What systems and tools were used to identify, prioritize, monitor and manage those risks?

To what extent was the project aligned with national development policies and stakeholder priorities?

To what extent did the project incorporate different interest groups at the local and national levels in the development of the project?

Was the project aligned with the strategic priorities of UNDP in Costa Rica? with the UNDP Strategic Plan, the CPD, the UNDAF, the SDGs, gender strategies, among others.

Is the project relevant in terms of the country's priorities and needs to address possible impacts on Costa Rica's biodiversity and ecosystems?

To what extent does the project contribute to the commitments of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and their objectives?

What political, legal, economic, institutional changes, etc. was there during the implementation of the project? How did the project respond? Did adjustments have to be made?

To what extent did the components of the project, as well as its other characteristics, choice of partners, structure, implementation mechanisms, scope, budget, use of resources, allow the achievement of the objectives?

How does the project support the biodiversity focal area and the strategic priorities of the GEF?

Does the intervention correspond with the priorities and needs of the project partners and the beneficiary population?

How did the project address gender issues from its design? Was a gender analysis carried out prior to implementation? How have gender and women's empowerment issues been addressed within the implementation of the Project?

How have human rights, disability and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion) issues been addressed and implemented?

What have been the main results obtained by the project with respect to what was planned?

What were the main factors that contributed to the project results?

What were the main limiting factors, risks and barriers faced in achieving the project objective and the impact on the overall environmental benefits?

According to plan, have the products been delivered? How have these contributed to the expected effects and objective of the project?

Have there been unexpected results, was more achieved than planned?

What changes could have been made (if possible) to the project design to improve achievement of the expected results?

How did the project contribute to the country program outcomes and outputs, SDGs, UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities and national development priorities?

What is the degree of effectiveness of the project in terms of achieving the stated results and objectives?

What has been the involvement of the institutions with the project?

Have differentiated results been obtained by region? Because?

To what extent have the intervention tools and mechanisms developed through the project included gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion)?

How was a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach incorporated into the design and implementation of the intervention? How did the project contribute to gender equality, women's empowerment and a human rights-based approach?

To what extent do other interventions or policies support or detract from the results sought by the project?

To what extent was the project effective in coordinating its activities with institutions, NGOs and academic institutions, among others?

What has been the benefit of the project by creating synergies with other interventions that support issues of gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion)?

To what extent has the project implementation and execution strategy been efficient and profitable?
Was the project implemented efficiently in accordance with international and national norms and standards?

Did the project comply with all activities in the project document? Am I missing something? Which was the reason? How did the project exceed its goals?

Has the logical framework, work plans or any changes made to them been used as management tools during project implementation?

Have the financial and accounting systems been adequate to manage the project and to produce accurate and timely financial information?

Have progress reports been accurate and timely? Do they respond to reporting requirements? Do they include changes due to adaptive management?

Have the project's operational strategy been cost effective?

Have procurements been made in a manner that makes efficient use of project resources?

Have procurements been made in a manner that makes efficient use of project resources?

How has the results-based management approach been used during the implementation of the project?

Are the results consistent with investments in capacity development, implementation of in situ adaptation measures and monitoring? Are the results consistent with the originally stated objectives and goals?

Has the project managed to enhance its resources and scope with the resources of its partners? As?
Did the project have resources (funds, technical advice, time, among others) to address the gender perspective, women's empowerment, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups (indigenous groups and inclusion)?

To what extent are project outcomes likely to depend on continued financial support? What is the probability that the necessary financial resources will be available to sustain project results once funding runs out?

Have national counterparts taken ownership of the results that ensure the benefits of the project?

Do national counterparts have the necessary capacity to ensure that project benefits are sustained?

Are there environmental problems, risks that could undermine the future environmental impact and benefits in general?

Are there any social or political risks that could undermine the longevity of the project results?

Is there evidence that the project partners will continue the activities for the remainder of the project and beyond its completion?

In particular, is there evidence that any institution (CADETI, MAG, etc.) is incorporating the results of the project into its flows and processes, with a view to its institutionalization?

Is there a development of technical capabilities in these actors that allows them to continue with the actions promoted by the project?

Did the project concept have its origin within the national sectoral and development plans?

Have the results (or potential results) of the project been incorporated into national sectoral and development plans?

How do the participating women perceive themselves once the project is finished?

What changes do you identify in the power relations between men and women who participated in the project?

What roles and capacities in equity were generated or reinforced in women and men during the project in reproductive, productive and social community issues?

To what extent did gender equality and women's empowerment advance as a result of the intervention?

How do the strengthened capacities provide gender equality and empowerment for women and what will be the follow-up they give to women?

What do you consider to be the positive or negative effects of the project on local populations?

What have been the results of the project and how have they contributed to better preparedness to deal with disasters and mitigation and adaptation to climate change?

How did vulnerable groups benefit from the project?

Is there quantitative and verifiable data that demonstrates increased environmental benefits?

Do self-assessments provide evidence of results achieved in creating a more enabling environment as envisaged at the approval stage?

Can the results be attributed to the GEF contribution as originally anticipated?

Did the project have an effective exit strategy?

Was environmental stress reduced? (e.g. reducing GHG emissions, reducing waste discharge or indicating the scale at which stress reduction is being achieved)

What changes in the environmental state occurred with the implementation of the project? (e.g. change in population of endangered species, forest stock, water retention on degraded lands, etc.);

How did the project contribute to changes at the socioeconomic level (income, health, well-being, among others).

Annex 7. Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation



By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.



INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible**.



ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent** regarding evaluation purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.



RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access** to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).



BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration** of risks and benefits from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm**. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

Marisol Violeta Sánchez Avendaño

Marisol Sánchez

(Signature and Date)

Annex 8. List of Reviewed Documents

- Borja, C; García P; Hidalgo R. Approach based on human rights: Evaluation and Indicators. Network on Rights. 2013
- Calderón, G. 2020. Paso de las Lapas Biological Corridor landscape strategy. UNDP-SGP
- Code of Conduct for evaluations in the United Nations System of the United Nations Evaluation Group. 2008. https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=134773
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- Costa Rica declares a yellow alert due to the forecast of drought due to the "El Niño" phenomenon. October 19, 2023 <https://www.france24.com/es/minuto-a-minuto/20231018-costa-rica-declara-alerta-amarilla-ante-previsi%C3%B3n-de-sequ%C3%ADa-por-el-ni%C3%B1o>
- Cotler H. (2007b). Comprehensive watershed management in Mexico: studies and reflections to guide environmental policy. National Institute of Ecology, Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources. Mexico City, Mexico. 264 pp.
- National Decree No. 42227-MPS https://www.imprentanacional.go.cr/pub/2020/03/16/ALCA46_16_03_2020.pdf
- Diagnosis of the Paso de las Lapas Biological Corridor. SINAC-GIZ. 2018 https://c4br.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SINAC-PLAN_CBPL_140518e1.pdf
- Project Document (Prodoc)
- UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021. <https://www.undp.org/es/costa-rica/publicaciones/estrategia-igualdad-de-genero-pnud>
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- Freeman, H. and Hofmann, G., 1999. Evaluation. A systematic approach. 6th edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Guidance For Conducting Terminal Evaluations Of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Finance Projects. http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf https://www.cac.int/sites/default/files/MAG%2C_Costa_Rica_NAMA_caf%C3%A9_una_herramienta_para_el_desarrollo_bajo_en_emisiones_2013..pdf
- Costa Rica Migration and Integration Report. 2012 <https://www.sdgfund.org/es/estudio-de-caso/juventud-empleo-y-migraci%C3%B3n>

- Subsidy project reports.
- IV Quarterly Report 2023. Small Donations Program. UNDP. Date January 15, 2024.
- Manual for planning, monitoring and evaluating development results” UNDP (2009)
- Manual for the ASADAS, Costa Rica. UNDP-AyA. 2013
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- NAMA Café: a tool for low-emission development
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- 2019-2022 Action Plan (Adjusted in 2020 within the framework of the health emergency).
<https://www.comex.go.cr/media/8863/plan-de-acci%C3%B3n-2019-2022-de-la-pol%C3%ADtica-de-igualdad-y-equidad-de-g%C3%A9nero-pieg.pdf>
- National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change 2022-2026. MINAE. Costa Rica
https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NAP_Documento-2022-2026_VC.pdf
- National Development and Public Investment Plan (PNDIP) 2019-2022. Mideplan. Costa Rica
[https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-nacional-de-desarrollo-e-inversion-publica-2023-2026-de-costarica#:~:text=El%20Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Desarrollo%20e%20Inversi%C3%B3n%20P%C3%BAblica%202023%2D2026,SNP\)%20y%20la%20participaci%C3%B3n%20ciudadana.](https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/planes/plan-nacional-de-desarrollo-e-inversion-publica-2023-2026-de-costarica#:~:text=El%20Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Desarrollo%20e%20Inversi%C3%B3n%20P%C3%BAblica%202023%2D2026,SNP)%20y%20la%20participaci%C3%B3n%20ciudadana.)
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- Plan for Strategic Management 2024-2029. SINAC-UNDP-SGP. 2023 [Plan de Gestión CBMA \(1\).pdf](#)
- UNDP-Costa Rica, INAMU and MINAE. 2023 <https://www.undp.org/es/costa-rica/publicaciones/plan-de-accion-nacional-sobre-igualdad-de-genero-en-la-accion-por-el-clima>
- National Policy for Adaptation to Climate Change of Costa Rica 2018-2030. Costa Rica
<https://cambioclimatico.go.cr/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Politica-Nacional-de-Adaptacion-al-Cambio-Climatico-Costa-Rica-2018-2030.pdf>
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Annex 9. Signed Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Marisol Violeta Sánchez Avendaño

Evaluators/Consultants:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation

in the UN System: Name of Evaluator: Marisol Violeta

Sánchez Avendaño

Annex 10. Signed evaluation report authorization form

Annex 11. List of Grants

No.	Organization	Project name	Grant
1	BIOMATEC Foundation Sustainability and Development	Renewable energy and low-carbon technologies project.	150,000
2	Avina Foundation	Strengthening community management of water resources in the Central-Pacific territory of Costa Rica.	150,000
3	Association for the Organic Agriculture Movement of the Central Pacific (MAOPAC)	Palmares coffee producers contribute to mitigating soil erosion	49,999
4	Association of Sustainable Producers of Santa Ana - APSSA	Support for the Increase in Environmental Resilience in Productive Areas of Santa Ana based on Conservation Practices and Appropriate Management of Natural Resources	30,000
5	Orange Agroindustrial Dairy Association ASONALAC	“Implementation of agro-conservation practices in livestock production, as an alternative for the mitigation of the Barranca River basin, on farms of the producers of the Naranjeña Agroindustrial Dairy Association”	30,000
6	Green Mother Foundation	Strengthening comprehensive fire management actions in the Jesús María river basins, the lower basin of the Grande de Tárcoles River and the Paso de Las Lapas Biological Corridor.	49,500
7	FUBONO	Sustainable Tourism Network of the Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor, a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity	47,600
8	CINAT-UNA	Strengthening the productive capacities of beekeepers and meliponiculturists in the area of the Jesús María and Barranca River Basin and the middle and lower Grande de Tárcoles Basin and the Montes del Aguacate and Paso Las Lapas Biological Corridors.	25,500
9	Panthera Costa Rica	Wildlife as a tool for the development and improvement of livelihoods, through community action in the upper part of the Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor.	49,985
10	Group of Orange Dairy Agroindustrial Women (MUNALAC)	Conditioning and equipment of a dairy products processing plant for the group of Mujeres Naranjeñas Agroindustriales de Lácteos (MUNALAC) - value chain in dairy products of sustainable origin.	36,000
11	ADI Barranca	Diversified and sustainable productive systems with the production of high-altitude fruit trees to mitigate soil degradation and produce in harmony with nature in the homes of families in Barranca, Naranjo, Alajuela.	30,000

12	ADI Guacalillo	“Vegetable production, applying principles of organic agriculture, under the agricultural system of protected environments in the communities of Guacalillo and Bajamar in the Lower Part of the Río Grande de Tárcoles Basin. Garabito Canton, Puntarenas.”	24,800
13	ADI Lagunillas	Vegetable production, applying principles of organic agriculture, under protected environments in the community of Lagunillas in the lower part of the Río Grande de Tárcoles Basin, Garabito canton, Puntarenas.	24,200
14	APEMEGO	Livestock producers from Orotina in the Jesús María River Basin applying silvopastoral techniques.	25,000
15	Association for Human Development Friendly Hands the Promise	Support to increase the availability, and physical and economic access of high protein foods through an aquaponics system to address the nutritional needs of vulnerable families during the pandemic in the canton of Santa Ana district of Brazil.	30,000
16	Association of Huetares de Zapatón Indigenous Women (AMIHZ).	Production of food security crops under the sustainable production system and improving existing infrastructure of the AMIHZ group in the community of Zapatón.	20,000
17	Association of Environmental Producers of San Rafael de Turubares (APASARAT).	Preparation of vermifero using coffee grounds and the dust produced in the preparation process of the Cerro Turubares coffee	15,760
18	ADAFARCES	Contribute to the protection of the air, soil and water resources of the canton of Puriscal, through the management of recoverable solid waste	24,300
19	DUNOMA	Sustainable production of vegetables and legumes in the community of Dulce Nombre	12,600
20	Cantonal Agricultural Center of Orotina (CACO)	Small Coffee Growers in the canton of Palmares mitigate soil degradation and erosion through sustainable practices.	49,998
21	Specific Development Association for Environmental Conservation of Athens ADECA	Use of technologies to save water resources, soil conservation practices and family gardens that contribute to mitigating soil degradation, climate change and supporting the diet of producers who inhabit the Cacao River Sub-Basin, in the canton of Athens.	33,047
22	Association of organic agricultural producers of the lower basin of the Turubares River APAECTU	Implementation of good agricultural practices for adaptation to climate change through water harvesting techniques and water networks with producers affiliated with APAECTU, in the canton of Turubares within the CBPLL.	28,000
23	Association of Agroecobusiness Families of the Socorro de Piedades Sur de San Ramón (ASOFAGRO)	Sustainable protected environments contribute positively to the production of healthy cosmetics and the food security of families in the Barranca River basin.	14,500
24	Asopeñas	Tinctures of medicinal plants as a sustainable use of natural resources	11,500

25	Entrepreneurial Women Association of Bijagual de Turrubares	Production of medicinal vegetables-plants in protected environments and the production of tinctures for the strengthening and empowerment of rural women in Bijagual, Carara, Turrubares	25,500
26	Esparza Cantonal Agricultural Center	Producers from Esparza and San Mateo applying silvopastoral techniques in the Jesús María and Barranca River basins.	49,999
27	Union of Agricultural Producers of Puriscal UPAP	Silvopastoral livestock farming in the Paso las Lapas Biological Corridor area and its buffer area	100,000
28	ADI Cerrillos	Production of vegetables and legumes under the shade house technique	26,120
29	ECOTROPIC	Development of Sustainable Tourism for the management and conservation of biodiversity in the La Cangreja National Park buffer area	31,726
30	Ladies Housewives Undertaking Development (SAED) and members of the Young People JUPAS group (Young People United for a Healthy Environment).	Planting blackberry, passion fruit and cape gooseberry as a crop diversification strategy in the community of Berlin applying soil conservation techniques and rational use of water	18,580
31	ADE Tufares	Strengthening biodiversity restoration processes in areas with degraded landscapes, valuing sustainable productive alternatives associated with reforestation, with local participation in the CB Paso De las Lapas (CBPL) region.	15,000
32	ASOPROGUARUMAL	Adaptation to the climate crisis and mitigation of soil degradation in the community of Guarumal, “Paso las Lapas” Biological Corridor through the implementation of water harvesting for the sustainable production of fruit trees and the socioeconomic improvement of the beneficiaries of ASOPROGUARUMAL	15,000
33	ADI Santiago	Strategic planning for the recognition of the contributions of the Montes del Aguacate Biological Corridor to effective conservation outside Protected Areas in Costa Rica and the world.	15,000
34	MAREBLU	Beach Cleaning Center and volunteering	30,066
35	ASOMURO	Women producers of “golden milk” diversifying their productive and economic options under good agro-environmental practices in Romakri, San Mateo	30,750
	Total		USD1,320,016

*Women’s groups highlighted in lilac.

* Strategic Projects highlighted with green.

Annex 12. Co-financing Table

Co-financing (in dollars)

Co-financing	UNDP Financing		Government		Collaborating Agency		Total	
	Planned	Real	Planned	Real	Planned	Real	Planned	Real
Subsidies		5,000			1,040,000		1,040,000	5,000
Grants/Loans								
In-Kind support	200,000	200,000	2,350,000	2,350,000	1,800,000	3,941,403	4,350,000	6,491,403
Others						47,000		47,000
Total	200,000	205,000	2,350,000	2,350,000	2,840,000	3,988,403	5,390,000	6,543,403

Source: Project Management Unit. 2024

Sources of co-financing confirmed at the Final Evaluation stage (in dollars)

Co-financier	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Accumulated
PNUD	50,000	50,000	50,000	55,000	205,000
MINAE	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
MAG	281,250	281,250	281,250	281,250	1,125,000
CADETI	62,500	62,500	62,500	62,500	250,000
AyA	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	100,000
UNA	18,750	18,750	18,750	18,750	75,000
Pedregal	0	0	12,000	0	12,000
COMDEKS	35,000	0	0	0	35,000
Subvenciones	0	1,313,801	1,313,801	1,313,801	3,941,403
Co-financing Total	672,500	2,647,693	2,659,693	2,652,693	6,543,403

Source: Project Management Unit. 2024

Area de Intervención, 2020

