

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MIDTERM EVALUATION

Reduction of Risks and Vulnerability Based on Flooding and Droughts in the Estero Real River Watershed

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the UNDP and AF M&E policies and procedures, a mid-term evaluation of the full-size project Reduction of Risks and Vulnerability Based on Flooding and Droughts in the Estero Real River Watershed implemented through the United Nations Development Program, is to be undertaken in 2013. The project started on June 2011 and is in its second year of implementation. This Terms of Reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for this mid-term evaluation.

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

Project Title:	Reduction of Risks and Vulnerability Based on Flooding and Droughts in the Estero Real River Watershed			
UNDP Project ID:	00074925	Project financing	<u>at endorsement</u> <u>(Million US\$)</u>	<u>at MTE (Million US\$)</u>
ATLAS Project ID:	00059776	AF financing:	5.07	5.07
Country:	Nicaragua	IA/EA own:		
Region:	Latin America and Caribe	Government:		
Focal Area:		Other:		
		Total co-financing:		
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Total Project Cost in cash:	5.07	5.07
Other Partners involved:	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		March 29, 2011	
		Planned closing date:	February 29, 2015	Revised closing date: June 30, 2015

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES

Nicaragua faces severe impacts related to extreme natural phenomena. Combined with already significant climate variability, socio-economic impacts are magnified by high levels of poverty. Both the First and the Second National Communications concluded relied heavily on extrapolations from global models and regional studies to define likely climate trends in the country, and both concluded that the average annual temperature could increase, and the precipitation trends are uncertain. The Pacific region, where over 65% of the population lives, is the most vulnerable of the country, with strong demographic trends, high levels of extreme rural poverty and low precipitation rates. The areas that will be most affected by climate change are those currently classified as dry zones, such as the northern region of Nicaragua and the municipalities in the departments of Chinandega and León.

The programme is aimed to reduce risks from droughts and flooding generated by climate change and variability in the watershed of the Estero Real River. In Chinandega and León, the Estero Real River Watershed (3.690 km²), and

in particular the sub watershed of the Villanueva River (1,550 km²)—also known as Rio Grande or Aquespalapa—is emblematic of the combined impacts of poor development models and strong climate variability.

The programme will rely upon a coordinated set of interventions designed to implement new public policies for addressing climate change by introducing agro-ecological practices and participatory watershed management in highly vulnerable rural communities. Through targeted investments in water retention, long-term farm planning, and institutional capacity building in local communities, municipalities and government agencies, the Programme will validate an adaptation scheme as a vehicle for implementation of the national climate change strategy.

4 outcomes will contribute to this objective; the progress toward the objective and outcomes is measured through the following indicators:

Objective / Outcomes	Indicators	Target by end of project, relative to the baseline of 2011 (unless specified otherwise)
Objective: Reduce risks from drought and flooding generated by climate change and variability in the watershed of the Estero Real River.	Number of farm families in the targeted micro-watersheds with at least one annual harvest (due to adaptation measures).	1005
	Number of farm families included in Sub-Watershed management proposal.	7120
Outcome 1: Increased availability of water for small scale domestic and productive uses and reduced risk of water stress and drought.	Percentage of farms in each micro-watershed with access to irrigation by means of hydraulic works built with programme funds.	90% (65 families in Las Mercedes and 20 families in Salale)
	Surface in hectare to increase under irrigation.	161.5 ha
	Amount of water (lts/sec) conducted through the infrastructure of community irrigation systems.	50
	Percentage of farmers in each micro-watershed with water use rated as satisfactory in relation to the relevant technical guidelines.	90% (at least 880 families with water use rated as satisfactory)
	Number of water harvest infrastructure installed and working at the micro-watershed level.	880 water harvest infrastructure
Outcome 2: Enhanced food security and eco-systemic resilience through agro-ecological practices and effective use of available water in the eight targeted micro-watersheds.	Percentage of farm families in each micro-watershed implementing agro-ecological farm transformation plans.	80% families and 120 ha.
	Number of farm families with agro-ecological farm transformation plans.	1005 farm families with plans
	Number of farm families benefited with housing and patio investments through agro-ecological farm transformation plans.	1005 farm families
	Surface in hectares under agro-ecological farm transformation plans.	1120 has. with plans
	Increase in percentage of land in each micro-watershed with vegetation coverage.	50% (at least 200 ha. of the water system recharge areas and riparian zones)

	Surface in hectares of water system recharge areas and riparian zones protected.	400 ha.
Outcome 3: Capacity and institutional development in micro watersheds, municipalities and participant institutions.	A validated and endorsed proposal by three municipal governments for the operation of a Sub-Watershed Committee for the Villanueva River basin.	1
	Municipalities in watershed with climate change adaptation measures included with their official plans and related normative instruments.	9
Outcome 4: Monitoring and continuous analysis of climate conditions and changes in land use, river basin and soil quality. Disseminated results and lessons learned about building climate change resilience in vulnerable rural communities.	Hydrological studies and number of informative bulletins to foster the participative monitoring regarding water quality and quantity, soil conditions and changes in land use.	8
	Lessons learnt in eight micro-watersheds and the Villanueva River Sub-Watershed available in SINIA, and other websites, and disseminated through workshops.	4 annual reports and 12 quarterly reports

3. OBJECTIVES OF THIS MID-TERM EVALUATION (MTE)

The objective of the MTE is to provide an independent analysis of the progress of the project so far. The MTE will identify potential project design problems, evaluate progress towards the achievement of the project objective, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP-GEF supported AF projects), and make recommendations regarding specific actions that should be taken to improve the project. The MTE will evaluate early signs of project success or failure and identify the necessary changes to be made. The project performance will be measured based on the indicators of the project's logical framework (see Annex 1).

The MTE must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct field missions to El Sauce, Achuapa and Villanueva, including the following project sites: Mercedes Centro, Cooperativa, El Borbollón, Salale, La Montaña, La Montañita, Ojochal, Campamento, Petaquilla, San Antonio 2, Varela, El Pajarito, El Guanacaste, Las Brisas, Las Lajas, El Lagartillo, El Waylo, El Rodeito, San Nicolás, Los Genízaros, Las Brisas, El Tule, Los Chupaderos y Las Pilas. Specific sites to be visited by Evaluator will be agreed with Project Team and UNDP.

Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

1. UNDP staff who have project responsibilities;
2. Executing agencies
3. The Chair of Project Board
4. The NPD and ANPD
5. Project stakeholders, to be determined at the inception meeting; including academia, local government and CBOs

The consultant will evaluate all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual PPRs, AF Tracking Tools, project budget revisions, progress reports, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. A list of documents that the project team and UNDP Country Office will provide to the evaluator for review is included in Annex 2 of this Terms of Reference.

4. SCOPE OF THE MTE

The evaluator will evaluate the following three categories of project progress. For each category, the evaluator is required to rate overall progress using a six-point rating scale outlined in Annex 3.

4.1 Progress towards Results

Project design:

- Evaluate the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Evaluate the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project. Identify new assumptions.
- Evaluate the relevance of the project strategy (and theory of change) and whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
- Evaluate how the project addresses country priorities.
- Evaluate the baseline data included in the project results framework and suggest revisions as necessary.

Progress:

- Evaluate the outputs and progress toward outcomes achieved so far and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project.
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze, beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis. Suggest measures to improve the project’s development impact, including gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- Examine whether progress so far has led to, or could in the future lead to, potentially adverse environmental and/or social impacts/risks that could threaten the sustainability of the project outcomes. Are these risks being managed, mitigated, minimized or offset? Suggest mitigation measures as needed.
- Evaluate the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners, and how the different needs of male and female stakeholders has been considered. Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships.

4.2 Adaptive management

Work Planning

- a) Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results.
- b) Examine the use of the project document logical/results framework as a management tool and evaluate any changes made to it since project start. Ensure any revisions meet UNDP-GEF requirements and evaluate the impact of the revised approach on project management.

Finance and co-finance:

- a) Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- b) Complete the co-financing monitoring table (see Annex 4).
- c) Evaluate the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.

Monitoring Systems.

- a) Evaluate the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required?
- b) Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators meet UNDP-GEF minimum requirements. Develop SMART indicators as necessary.
- c) Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators as necessary.
- d) Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to M&E? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Risk Management

- a) Validate whether the risks identified in the project document, PPRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why. Give particular attention to critical risks.
- b) Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted.

Reporting

- a) Evaluate how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management, and shared with the Project Board.
- b) Evaluate how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

4.3 Management arrangements

- a) Evaluate overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the project document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- b) Evaluate the quality of execution of the project Implementing Partners and recommend areas for improvement.
- c) Evaluate the quality of support provided by UNDP and recommend areas for improvement.

5. MID TERM EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator clarifies timing and method of evaluation. Written in Spanish	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission	Evaluator submits to UNDP Nicaragua
Presentation	Initial Findings Written in Spanish	End of evaluation mission	To project management and UNDP Nicaragua
Draft Final Report	Full report (as template in annex 5) with annexes Written in Spanish	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to UNDP reviewed by RTA, PCU, ...

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Final Report	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comment have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report). Written both, in English and Spanish	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to Nicaragua

6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO) in Managua, Nicaragua; the UNDP CO will contract the consultants. The project team will be responsible for liaising with the evaluator to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits with missions to El Sauce, Achuapa and Villanueva.

7. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 4 weeks, according to the following plan:

Activity	Timeframe
Preparation	(5 working days)
Evaluation mission and debriefing	(10 working days)
Draft evaluation report	(5 working days)
Finalisation of final report	(5 working days)

8. EVALUATOR

One independent evaluator will perform the evaluation. The consultant will not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities. The evaluator should have prior experience in reviewing or evaluating similar projects. Experience with AF financed projects is an advantage.

The selection of consultants will be aimed at maximizing the overall qualities in the following areas:

- At least 5 experiences with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- At least 5 experiences applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- At least 5 experiences of work in Latin America region.
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years (sustainable management of natural resources and/or productive systems);
- Excellent Spanish communication skills (written and spoken);
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations System and/or Adaptation Fund will be considered an asset;

9. PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

%	Milestone
15	Upon approval of inception report
35	Upon approval of 1 st draft mid-term evaluation report
50	Upon approval of final mid-term evaluation report

Annex 1: Project logframe

Objective: Reduce risks from drought and flooding generated by climate change and variability in the watershed of the Estero Real River									
	Indicators	Baseline	Final Programme Goals	Current level according to last PIR	Expected goal for mid-2013 (to be achieved for PIR period)	Expected goal at the end of 2013	Total budget assigned in PRODOC for the outcome	Programmed budget for 2013	Total budget disbursed up to date
Programme Objective Reduce risks from drought and flooding generated by climate change and variability in the watershed of the Estero Real River	Number of farm families in the targeted micro-watersheds with at least one annual harvest.	400	1005 ¹	562	925	1005	5,070,000	1,735,205	1,904,467
	Number of farm families included in Sub-Watershed management proposal.	0	7120 ²		7174	3560			
Outcome 1 Increased availability of water for small scale domestic and productive uses and reduced risk of water stress and drought.	Percentage of farms in each micro-watershed with access to irrigation by means of hydraulic works built with programme funds.	0%	90% (65 families in Las Mercedes and 20 families in Salales)	80% (68 families in Las Mercedes)	137.64% (85 families en Las Mercedes and 32 families in Salales)	(137.64%) 100	2,480,000	725,705	753,071
	Surface in hectare to increase under irrigation	67.55 ha	161.5 ha	130	170	170			
	Amount of water (lts/sec) conducted through the infrastructure of community irrigation systems.	0 lts/sec	50	25	60	60			
	Percentage of farmers in each micro-watershed with water use rated as satisfactory in relation to the relevant technical guidelines.	5%*	90% (at least 880 families with water use rated as satisfactory)	23%	33%	68.41%			
	Number of water harvest infrastructure installed and working at the micro-watershed level.		880 water harvest infrastructure	200	293	602			

¹ Exact number of farm families currently living in targeted micro-watersheds to be confirmed at project start-up.

² Exact number of farm families currently living in Villanueva River Sub-watershed to be confirmed during year one of the project.

Outcome 2 Enhanced food security and eco-systemic resilience through agro-ecological practices and effective use of available water in the eight targeted micro-watersheds.	Percentage of farm families in each micro-watershed implementing agro-ecological farm transformation plans.	5%*	80% families and 120 ha.	56%	92%	100%	1,300,000	582,991	651,776
	Number of farm families with agro-ecological farm transformation plans	0	1005 farm families with plans	562	925	1005			
	Number of farm families benefited with housing and patio investments through agro-ecological farm transformation plans.	0	1005	45	0	679			
	Surface in hectares under agro-ecological farm transformation plans	0	1120 has. with plans	562	1890	1120			
	Increase in percentage of land in each micro-watershed with vegetation coverage.	25%*	50% (at least 200 ha. of the water system recharge areas and riparian zones)	50%	75%	100%			
	Surface in hectares of water system recharge areas and riparian zones protected		400 ha.	200	300	400			
Outcome 3 Capacity and institutional development in micro-watersheds, municipalities and participant institutions.	A validated and endorsed proposal by three municipal governments for the operation of a Sub-Watershed Committee for the Villanueva River basin.	0	1	0	0	0	440,000	25,604	27,888
	Municipalities in watershed with climate change adaptation measures included with their official plans and related normative instruments.	0	9	3	3	3			
Outcome 4 Monitoring and continuous analysis of climate conditions and changes in land use, river basin and soil quality. Disseminated results and lessons learned about building	Hydrological studies and number of informative bulletins to foster the participative monitoring regarding water quality and quantity, soil conditions and changes in land use.	0	8	0	0	0	450,000	169,364	126,053
	Lessons learnt in eight micro-watersheds and the Villanueva River Sub-Watershed available in SINIA, and other websites, and disseminated through workshops.	0	4 annual reports and 12 quarterly reports	Finalizing the design of Web Page MARENA – ESTERO REAL	Web pages online and with continuous feed per component	Continuous feed of web pages with 1 annual report and 4 quarterly reports			

climate change resilience in vulnerable rural communities.				Program					
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Annex 2: List of Documents

1. Project Document
2. Logical Framework adaptive management
3. AF Project Performance Reports (PPRs) & AF Tracking Tool
4. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
5. Audit reports
6. M & E Operational Guidelines, all monitoring reports prepared by the project; and
7. Financial and Administration guidelines.

The following documents will also be available:

8. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
9. Minutes of the Project Board Meetings
10. Maps
11. The AF Operations guidelines
12. UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks
13. Draft of the National Human Development Plan 2008-2012
14. Nicaragua Environmental Policy and Action Plan 2007
15. United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF) for Nicaragua 2008-2012

Annex 3: Mid-term Evaluation Rating Scale

Progress towards results: use the following rating scale

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Adaptive management AND Management Arrangements: use the following rating scale

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The project has no shortcomings and can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	The project has minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The project has moderate shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The project has significant shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has major shortcomings.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has severe shortcomings.

Annex 5: Table of Contents for the Mid-term Evaluation Report

- i.** Opening page:
 - Title of UNDP supported AF financed project
 - UNDP and AF project ID#s.
 - Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - Evaluator
 - Acknowledgements
- ii.** Executive Summary
 - Project Summary Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Evaluation Rating Table
 - Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons
- iii.** Acronyms and Abbreviations
- 1.** Introduction
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Scope & Methodology
 - Structure of the evaluation report
- 2.** Project description and development context
 - Project start and duration
 - Problems that the project sought to address
 - Immediate and development objectives of the project
 - Baseline Indicators established
 - Main stakeholders
 - Expected Results
- 3.** Findings
- 3.1** Progress toward Results:
 - Project Design
 - Progress
- 3.2** Adaptive Management:
 - Work planning
 - Finance and co-finance
 - Monitoring systems
 - Risk management
 - Reporting
- 3.3** Management Arrangements:
 - Overall project management
 - Quality of executive of Implementing Partners
 - Quality of support provided by UNDP
- 4.** Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons
 - Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
 - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
- 5.** Annexes

- ToR
- Itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits
- List of documents reviewed
- Questionnaire used and summary of results
- Co-financing table