TERMINAL EVALUATION (TE) OF THE FIFTH OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME IN MEXICO (PIMS #4519)

FINAL REPORT

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June 2014

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I. OPENING PAGE

Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project

Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Mexico

UNDP and GEF project ID#s.

Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report

The evaluation was carried out between end of April and May 2014. The field visit happened between May 1 and 11, 2014. The Inception Report was sent on May 15, 2014. This Final Report Draft is dated May 25, 2014

Region and countries included in the project

The Project was implemented in Mexico, in the southeastern part of the country. Its actions were located in the States of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco and Chiapas.

GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program

Implementing Partner and other project partners

The Implementing Partner of the Project was UNOPS. Other Project Partners include the organizations receiving the small grants, the accompanying organizations and other national organizations (Governmental, academic and civil) participating in different steering and advising structures. In total this other partners are close to a hundred (see list in the main text of this Report)

Evaluation team members

The evaluation was carried out by Alejandro C. Imbach.

Acknowledgements

The evaluator would like to thank the members of the SGP National Coordination (Raul Murguía and Armida Avilés), the UNDP Project Officer (Edgar Gonzalez), the SGP Global Coordinator for SGP Upgraded Programs (Nick Remple) and all persons from the community groups and the different organizations providing time for interviews and visits and valuable information, for their support to the evaluation process.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Summary Table

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE				
Project Title:	**Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Program in Mexico**			
GEF Project ID:	4353		*at endorsement (Million US$)*	*At completion (Million US$)*
UNDP Project ID:	PIMS 4519	GEF financing:	4,662,755	4,662,755
Country:	Mexico	IA/EA own:	1,546,549	283,255
Región:	LAC	Government:	1,739,889	1,082,762
Focal Area:	MFA (Multifocal)	Other:	2,613,562	4,861,531
Operational Program:	Biodiversity Climate Change	Total co-financing:	5,900,000	6,228,149
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:	10,562,755	10,890,904
Other Partners involved:	NSC*, EDUCE, TNC	PRODOC Signature (date Project began):		July, 1st, 2011
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: December 31, 2013	Actual: June 30, 2014

** NSC is the SGP National Steering Committee. All co-financing coming from the organizations getting SGP grants are accrued under NSC.*

Project Description

The project objective is to support community-based initiatives and actions for sustainable livelihoods to conserve Mexico's Southeastern large ecosystems and help mitigate climate change. This will be achieved through three inter-related outcomes: 1) Improved conservation of forest, wetland and coastal-marine biological resources in community-owned lands in the production landscapes of Mexico's Southeastern region; 2) Carbon stocks in community-owned forest lands maintained or increased; and 3) Increased project management capacity among communities, and knowledge acquired through project implementation systematized and disseminated. Building on the achievements and experience from previous phases of the SGP in Mexico, the project supported community-based initiatives to overcome the barriers for the adoption of sustainable practices at scale for biodiversity conservation and for maintaining carbon stocks.

The project was executed by UNOPS as Implementing Partner using the existing mechanism of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Mexico, including grant approval by the National Steering Committee and day-to-day management by the Country Programme Team under the leadership of the Country Programme Manager (National Coordinator). The project collaborated with a large number of partners including national and State Government institutions, national and local NGOs, scientific institutions, and the private sector.

Evaluation Rating Table

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	***rating***	**2. IA& EA Execution**	***rating***
M&E design at entry	6 (HS)	Quality of UNDP Implementation	5 (S)
M&E Plan Implementation	5 (S)	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	5 (S)
Overall quality of M&E	5 (S)	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	5 (S)
3. Assessment of Outcomes	***rating***	**4. Sustainability**	***rating***
Relevance	R	Financial resources:	4 (L)
Effectiveness	5 (S)	Socio-political:	4 (L)
Efficiency	5 (S)	Institutional framework and governance:	4 (L)
Overall Project Outcome Rating	5 (S)	Environmental :	3 (ML)
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	3 (ML)
5. Project Impact	***rating***		
Assessment of Project impact	3 (S)		

Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

After reviewing documents, interviewing a broad range of stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, and visiting and observing several field locations of SGP activities, the main conclusions of this evaluation are:

1. The SGP in Mexico during its Fifth Operational Phase is a satisfactory project that has achieved significant impacts in one of the most challenging areas for conservation: biodiversity conservation outside Protected Areas, while contributing significantly to improve the well being of local communities.

2. These successful results cannot be attributed to OP5 alone; they were built on the long history of SGP in the region of Mexico where it is active (Yucatan Peninsula and, less significantly, Chiapas). For 20 years the SGP has patiently fostered the development of capacities, strengthening of local organizations, identification and use of intelligent alternatives to foster conservation while improving the wellbeing of rural communities. This was possible through the articulation of different actions such as identification of market opportunities and forging alliances between governmental, academic, civil and private organizations to weave networks of interacting and complementing organizations and processes that reasonably ensure the long-term sustainability of these processes.

3. Specifically, the development of organic apiculture with value chains going from individual small farmer production to the export of certified organic honey to very demanding markets such as Germany and other European countries, is one of the areas of great success as the overall chain operates now independently of SGP and will continue doing so even if SGP is discontinued. A similar story can be told about freshwater aquaculture based on native species of fish (pejelagarto, mojarra and others) where the alliance with academic organizations allowed for the development of the scientific research required to provide a strong basis for the following phase of actually developing aquaculture farms managed by small cooperatives and groups in the Usumacinta delta and neighboring areas of Tabasco. Currently, the whole circle is closed by the high local demand for the products and the recent formation of a Native Aquaculture Production System by the State and Federal authorities. This System ensures the

technical and financial involvement of governmental, private, academic and civil organizations in the operation of this value chain (aquaculture with native fish species) and its extension beyond Tabasco State to access other markets with fresh products and also different industrial processing alternatives. Again, this value chain is now well established and fairly independent of SGP involvement. A similar history can be told about home-gardens in rural communities, an initiative fostered by the SGP that now has involved other organizations (State and Academic) ensuring the continuation of these efforts that are very relevant to address food security issues in communal areas (ejidos). Other lines are less advanced and not entirely sustainable yet, such as sustainable forest management (due in part to the incidence of catastrophic hurricanes), alternative tourism (still progressing in key areas but still not well developed in terms of marketing) and others such as environmental education.

4. These results and impacts, and the level of sustainability achieved, demonstrate clearly that the GEF vision of a small-grants window for CBOs and NGOs is correct, and the chosen mechanism, the SGP, is adequate. This small-grants mechanism is providing the right complement to the other GEF mechanisms such as the full and medium-size projects among others.

5. Moreover, the examination of more operational aspects such as logistics, beneficiaries and authorities' satisfaction, the use of GEF funds, leveraging, co-financing, project-selection criteria and procedures, monitoring and evaluation, costs (even when Federal organizations still feel that the international overhead structure is heavier than necessary), and management in general, are also satisfactory. A specific mention should be made to highlight the fact the Mexico SGP in OP5 was able to exceed the co-financing levels agreed at Project design by 5%.

6. The SGP upgrading process for those programs in countries with longer and more successful experiences such as Mexico has brought mixed results requiring attention. A highly positive result is that in OP5 Mexican institutions maintained their commitment to the SGP and funded it from the GEF country allocations exactly as they said they would do. This is not a minor achievement; it meant that the positive assessment of SGP in Mexico was authentic, and the country maintained a coherent position by incorporating SGP into its national GEF portfolio.

7. The new administrative structure of the upgraded SGP in Mexico maintained a key and distinctive feature of the SGP, that is, to maintain the program under a balanced control by their different stakeholders, instead of putting it under the direct authority of a single organization. This balanced governance allows for the participation of all stakeholders and for consensus-based decision making, resulting in a greater level of commitment by the stakeholders who actually perceive that they are part of the project management. This participatory governance structure at the country level under the form of the National Steering Committee has been highly beneficial for the SGP because it ensures reasonable autonomy and transparency leading to more credibility and commitment by the different private, civil, governmental, non-governmental, academic and international stakeholders. This is an achievement considered essential for the success and future of SGP and it should be preserved.

8. The new administrative structure also left a grey area in high-management decision making that was not properly filled yet. In the regular (non-upgraded) SGP structure, all Country Programs are executively coordinated by the SGP central office at UNDP HQ in New York (CPMT). With the SGP upgrading process, this function was lost and was not assumed by any other structure generating this mentioned "grey area". Specifically, this "grey area"

means that no one has the authority and the responsibility to take care of key management issues such as National Steering Committee renovation, evaluation of National Coordination, decisions about broadening SGP reach to other parts of the country, etc. (see section 3.2.6 for additional details) . In the view of this evaluation, the most reasonable option is to incorporate this strategic management function into the SGP National Steering Committee duties (see Recommendations below). These changes aim at introducing adjustments in the current role of the NSC now focused on technical and scientific issues and, most important, evaluation and selection of project proposals received by SGP for funding.

9. In the particular case of the Mexico SGP Country Program the situation described in the previous points led to delay in addressing such a key issue as the analysis of the process to deal with the members of the National Coordination team reaching retirement. It is necessary to define how to address the situation properly, how long should this process be, when to do it, etc. All these steps are requirements to organize a well-planned transition process ensuring that the experience gathered in 20 years is adequately transferred. Even when these questions were analyzed by the NSC in Mexico in OP4, at that time the decisions were postponed due to other challenges regarding the new OP5, and remained unanswered. This is the sort of strategic managerial issues that needs to be assumed by some structure in replacement of the former role of the SGP Central Program Management Team in New York; the evaluation considers that this role should be taken up by the NSC as detailed in the previous point.

10. Another aspect emerging from the SGP upgrading process is related to fitting the SGP Country Program's particular structure and way of operation (a structure to channel GEF funds to CBOs, NGOs and similar organizations through small grants) with the regular requirement of the GEF full-sized projects included currently in the GEF national portfolios. The OP5 experience in this regard was reasonably satisfactory because the project operated well, achieved most of its results and kept the different field processes in operation without major disruptions. During this evaluation it became clearer that the planning requisites and structures for the SGP require more significant adjustments, specifically at the level of outcome targets. The general structure of the Strategic Results Framework was useful and was completed satisfactorily, but there were too many indicators and targets for a program that is not implemented directly. The used indicators and target are better suited for the regular GEF full-sized projects where there is a project team carrying out the project activities, generating products and achieving results by themselves with the support from partners and other contracted parts. The situation is completely different in the case of the SGP Country Programme who does not directly implement and achieves its results through open calls for proposals and selects and funds those proposals that are closer to its indicators and targets but cannot avoid issues as absence of proposals for some targets, or commitments to achieve results based on the real capacities of the proposing organizations

11. Consistent with the previous point on planning, the obvious consequences were some difficulties for monitoring and reporting on 70 planned targets included in the PRODOC. As reported in the main text, the SGP M&E system to track and evaluate the use of the funds granted to the different organizations is very good, but the conversion of results from more than 90 projects to categories fitting the Project targets proved to be very laborious and difficult to achieve by the small National Coordination two-person team.

12. Finally, but not less important, the SGP Mexico Country Programme has a lot of room for improvement in the area of analysis of its own experiences, extraction of lessons learned, use of those lessons to develop guides, manuals and other orientation materials, and dissemination of them (and the pertinent supporting experiences) to a large national and regional Mesoamerican audience in need of those experiences. There is no doubt that the Country Programme has made efforts in this area and produced some materials, but it is also clear that the gathered experience in hundred of projects over 20 years largely exceeds what documentation is available.

Recommendations

Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

1. To maintain the existing administrative and operational structure for the SGP Country Program of OP5, with UNOPS as the project executing agency (or Implementing Partner as per UNDP terminology), UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency, and the SGP National Steering Committee as the decision making body of the Project with the SGP National Coordination reporting to the NSC. The exchange of information and coordination between the SGP Country Program (NSC and National Coordination) with the UNDP Global Technical Advisor for SGP Upgraded Programs in CPMT New York should be maintained as it is. This structure has shown itself to be adequate for SGP operations, and there is no obvious reason to change it.

2. To add strategic management duties to the tasks of the National Steering Committee aiming to have a clearly defined instance able to receive, analyze and decide on strategic managerial aspects at country level. Currently the main tasks of the NSC are related to technical and scientific orientation, advice and to the selection of proposals submitted mainly by CBOs and NGOs to be funded by the SGP. These tasks should be maintained but it is necessary to add a short number of key strategic management tasks to the existing lists. These key strategic management tasks should include:

a. Annual evaluation of the National Coordination
b. Periodic validation of the National Coordination team through open calls to fill the position allowing current Coordinators to participate and revalidate their positions
c. Regular renewal of the NSC members
d. Thematic and geographical reach of the SGP in the country
e. Supervision of the SGP monitoring, evaluation and reporting system
f. Supervision of the SGP knowledge management processes
g. Other issues presented to the NSC and considered as strategic by the NSC

In defining the strategic management tasks it is extremely important to keep them clearly differentiated and not overlapping with those of UNOPS and SGP National Coordination, in order to maintain separate and coordinated areas of work among them. The evaluation also recommends that this task should be initiated and coordinated by the UNDP Global Technical Advisor for SGP Upgraded Programs in CPMT in order to ensure consistency across the group of upgraded SGP Country Programs.

3. To define and adopt a more flexible approach for the identification of SGP Project Outcome Indicators and Targets allowing for the use of indicators and targets that are more generic without losing their alignment with the GEF Focal Areas and their indicators and targets that orient the entire GEF operation in each Operational Phase. These adjustments in the planning process and products will, in turn, have positive effects on the monitoring and evaluation system that is already working satisfactorily.

Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

4. The most important action for maintaining, reinforcing and continuing the development of the lines of work that are not yet sustainable is to maintain the SGP Country Program in Mexico as a GEF full-size project for OP6. According to the interviews maintained during the evaluation the different Mexican Governmental organizations related to the SGP have a positive view about this, in ways similar to those expressed by State Organizations, Academic groups and beneficiaries. All these stakeholders have different ways to access the GEF National Commission and make a strong case for the SGP to remain active during OP6.

5. According to what was seen, heard and analyzed during this evaluation the key areas to be considered by SGP for OP6 are those whose sustainability is still in process such as sustainable forest management, alternative tourism, home-gardens, environmental education and others. These priorities should not preclude the assignment of resources to organizations and groups willing to join the highly successful lines on organic apiculture and freshwater aquaculture with native fish species, as many groups willing to enter into these activities still require support to be able to make the change.

Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

6. Important emerging cross-cutting themes are how to create better opportunities to retain the youth in the rural areas, avoiding emigration to urban areas and/or other countries. It is also necessary to strengthen local stakeholder capacities to deal with the increasing changes in land tenure and ownership of communal lands (ejidos) which are the source of conflicts in making decisions about resources and has other implications in different initiatives (access to land, tourism attractions, rights of transit, etc.).

7. For the next Operational Phase (OP6) it is very important for the SGP Upgraded Country Program project to include a strong component on analysis of its own experiences, extraction of lessons learned, use of those lessons to develop guides, manuals and other orientation materials, and dissemination of them (and the pertinent supporting experiences) to a large national and regional Mesoamerican audience in need of this knowledge and information. This is a delayed duty that should not be postponed.

Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

A program with a history of 20 years as the Mexico SGP had many opportunities to improve and adjust its operations, and it is evident that they have been using them to advance an operation that performs very well. Therefore, even if there are minor things to be improved here and there, none of them are relevant enough to be included at the same level of relevance of the group presented in this chapter. Just the two following aspects fulfilled this relevance criterion and are described as follows.

8. The National Steering Committee should make a thorough analysis of the SGP experience to extend its influence to the neighboring State of Chiapas, which is separate from the Yucatan Peninsula despite some basic common (and distant) origins of parts of its population. SGP Mexico extended some of its activities into Chiapas in both OP4 and OP5. While this evaluation did not have a focus on this issue, the evidence shows that there are mixed results from this experience, some of it good and some problematic. The closure of the UNDP Office in Chiapas did not cause the problems but contributed to the difficulties in overseeing SGP activities in Chiapas, providing adequate technical assistance and attention, generating co-financing, etc. The evidence collected in this evaluation did not allow for a clear recommendation about maintaining or closing the SGP presence in Chiapas, but it allows for this recommendation to be made to the NSC to look at this issue carefully and make a decision about it for OP6.

9. Related with the previous point there is another issue that was put on the table a few times by different persons. The basic question is: Can, or should, the SGP be extended nationwide? Again, this is an issue larger than the scope of this evaluation, but the perspective of this evaluation based on the collected evidence is that the SGP, as it is, should remain focused in the States of Yucatan Peninsula. The level of work and the need for close interaction with local organizations and other stakeholders makes it almost impossible to effectively extend the program so broadly. Nevertheless, what can be done is to replicate the program in other parts of the country using the experience, methods and procedures used by the SGP in Yucatan. The construction of these "replicated programs" needs to be careful in order to not confuse SGP operational procedures with SGP's ethos or nature; failing to understand and consider this difference will compromise the success of the replicated programs. In concrete terms, the SGP is not just a system to deliver funds to CBOs and local NGOs; therefore, just taking these aspects (how proposals are prepared, submitted, analyzed, funded and supervised) into consideration does not guarantee the success of the new "replicated programs". Other essential aspects differentiating SGP from other granting initiatives are

a. who controls the initiative (in SGP this control is distributed among several stakeholders and no one of them has complete control, as explained abundantly in this report);
b. how to achieve a proper balance between biodiversity conservation and improvement in people's wellbeing (not just a mechanism to transfer funds to groups in need);
c. how to develop real networks of CBOs, academic and governmental organizations working together and providing the necessary knowledge, technical and financial support and committed beneficiaries that will develop the value chains (production, processing, marketing) leading to sustainability;
d. how to maintain an effective and efficient management (avoiding overstaffing, lengthy or complicated procedures and time-consuming processes) contributing to maximizing the proportion of funds reaching the final beneficiaries; and, not the least important,
e. how to develop a program that is locally owned by the communities and the States where it is active in a political context where the States are very protective of their autonomy and right to decide and almost always somewhat suspicious of exogenous initiatives.

The previous list is not an exhaustive one, but it was included as an example of the complexities to be considered when developing SGP replications in other parts of the country and to be included as things to learn from the GEF SGP Mexico Country Program's experience in addition to the procedures and formats for grant allocation.

III. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APR	Annual Project Review
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BC	Biological Corridor
BD	Biodiversity
BTOR	Back-to-office Report
CBO	Community-based Organization
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CD	Capacity Development
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPMT	Central Programme Management Team
CO	Country Office
CONABIO	National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (*Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad*)
CONAFOR	National Forestry Commission (*Comisión Nacional Forestal)*
CONANP	National Commission of Protected Areas (*Comisión Nacional de Areas Naturales Protegidas*)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTC	Technical Consultative Committee (*Comité Técnico Consultivo*)
ERC	Evaluation Resource Centre
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Fund
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green-house Gases
IAIG	Internal Audit and Investigation Group
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
ILO	International Labour Organization
IW	International Waters
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry
MBC	Mesoamerican Biological Corridor
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MRV	Measurement, Review and Verification
NCCS	National Climate Change Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PLMR	Programme on Local Risk Management (*Programa local de manejo de riesgo*)
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PPR	Project Progress Report
PSAH	Payments for Hydrological Environmental Services Programme
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RR	Resident Representative

RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SEMARNAT	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (*Secretaría de medio ambiente y recursos naturales*)
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SGP	GEF Small Grants Programme
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
STAR	System for the Transparent Allocation of Resources
tCO2 e	Tons of CO2 equivalent
UMAC	Micro-regional Units for Risk Preparedness and Management (*Unidades micro regionales de atención a contingencias*)
UMAS	Units for Wildlife Management and Conservation (*Unidades para la conservación, manejo y aprovechamiento sustentable de la vida silvestre*)
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation has the following purpose:

1. To evaluate the achievement of the Project results during OP5
2. To draw lessons from the implementation of this phase to help improve the sustainability of benefits generated during the implementation and to improve overall programmatic capabilities (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) of SGP and UNDP
3. To provide some inputs for the formulation of the SGP proposal for the GEF Sixth Operational Phase in Mexico

1.2 Scope & Methodology

Scope

The Final Evaluation assessed the main key areas related to project performance, impact and sustainability.

The addressed areas were:

a. Relevance
b. Effectiveness
c. Efficiency
d. Sustainability of Results
e. Impact

Methodology

Based on the evaluation purpose and scope, an evaluation matrix including evaluation questions, indicators, sources of information and methods to obtain information was developed and used to guide the evaluation. This matrix was included in the Evaluation Inception Report submitted to the different stakeholders before the beginning of the evaluation.

This matrix is presented as Annex 6

The evaluation process was carried out according to the following steps:

1. Reading and analysis of existing documentation (including those documents listed in the TOR and the UNDP guidelines for these evaluations*, as well as websites and information available online and documents provided directly by the visited organizations and institutions). The list of documents analyzed is included as Annex 5.
2. Development of data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides and field visits, observation and other protocols.
3. Field visit to collect primary information through interviews, observations, field visits and meetings. The itinerary of this visit is included as Annex 2. A brief summary of the experiences and small projects visited during the evaluation is included as Annex 3. The list of persons interviewed for this evaluation is included as Annex 4.

4. Preparation of a Debriefing Report immediately after the field visit. This Report was distributed to the key stakeholders for verification of information accuracy.
5. Preparation of the Draft Final Report and distribution to users established for feedback and comments.
6. Reception of comments and feedback and preparation of the "audit trail"
7. Preparation and submission of the Final Report , including verification of the facts on the basis of comments on drafts , incorporating new materials and adjustments to the Draft Final Report

1.3 Structure of the evaluation report

The contents for the report were organized on the basis of the Table of Contents included in the TOR. This Table of Contents complies and is consistent with the guidelines established in the GEF-UNDP Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Project start and duration

The Project started on July 1st, 2011 and was planned for 30 months duration to be finished by December 31, 2013. During its implementation it was extended until June 30, 2014, for a total duration of 3 years. The extension did not contemplate additional resources.

At this point it is important to highlight that this is not the typical 3-year project starting from scratch and aiming to achieve agreed specific products and results. Despite being labeled as a "project" to fit within the GEF operational structures, the SGP is a program that was established in the early 90s and is reaching 20 years of continuous operation in the Yucatan Peninsula region.

Therefore, when assessing its different aspects it is necessary to remember that the current 3-year-project is the continuation of a long program that built processes and results in a consistent way throughout this time. This aspect will be addressed later in the different sections of this Report to show how this long history influenced the results of this particular phase.

2.2 Problems that the project sought to address

Southeastern Mexico, which includes the states of Campeche, Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, and Yucatan where this project is implemented, has a great diversity of ecosystems and species as well as significant endemism.

Among other large tracts of forests, the region harbors the Lacandon rainforest constituting the largest remaining expanse of evergreen rainforests and harboring 22% of Mexico's biodiversity. The wetlands of the region include swamps with shrub/grass vegetation, wooded wetlands, and temporarily or permanently flooded forests and jungles. There are also flood-prone low rainforests in Tabasco, Campeche and Quintana Roo, and seasonally-flooded riverside forests, palms (Attalea, Roystonea) and palmettos (Acoelorrhaphe).

Important among coastal or estuarine wetlands are tidal marshes, deltas, coastal lagoons, inlets, estuaries and bays, rocky zones, dunes, and mangrove swamps, as well as beaches, where a significant portion of Mexico's tourism industry has developed. Southeastern Mexico also has some of the largest remaining tracts of mangroves in the world.

This rich diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic variability is threatened by the relentless advance of different human-induced degradation processes that over the last five centuries are affecting the region. The history of boom-bust cycles related with extensive crops of henequen (sisal), the massive extraction of mahogany from the forests, large tracts of land converted into pastures for cattle ranching, introduction of exotic species (such as tilapia) and other similar initiatives led to the destruction of large areas of natural ecosystems, the degradation of the naturally thin soils, the growing pollution of water sources and the reduction of wild populations of different species captured or extracted for commercial purposes.

This extensive use and degradation of biodiversity and natural resources did not lead to the wellbeing of the population. The states of Southeastern Mexico are among the least developed of the country (with the exception of Oaxaca and Guerrero who are among the three poorest and do not belong to this region). Wealth and poverty are unevenly distributed in the region, where a few modern and cosmopolitan urban centers such as Cancun, Merida and others coexist with extended rural areas of high population density where people live in extreme poverty creating a continuous flow of emigrants towards other parts of Mexico and other countries.

Moreover, some basic rural social structures such as the *ejidos* (a communal structure of land tenure and use) began to disband under the combined weight of youth emigration, farmers' aging and low profitability of traditional rural activities.

In this context, the SGP (and this project) aims to conserve the biodiversity and ecosystem services of Southeastern Mexico's Large Ecosystems and to help mitigate climate change through community based initiatives and actions. The project addresses biodiversity conservation and sustainable use at the landscape level, and land use, land use change and forestry, by applying an ecosystem focus when programming community interventions for sustainable resource use leading to global environmental benefits.

SGP´s history of support to sustainable resource use projects has resulted in a suite of potential interventions that have been proven to produce a double dividend of reduced habitat conversion, fragmentation or degradation and increases in the stability and sustainability of rural livelihoods.

These interventions are aimed at removing barriers to developing and implementing sustainable livelihoods and include organic apiculture, sustainable forest management and the sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products, alternative tourism, aquaculture, agro-forestry systems that replace or minimize slash-and-burn agriculture and others that protect ecosystem integrity while producing income.

2.3 Immediate and development objectives of the project

The development objective of the Project is *to support community-based initiatives and actions for sustainable livelihoods to conserve Mexico's Southeastern large ecosystems and help mitigate climate change*.

The Project objective is "*Community-based initiatives and actions for sustainable livelihoods conserve Mexico's Southeastern large ecosystems and help mitigate climate change*"

The project has three immediate objectives (or outcomes in the project strategic framework)

Outcome 1: Improved conservation of forest, wetland and coastal-marine biological resources in community-owned lands in the production landscapes of Mexico's Southeastern region.

Outcome 2: Carbon stocks in community-owned forestlands maintained or increased

Outcome 3: Increased project management capacity among communities and knowledge acquired through project implementation systematized and disseminated

2.4 Baseline Indicators established

Indicators and baseline situation is defined in the Project Document (PRODOC) as summarized in the following table.

	Indicator	Baseline
Project Objective Community-based initiatives and actions for sustainable livelihoods conserve Mexico's Southeastern large ecosystems and help mitigate climate change	1. Increased area (hectares) of sustainably managed production landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in the following ecosystems: • Sub-evergreen tropical forest • Coastal-marine areas • Montane forest	Area under sustainable management by local communities in selected Southeastern ecosystems: • 113,157 hectares of sub-evergreen tropical forest • 99.3 hectares of deltaic estuarine ecosystem • 30,000 hectares of coastal lagoon and wetlands • 10,500 hectares of montane forest
	2. Reduced habitat fragmentation in community lands between protected areas in the Palmar – Dzilam and Sian Ka'an - Calakmul biological corridors Measured in percentage of habitat loss reduction	Sian Ka'an-Calakmul BC: The annual rate of forest conversion to grasslands in the last 20 years is estimated at 7% while the annual rate of forest conversion to agricultural land is 6%. Dzilam – Palmar BC: The original sand dune vegetation has been reduced by 48%. The current annual rate of sand dune vegetation loss is 3%. The rate of mangrove loss in the period 2000-03 was about 40%. The current annual deforestation rate is 1.84%
	3. Reduced risk of IAS introduction in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and improved control of selected IAS Measured in number of hectares monitored and managed by local communities for detection and control of IAS or in percentage of reduction of specific IAS	Mexico has a National Strategy for the Prevention, Control and Eradication of Invasive Alien Species. However, an implementation plan has yet to be developed. There is no system by which communities can systematically provide early warning on IAS introductions and receive technical assistance for the eradication or control of IAS in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems IAS baseline information will be collected for each area and species at the time of grant approval
	4. Carbon stocks maintained or increased in community-owned lands trough avoidance of land use conversion from forest land to other uses; avoidance of wildfires and slash-and-burn practices; and through sustainable forest management, reforestation and natural regeneration Measured in tCO_2e/year	Carbon stocks loss and GHG emissions related to land use and land use change in community lands in project area to be determined at inception of project, including: • Current rate of forest land conversion in areas affected by hurricanes • Current rate of forest land conversion to agriculture and livestock uses in project area • Current area under slash and burn practices in project area • Current frequency and number of hectares affected by wildfires in community lands • Reforestation practices in last 2 years in community lands • Current rate of conversion of area under shade coffee to other coffee varieties

	5. Increased number of communities with enhanced SFM capacities obtaining and retaining certification and marketing their timber and non-timber forest products Measured by the number of certificates obtained/retained and by tons of timber and non-timber forest products sold	• 7 forest *ejidos* in Quintana Roo have FSC certification • FSC certification applications from 2 *ejidos* are under review of which 1 in Campeche and 1 in Chiapas • There are 714 UMAs with approved permits nationally but 90.8% are in 4 States (Sonora, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas) while the rest (9.2) are in other parts of Mexico. SGP has supported 8 UMAs in Southeastern Mexico of which 2 have obtained permits (for crocodile) while the other 6 are still awaiting SEMARNAT approval. • 4 communities with certified organic apiculture • A baseline per product (tons of product sold) will be established at the inception of the project to monitor markets for community products
	6. Increased area of forest and non-forest lands under good management practices Measured in number of hectares with community sustainable production practices per ecosystem	• 30,000 hectares of coastal lagoons; • 90 hectares of inland lakes and 9.3 hectares of wetlands. • 17,000 hectares of forests being conserved through non-organic apiculture • 10,500 hectares of montane forest • 2,834 hectares of agro-ecological or agro-forestry systems and 24 hectares of tree nurseries with 207 plant species.
	7. Enhanced communities livelihoods and climate change risk reduction Measured in tons of food/crop production, income or savings, and risk management plans as a proxy for climate induced disaster preparedness	• Approximately 1,000 families targeted by the project produce some 200 tons of food/year Baseline to be provided at the time of grant approval for specific communities • 124 local communities with risk management plans
	8. Stakeholders empowered and informed for effective conservation and sustainable use of resources and avoiding land use change Measured through qualitative assessments done during training events and technical assistance processes	• Over 400 SGP grantees from previous programme phases with increased capacities and skills to effective biodiversity conservation • SGP had not targeted land use change avoidance in previous phases, therefore the baseline is 0
	9. Individual grant performance enhanced by increased community know-how on project design, M&E and adaptive management Measured by the rate of success of community projects	• The rated of individual grant success in previous SGP phases is 85% • Baseline concerning community know-how will be determined for each grantee at the time of grant selection
<u>Outcome 1</u> Improved conservation of forest, wetland and coastal-marine biological resources in community-owned lands in the production landscapes of Mexico's Southeastern region	Increased number of land/resource use management plans developed and approved	Existing management plans: • 2 *ejido* forest management plans • 8 draft UMAS management plans • 2 lobster fisheries management plans • 5 freshwater fish species management plans
	Reduced impact of unsustainable fisheries in the Caribbean coast and Yucatan Channel Measured by number of fishing boats fishing at a given time and by number of fishermen as a proxy of pressure over marine resources in the project area Increased number of low intensity eco-friendly aquaculture initiatives in deltaic, estuarine and coastal lagoon ecosystems providing sustainable livelihoods and helping control aquatic invasive species	• Fisheries productivity (catching effort) in Mexico declined from 19.8 tons in 1996 to 14.2 tons in 2006. In the project area it is more severe: In Campeche it declined from 21 tons in 1994 to 7.7 in 2000; in Quintana Roo from 8.7 to 3.7; and in Yucatan from 20.3 tons to 6.5 in the same period • Intensive large-scale aquaculture production is based on the exploitation of a limited number of species such as shrimp and causes negative impacts on coastal ecosystems. Fresh and brackish water aquaculture is based on exotic species such as Tilapias, which also have a negative effect on aquatic biodiversity. There is no baseline data concerning number of low intensity aquaculture initiatives with native species in the Southeastern

		region but SGP financed 65 initiatives in previous phases
	Increased number of hectares of coastal and marine habitats conserved through sustainable alternative tourism (community tourism ventures reduce pressure from fisheries)	• 53 initiatives on alternative tourism
	Number of commercial networks for sustainable/ certified timber and non-timber products and number of communities participating	• No commercial network for timber and non-timber forest products has been established in the 5 micro-regions
	Number of communities with enhanced production capacity for non-timber forest products and business skills (for those with commercial use) measured by the number of products and the volume of production	• Specific baseline data will be gathered for each species • 100% of non-organic honey is bought by local intermediaries who control access to local, regional and international markets • Technical study for community production *Pimenta dioica officinalis* (Allspice)
	Percentage of grantee communities actively monitoring and controlling invasive alien species in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems	• There is no community programme for monitoring and control of IAS in the project area, however, prior SGP work has help start substituting IAS species in rural development programmes by native species.
<u>Outcome 2</u> Carbon stocks in community-owned forest lands maintained or increased	Number of hectares of forestlands with avoided land use change Number of hectares of agricultural land without slash and burn Number of hectares of forestlands with increased vegetation cover	• 20,000 of forests impacted by hurricanes are at risk (fires and land use change) • Slash and burn practices are widespread in the project area. Specific baseline data will be gathered at grant approval • Specific baseline data will be gathered at the time of grant approval for specific areas
	LULUCF monitoring system at the project and country program level established and applied	• There is no prior experience in the region concerning measuring and monitoring carbon stocks related to community activities
	Percentage of communities implementing their CC risk preparedness plans in case of hurricanes or other severe weather events	• 100% of 124 communities with CC risk preparedness plans have put it in effect
<u>Outcome 3</u> Increased project management capacity among communities and knowledge acquired through project implementation systematized and disseminated	Percentage of successful community projects	• 85% of SGP-funded projects rated as successful by evaluations (outcomes, outputs and targets met and likelihood of sustainability)
	Number of community projects that apply adaptive management	• 80% of CBOs and NGOs implementing SGP funded projects implement their monitoring and evaluation activities and apply adaptive management
	Project information system includes up-to-date and user friendly data	• SGP Mexico has a project database and an information system, however, it requires updating and upgrading to meet the requirements of the global SGP and the Mexico programme.
	Number of community leaders and members with enhanced capacities for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem management and conservation	• 700 community leaders trained
	Increased number of communities that receive adequate technical assistance for their activities Measured by percentage of communities reporting satisfaction with quality and timeliness of support	• 45% of communities satisfied with support received
	Number of additional communities made aware of results of SGP supported activities	• N/A

Analyzing this table it becomes evident that the results logic is good but there are too many indicators. This may be acceptable for a project doing direct implementation with its own staff and resources and, therefore, the possibility of making and implementing decisions. This is not the case of the SGP who implements through funding proposals submitted on a voluntary basis by other organizations.

2.5 Main stakeholders

The main stakeholders of the project are the community groups who will design, implement, monitor and evaluate small grant projects. These beneficiaries also contribute significant in-kind co-financing to the projects (land, infrastructure, tools, labor, and other inputs).

Some NGOs also receive grants when local communities are not able to directly manage SGP funding. An important feature of SGP in Mexico is the network of accompanying organizations who are locally based NGOs that provide technical support to community-based organizations; they are a key component for the sustainability of SGP interventions.

Accompanying organizations are independent NGOs that have their own sources of funding and have professional staff. Their main objective is to provide technical support to community-based organizations. Because of their location near the SGP beneficiaries and their understanding of local culture, these organizations are well placed to assist the communities throughout the SGP grant implementation cycle. Some of these organizations also assist SGP to monitor CBO project implementation at the local level by helping communities apply participatory M&E and collecting information and data to track indicators.

NGOs contribute significant amounts of in-kind co-financing and in some cases they also contribute cash co-financing.

The numbers of different types of organizations receiving resources from SGP during OP5 are:

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Community based organizations	40	43.4
Indigenous community based organizations	19	20.7
NGOs	22	23.9
Indigenous NGOs	11	12.0
TOTAL	92	100.0

Other important stakeholders are the National Steering Committee (NSC) members comprising representatives of civil society, government and academia who provide essential governance for the Country Programme, including strategic guidance and networking with broader constituencies in country. NSC members work without remuneration.

Finally, State Government entities and some local branches of Federal Government entities contribute cash and in-kind co-financing and technical assistance to the project.

2.6 Expected Results

The expected results of the Project are also included in the Project Strategic Results Framework (SRF). The following table presents a summary of the project expected results.

	Indicator	Targets. End of Project
Project Objective Community-based initiatives and actions for sustainable livelihoods conserve Mexico's Southeastern large ecosystems and help mitigate climate change	1. Increased area (hectares) of sustainably managed production landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in the following ecosystems: • Sub-evergreen tropical forest • Coastal-marine areas • Montane forest	At the end of a three year period communities conserve biodiversity and sustainably manage the following additional areas in selected ecosystems: • 70,000 hectares of sub-evergreen tropical forest • 6,000 hectares of deltaic estuarine ecosystem • 9,000 hectares of coastal lagoon and wetlands • 1,000 hectares of montane forest
	2. Reduced habitat fragmentation in community lands between protected areas in the Palmar – Dzilam and Sian Ka'an - Calakmul biological corridors Measured in percentage of habitat loss reduction	Forest areas remain the same or increase in at least 50% of the land of grantee communities in the Sian Ka'an- Calakmul BC In the Dzilam – Palmar BC sand dune vegetation loss will be arrested (0% loss) in community areas supported by SGP The rate of mangrove forest loss will not increase in the area of SGP-influence, i.e. ≤ 1.84% per year Mangroves remain healthy as an indicator of adequate water flow from hummock (Peten) areas
	3. Reduced risk of IAS introduction in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and improved control of selected IAS Measured in number of hectares monitored and managed by local communities for detection and control of IAS or in percentage of reduction of specific IAS	Communities' participation in IAS detection, eradication and control achieve the following: • 10,000 hectares of water bodies (lagoons, wetlands and river deltas) with community systems to control Loricariidae (in particular *Plecostomus sp)*; • 8 reef areas with a community system to detect *Pterois volitans*; • 10% reduction of *Tilapia spp* and *Oreochromis spp* in the protected areas of Pantanos de Centla and the Términos Lagoon. • 10% reduction of plant IAS in community lands with SGP interventions (including species such as *Gmelina arborea, Elaeis guineensis, Leucaena leucocephala, and Hevea Brasiliensis*)
	4. Carbon stocks maintained or increased in community-owned lands trough avoidance of land use conversion from forest land to other uses; avoidance of wildfires and slash-and-burn practices; and through sustainable forest management, reforestation and natural regeneration	• 442,283 tons of CO2e/year mitigated through restoration and enhancement of vegetation cover in community-owned forest lands and avoidance of wildfires • 2,800 tons of CO2 e/year maintained or increased through avoided land use change in community forest and non-forest areas • Reduced GHG emissions of 987,375 tons of CO2 e/year through avoided slash and burn practices
	5. Increased number of communities with enhanced SFM capacities obtaining and retaining certification and marketing their timber and non-timber forest products Measured by the number of certificates obtained/retained and by tons of timber and non-timber forest products sold	• At least 50% of the additional 4 forest *ejidos* supported by SGP obtain and retain FSC certification for sustainable timber • 18 communities successfully producing a variety of non-timber forest products, with sustainable management plans of which at least 10 community wildlife conservation management units (UMAs) established and with their operation legalized and certified by SEMARNAT. • 4 communities retain their organic apiculture certification and • On average the volume of sustainable community products sold in local, national and international markets increases by 15% over the project period

	6. Increased area of forest and non-forest lands under good management practices Measured in number of hectares with community sustainable production practices per ecosystem	• 2,000 hectares of freshwater ecosystems and 3,450 hectares of coastal lagoons conserved through low intensity, native species community aquaculture programmes • 20,000 hectares of forest ecosystems used for certified organic apiculture, producing 1,000 tons of honey • 7,000 hectares of forest ecosystems conserved through sustainable non-timber forest products • 5,550 hectares of coastal and forest ecosystems used for sustainable tourism • 1,500 hectares with avoided land-use change and sedentary agriculture using agro-ecological and agro-forestry systems
	7. Enhanced communities livelihoods and climate change risk reduction Measured in tons of food/crop production, income or savings, and risk management plans as a proxy for climate induced disaster preparedness	• 100% increase in food production (i.e., 1,000 families producing 450 tons/year) • 25% increase in profits for beekeepers obtaining organic certification • 140 local risk prevention and management plans
	8. Stakeholders empowered and informed for effective conservation and sustainable use of resources and avoiding land use change Measured through qualitative assessments done during training events and technical assistance processes.	• At least 80 new grantees empowered and with increased capacities for effective conservation and sustainable use of natural resources • At least 50 new grantees empowered and with increased capacities to undertake activities with the aim of avoiding land use change in forest and non-forest lands

	9. Individual grant performance enhanced by increased community know-how on project design, M&E and adaptive management (Measured by the rate of success of community projects)	• The 85% rate of success of individual grants will be maintained or increased.
<u>Outcome 1</u> Improved conservation of forest, wetland and coastal-marine biological resources in community-owned lands in the production landscapes of Mexico's Southeastern region	Increased number of land/resource use management plans developed and approved	The following new management plans will be delivered: • 4 *ejido* forest management plans • 18 sustainable non-timber products management plans including 10 UMAS management plans (see species below) • 4 lobster/sea cucumber fisheries management plans • 9 freshwater fish species aquaculture management plans
	Reduced impact of unsustainable fisheries in the Caribbean coast and Yucatan Channel Measured by number of fishing boats fishing at a given time and by number of fishermen as a proxy of pressure over marine resources in the project area Increased number of low intensity eco-friendly aquaculture initiatives in deltaic, estuarine and coastal lagoon ecosystems providing sustainable livelihoods and helping control aquatic invasive species	• 15% reduction of pressure over marine resources. • 9 aquatic native species[1] sustainably managed • At least 525 tons of biomass produced annually by end of project • Sustainable fisheries for *Holothuria spp* (Sea cucumber) and *Palinurus argus* (Spiny lobster) • 2,000 hectares of deltaic-estuarine habitat sustainably managed. • Substitution of IAS by native species in SGP supported communities (at least 70% of existing community aquaculture activities that use exotic species substitute these by native species) and 100% of new aquaculture activities use native species

[1] *Crassostrea virginica, Petenia splendida, Lipesosteus tropicus, Cichlasoma urophthalmus, Poecilia Mexicana, Centropomus undecimalis, Callinectes rathbunae, Holothuria spp, and Palinurus argus*

	Increased number of hectares of coastal and marine habitats conserved through sustainable alternative tourism (community tourism ventures reduce pressure from fisheries)	• Two new tourism circuits in 5,550 hectares of coastal dunes, coastal lagoons, mangroves, wetlands and/or forests • Existing tourism networks increase by 20% the number of affiliated CBOs • 300 members of various organizations receive training on alternative tourism • Strengthened alternative tourism network "Puerta Verde" in Northern Quintana Roo
	Number of commercial networks for sustainable/ certified timber and non-timber products and number of communities participating	• At least 2 commercial networks formed with 20 communities affiliated and participating: • A new network composed of aquaculture production communities for the Centla Wetlands and the Terminos Lagoon • A new network bringing together communities engaged in timber and non-timber forest products
	Number of communities with enhanced production capacity for non-timber forest products and business skills (for those with commercial use) measured by the number of products and the volume of production	• 18 communities sustainably managing 48 ornamental plant species (e.g., orchids, palms, and *Beaucamea*), 40 species of medicinal plants, 8 wild animal species for commercial production under UMAS (*Agriocharis ocellata, Amazona farinosa, Crax rubra, Crocodylus moreletii, Mazama americana, Odocoileus virginianus, Penelope purpurascens y Tayassu tajacu).* For a more complete list of species see Annex F) • Technical study for the commercial production of gum from Chicle (*Manilkara zapota)* and production of *Pimenta dioica officinalis* (Allspice) • 600 families will obtain income or food from non-timber forest products • 14 communities with enhanced capacities and infrastructure (285 apiaries) producing organic honey and obtaining certification • Each beehive produces 70 kg of honey • 100% of honey produced is accepted by organic markets
	Percentage of grantee communities actively monitoring and controlling invasive alien species in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems	• 50% of SGP grantees actively contribute to monitor and control at least 5 plant species (*Gmelina arborea, Elaeis Guineensis, and Leucaena leucocephala*), and aquatic IAS (*Pterois Volitans, Oreochromis sp, Plecostomus, sp*)
<u>Outcome 2</u> Carbon stocks in community-owned forest lands maintained or increased	Number of hectares of forestlands with avoided land use change Number of hectares of agricultural land without slash and burn Number of hectares of forestlands with increased vegetation cover	• 20,000 hectares of community-owned forests impacted by hurricanes and that they no longer value as an asset conserved and mitigating 2,800 tCO_2e/year • 71,000 hectares of avoided land-use change mitigate 71,710 tCO_2 e/year • 1,500 hectares under sedentary agriculture without slash-and-burn mitigate 987,375 tCO_2 e/year • Reduced wildfires by 20 hectares annually mitigate 438,833 tCO_2e/year • 15,000 hectares reforested mitigate 3,450 tCO_2 e/year
	LULUCF monitoring system at the project and country programme level established and applied	• At least 50% of SGP grantees implementing project activities on land use, land use change and forest ecosystem conservation will contribute to monitoring Carbon stocks • SGP country programme team and selected National Steering Committee members trained in carbon measurement and applying the knowledge to assess Carbon benefits at the country programme level

	Percentage of communities implementing their CC risk preparedness plans in case of hurricanes or other severe weather events	• 100% of communities with a risk management plan actively implemented
Outcome 3 Increased project management capacity among communities and knowledge acquired through project implementation systematized and disseminated	Percentage of successful community projects	• The current 85% rate of successful projects will be maintained or increased during this SGP phase.
	Number of community projects that apply adaptive management	• At least 80% of projects show evidence of timely course change or improvements in project delivery based on M&E inputs and training
	Project information system includes up-to-date and user friendly data	• Data organized by ecosystem, micro-region and type of intervention available for 100% of projects approved under GEF -5
	Number of community leaders and members with enhanced capacities for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem management and conservation	• At least 4 individuals per project with enhanced knowledge and leadership capacities to work with communities in sustainable ecosystem and resources management as well as in business plan development and marketing of community produced goods and services. • Of these at least 1 female leader per project.
	Increased number of communities that receive adequate technical assistance for their activities Measured by percentage of communities reporting satisfaction with quality and timeliness of support	• 100% of communities report satisfaction with technical assistance and other support received
	Number of additional communities made aware of results of SGP supported activities	• 20% of beekeepers in the Yucatan Peninsula made aware of the results of SGP-supported organic apiculture activities • Knowledge from experiences in sustainable agriculture and agroforestry systematized through participatory evaluations with 17 communities and shared with a similar number of organizations through exchange visits, presentations, manuals and visual materials • Results of sustainable forest management activities shared with all Forest ejidos in the South of the States of Quintana Roo and Campeche • Experiences of alternative tourism and sustainable fisheries systematized and shared with at least 10 fisher communities in 4 States (Tabasco, Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo)

The same aspect highlighted previously at the Indicators table is visible here. There are too many targets (70) for a project with the implementing characteristics of SGP in Mexico (and also in general). The decision to apply strictly the guidelines of the typical GEF full-sized projects to the SGP led to this excessive number of indicators and targets that later created problems with the monitoring and reporting of tasks and with some aspects of this evaluation.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 PROJECT DESIGN / FORMULATION

3.1.1 Understanding the SGP nature as a Project

A first key aspect that should be kept in mind when analyzing the SGP OP5 Project in Mexico is that this is an unusual project. A typical Project defines results to be achieved, inputs to be used to generate outputs to reach the results (all evidenced by indicators) and the required resources (funding an time) to perform the activities. The SGP Project does not work this way.

The SGP was created by GEF as a funding window to support projects from CBOs (community based organizations) and small and medium NGOs. It was established to balance the portfolio of full-size and medium-sized projects aimed at Governmental organizations and, to some extent, large NGOs (national and international).

Because of this origin, the SGP was established as a GEF corporate program located in UNDP and a few implementing organizations (originally UNDP, UNEP and World Bank). This GEF-UNDP SGP has a centralized unit at UNDP Headquarters and from there the national SGPs (as the Mexico SGP) were coordinated and funded. The national SGPs, in turn, channeled small funds (usually less than US$ 50,000) to CBOs and NGOs in the form of small grants with specific requisites.

This initiative was highly successful as documented in different evaluations and it was renewed with each one of the different GEF OPs. Therefore, and given both its continuity and *modus operandi* these national SGPs became programs, in the sense of long-term interventions based on the demands from local communities and civil society.

The SGP success led to increased demand from the countries, quick program growth and the expected problems of managing a program in dozens of different countries with a limited budget. Therefore, at the end of OP4 there was a decision to “upgrade” or “graduate” the most successful and best established national SGPs to a different category. The chosen way to accommodate these new graduated SGPs was to incorporate them as full-size projects within the GEF national portfolios starting with GEF OP5.

Therefore, at the end of OP5, these so called “projects” are evaluated in a similar way to the traditional GEF full-size projects. Obviously, it is necessary to briefly recall the SGP history to understand that this type of full-size projects have some very specific characteristics that should not be forgotten at evaluation time.

A key aspect to be considered is that SGP Projects do not implement directly. They don´t have staff, resources, equipment or mandate for direct implementation of activities leading to results and fulfillment of agreed indicators. These projects work by opening calls for proposals from CBOs and NGOs with a scope of areas of work based on the Project Document; therefore, the implementation of activities and achievements of results depends on the interest and willingness of other organizations to submit proposals within the defined scope of actions. If the organizations do not submit proposals the calls go unanswered and there are no actions made, money spent or results achieved.

Considering these aspects it is easy to understand that different aspects of the planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle are significantly affected by these conditions of operation and they need to be considered when assessing the different components and parts of the project cycle.

3.1.2 Analysis of Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)

The analysis of the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) led to mixed results. On one hand the matrix was properly done (as detailed below); on the other hand, and considering the SGP nature, it is too detailed at the level of Outcome targets and, as shown at a later section (see 3.2.5), almost impossible to fulfill properly.

Therefore, the SRF analysis is divided in two aspects: SRF Logic and structure, and SRF Indicators and targets

SRF Logic and structure

The analysis of the Strategic Results Framework in terms of logic and structures led to the following results, supported by the observations and interviews carried out during the field visits:

1. The project's objectives and components were clear, practicable and reasonably feasible within the established timeframe.

2. The capacities of the executing institution (UNDP) and the local counterparts were properly considered at project design.

3. Lessons from other relevant projects were incorporated in the project design.

4. The partnership arrangements were properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval.

5. Counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements were in place at project entry.

SRF Indicators and Targets

The SRF includes 32 Indicators and 70 Targets to be achieved in 30 months on the basis of almost a hundred different projects implemented by different organizations whose objectives, indicators and targets are proposed by the project planners with these projects being selected on the basis of an open call.

It is clear from the above paragraph that there are two different realities whose matching needs to be improved. On the one hand, there is the usual structure of a GEF full-size project (usually implemented by one organization that spends the funds directly or through contracts). This model is consistent with the existing SRF as the implementing organization has all the means required to achieve the targets.

On the other hand, there is the SGP implementing structure that works on the base of call for proposals aimed to CBOs and NGOs. These calls define the GEF-SGP areas of interest for the proposals but sometimes there are no proposals for some areas or themes of the calls, or the presented proposals are not adequate or, most frequently, the indicators and targets of those proposals do not match precisely the SGP targets.

This mismatch creates several inconveniences to be analyzed later, and creates an obvious need to develop specific guidelines for the planning of the upgraded SGP projects. These guidelines need to comply with GEF standards but they should also take into consideration the specific implementation mechanisms of the upgraded SGP.

3.1.3 Assumptions and Risks

Assumptions and risks were properly considered at project design.

Risks

The identified main risks were:

- Climate Threats (high risk)

Southeastern Mexico is affected every year by extreme weather events (hurricanes and other cyclonic events, forest fires, seasonal droughts, etc.) that threaten ecosystems and human communities. The project includes activities to reduce risks, managing risks at local level, building upon the experience of the Local Risk Management Programme initially developed by the Mexico SGP that proved to be effective in reducing the social and economic impacts of hurricanes and extreme weather events.

- Resistance to change of agricultural practices (high risk)

Maya communities in the project geographic area have practiced slash and burn agriculture for thousands of years and these practices are deeply rooted in Maya culture. The project will work with the younger generation who is more educated, has a better understanding of the new demographic, environmental and economic conditions under which they have to produce and earn a living, and may be more open to new technologies and practices.

- Market Competition (medium risk)

Sustainable production is usually more expensive than conventional methods. Producers engaged in sustainable production systems compete with similar products and services produced by cheaper unsustainable systems, resulting in unequal competition. This risk can be mitigated by optimizing and scaling-up production, and by certifying products as biodiversity friendly to capture a premium price.

- Running a grants program with civil society organizations that have a low level of technical and management capacity (low risk)

SGP has a past performance rating of 85% achievement. Risk mitigation systems in place (e.g., grantee capacity development support, appropriate rates of grant disbursement, working in a flexible manner that responds to the strengths and weaknesses of grantees, periodic monitoring visits) will be strengthened to maintain or improve this rate of achievement.

Assumptions

They are included in the Strategic Results Framework. A major assumption is that the National Coordination team will continue receiving effective support from its traditional partners – the National Steering Committee, the accompanying organizations and local governments, which are essential for a two-staff team to deliver on a large, complex and demanding project.

3.1.4 Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design

This SGP Project incorporates lessons and experiences gained from all previous phases of the process. The current SGP project inherits around 20 years of experience in working with CBOs, NGOs and other organizations and several aspects learned from that experience were used to design this project.

Among these lessons it is useful to highlight the evolution of project regionalization. At the initial stages the calls for proposals were organized for the entire region,; from there the process evolved into a regionalization by political division (State, Municipality) and from there to the current system of Large Ecosystems.

Other important lesson is the importance of requesting organizations interested in participating in the calls for proposals to register properly with the SGP before launching the pertinent calls.

The monitoring and evaluation system has also evolved, and will continue evolving, to adapt to the changing requirements of GEF, UNDP and the partner organizations.

3.1.5 Planned stakeholder participation

In a large and complex project such as SGP there are different stakeholders who participate in different ways using different mechanisms.

A key stakeholder participation mechanism is the National Steering Committee (NSC) composed of individuals from organizations independent from SGP and the partner and executing organizations. The NSC members are appointed by the UNDP Resident Representative with clearance by the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor.

The NSC is integrated by government and non-government organizations with a non-government majority, a UNDP representative, and individuals with expertise in the GEF Focal Areas. It is responsible for grant selection and approval, and for deciding the overall strategy of the SGP in the country. The Government is usually represented by the GEF Operational Focal Point or by another high level representative of relevant ministries or institutions. The National Coordination reports to the NSC on Country Program progress, to the UNDP RR as primary supervisor, and to CPMT regarding the SGP Operational Guidelines. Therefore, several key stakeholders are involved through the NSC.

Other mechanisms are the “accompanying organizations”, usually NGOs (but in several cases different units and programs in academic organizations, cooperatives, etc.) who provide technical advice and assistance to different CBOs and serve as a bridge between these CBOs

(funded or not by the SGP) and the SGP Coordination and/or the NSC. Some of the second degree organizations supported by SGP such as networks, committees, cooperatives of organizations and others provide an additional level of participation as, again, they serve as a bridge between CBOs (funded or not by the SGP) and the SGP project.

These mechanisms, mostly informal (excepting the NSC), seem to be fairly efficient in disseminating SGP calls and lines of action and also to bring information, interests and priorities from local organizations and CBOs to the SGP, directly through the National Coordination or to the NSC. In any case, this flow of information is very useful and used by the NSC in their decision making and orientation to the SGP.

3.1.6 Replication approach

The project emphasizes replication and upscaling within their selected geographical areas. Moreover, the replication component of the submitted proposals is a criterion used by the NSC to allocate funding.

SGP Project Component 3 is devoted to knowledge management and capacity development of community organizations and their members, which are essential for replication. SGP helps to identify best practices and make this information available to other communities and development practitioners to promote uptake by other communities within the project target areas and beyond.

During the OP5 phase the project also pursued upgrading and up-scaling of prior successful practices. For example, SGP success with introducing effective apiculture practices among local communities and linking these with biodiversity conservation was upgraded by supporting communities to achieve organic certification and to be up-scaled by establishing commercial networks to help a large number of communities take control of honey marketing at the international level.

Similarly, additional communities received SGP support to develop or strengthen their tourism network association and include new members, which in turn will help promote tourism ventures and improve the quality of services. The strengthened network is also active in improving the marketing efforts of the alternative tourism initiatives aiming to help them to be able to compete successfully with other tourism operators.

These short examples show the double approach of SGP Mexico to replication: a) horizontal replication aiming to bring more organizations, families and peasants into the different alternatives promoted and funded by SGP, and b) vertical replication (upscaling) aiming to expand the activities of the existing organizations and networks into the value chain, looking to achieve a larger vertical integration, increased benefits and improved sustainability of the initiatives.

3.1.7 UNDP comparative advantage

The UNDP Country Office is the business unit in UNDP for the SGP project and is responsible for ensuring that the project meets its objective and delivers on its targets. The Resident Representative signs the grant agreements with beneficiary organizations. The Country Office should also make available its expertise in various environment and development fields. It should also provide other types of support at the local level such as infrastructure and financial

management services, as required. UNDP is also represented in the NSC, and should participate actively in NSC activities (SGP orientation, grant allocation and monitoring, etc.).

In the specific case of SGP Mexico the absence of UNOPS in the country led to the delegation of some of the UNOPS tasks to UNDP. While this is not an arrangement exclusive to Mexico, it is something to be highlighted as it represents a small departure from the original arrangement for SGP upgraded programs because UNDP is taking a larger administration role than planned..

While some of the listed activities and duties can be performed by other organizations, it is evident that UNDP has some comparative advantages in some aspects relevant to SGP. Among them its specialization in development issues, its relationships with the whole range of Governmental organizations related to development and also environment (particularly at the national –federal-level) and its access to specialized networks of conservation and development experts and networks both nationally and internationally. All these characteristics make UNDP and SGP natural allies in the task of disseminating the SGP experiences far beyond the SGP region of intervention.

A UNDP shortcoming in relation to SGP is that most of UNDP activities take place at high political and institutional levels, and this implies a large gap in relation to the community-based focus and activities of SGP. UNDP usually has a number of large projects operating in the field, but in most cases the focus of the key stakeholders of these projects are not CBOs. So, even when these UNDP projects are helpful in bridging the mentioned gap, there is always a risk for misunderstandings, different views and priorities, etc. This seems to be a systemic issue and probably not exclusive of the situation in Mexico.

3.1.8 Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

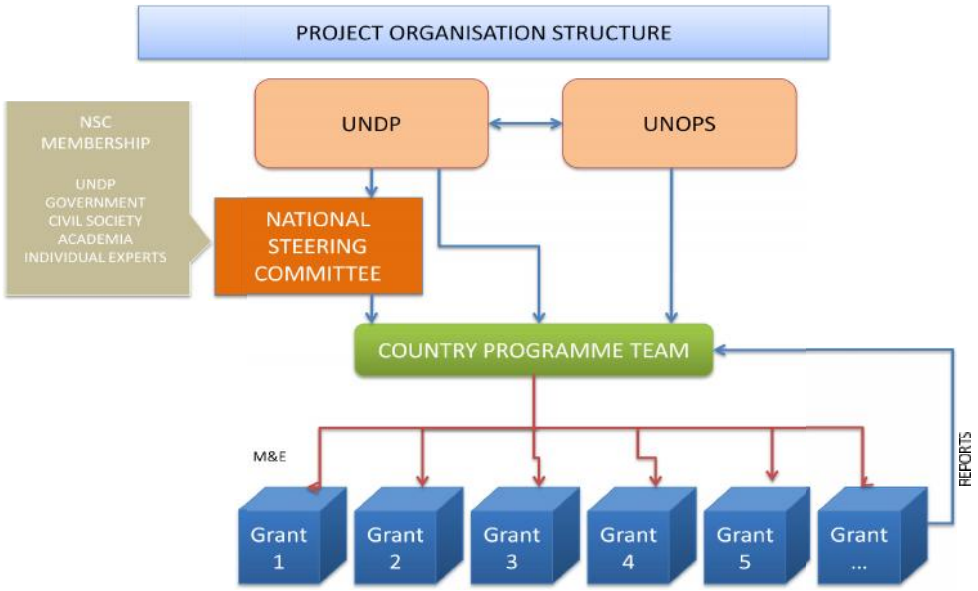
The links between the SGP and other related interventions in the regions are summarized in the following table.

Initiative and Organization(s)	Relevance to SGP	Brief description of links with SGP
El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve: Habitat Enhancement in Productive Landscapes	There are several experiences about biodiversity conservation in the production landscape of the Biosphere Reserve, buffer and influence zones (through cultivation of coffee under tree shade, productive reconversion of coffee production regimes, and promotion of sustainable production opportunities) that will be useful to SGP grantees.	The majority of community organizations in the buffer and influence zones of the El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve require continued support to maintain and expand their biodiversity-friendly activities in coordination with the Reserve authorities.
Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC)	SGP- Mexico has a long standing collaboration with the MBC to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through co-financing agreements in biological corridors in the states of Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan. In its new stage named “Fostering sustainable and competitive production systems consistent with the conservation of biodiversity” SGP had the opportunity to strengthen this relationship.	SGP coordinated with the MBC the provision of support to the expansion of environmentally friendly productive activities.

Initiative and Organization(s)	Relevance to SGP	Brief description of links with SGP
Integrated Assessment and Management of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem (IAMGMLME)	This trans-boundary project is oriented to build capacities and institutional planning to conserve this critical ecosystem. Some specific demonstrations activities in the Laguna del Carmen micro-region are relevant to SGP.	SGP coordinates pilot projects to conserve the deltaic estuarine large ecosystem with IAMGMLME
Mitigating Climate Change through Sustainable Forest Management and Capacity Building in the Southern States of Mexico (Campeche, Chiapas and Oaxaca)	SGP–Mexico developed strategies and tools, and strengthened the capacities of local communities to carry out activities that helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maintained or increased carbon capture in the forest ecosystems by financing LULUCF activities. Activities of this SFM initiative are highly relevant to SGP's work.	The Mexican SGP cooperated with the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) to co-finance poor and vulnerable rural community-based organizations.
FCPF funded R-PP and REDD+ Strategy preparation	A multi-stakeholder technical advisory committee has been created and appointed as advisory body for the GT REDD. Concerning Monitoring Reporting and Verification, Mexico is a demonstration country for GEO Forest Carbon Tracking.	SGP collaborated with the Technical Advisory Committee (CTC-REDD+), and followed up the development of the REDD+ strategy for Mexico to ensure coordination and complementarity. It also cooperated with the REDD+ pilots in Quintana Roo and Chiapas

3.1.9 Management arrangements

The following figure shows the project organizational structure. The roles and responsibilities of the various components are summarized immediately after.



According to the approved Project Document, the management arrangements for the SGP OP5 projects are as follows:

UNDP provides overall program oversight and takes responsibility for standard GEF project cycle management services beyond assistance and oversight of project design and negotiation, including project monitoring, periodic evaluations, troubleshooting, and reporting to the GEF. UNDP will also provide high level technical and managerial support through the recently established Communities Cluster within EEG, and from a UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) and other members of the regional teams, who will be responsible for project oversight for upgraded Country Programme projects. SGP CPMT will monitor for compliance of upgraded Country Programmes with SGP core policies and procedures.

In accordance with the global SGP Operational Guidelines guiding overall project implementation in Mexico, the UNDP Resident Representative appoints the National Steering Committee (NSC) members. The NSC, composed of government and non-government organizations with a non-government majority, a UNDP representative, and individuals with expertise in the GEF Focal Areas, is responsible for grant selection and approval and for determining the overall strategy of the SGP in the country. NSC members serve without remuneration and rotate periodically in accordance with its rules of procedure. The Government is usually represented by the GEF Operational Focal Point or by another high level representative of relevant ministries or institutions.

The Country Office is the business unit in UNDP for the SGP project and is responsible to ensure the project meets its objective and delivers on its targets. The Resident Representative signs the grant agreements with beneficiary organizations. The Country Office will make available its expertise in various environment and development fields as shown below. It will also provide other types of support at the local level such as infrastructure and financial management services, as required. UNDP will be represented in the NSC, and will actively participate in grant monitoring activities.

The National SGP Coordination is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. This includes supporting NSC strategic work and grant selection by developing technical papers, undertaking ex-ante technical reviews of project proposals; taking responsibility for monitoring the grant portfolio and for providing technical assistance to grantees during project design and implementation; mobilizing cash and in-kind resources; preparing reports for UNDP, GEF and other donors; implementing a capacity development program for communities, CBOs and NGOs, as well as a communications and knowledge management strategy to ensure adequate visibility of GEF investments, and disseminating good practices and lessons learnt.

Grants will be selected by the NSC from proposals submitted by CBOs and NGOs through calls for proposals in specific thematic and geographic areas relevant to the SGP strategy. Although government organizations cannot receive SGP grants, every effort will be made to coordinate grant implementation with relevant line ministries, decentralized institutions, universities and local government authorities to ensure their support, create opportunities for co-financing, and provide feedback on policy implementation on the ground. Contributions from, and cooperation with, the private sector will also be sought.

SGP utilizes consultants for specialized services only, mostly for baseline data collection, capacity development activities, business development support, and to assist grantees when specialized expertise is required, or for tasks that require an external independent view such as the mid-term and terminal evaluations.

UNOPS will provide Country Program execution services, including human resources management, budgeting, accounting, grant disbursement, auditing, and procurement. UNOPS is responsible for SGP financial management and provides periodic financial reports to UNDP. The UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures guide the financial and administrative management of the project.

As commented before, some UNOPS responsibilities were transferred by agreement to the UNDP Country Office in Mexico due to UNOPS limited operational capacity within the country.

Implications of these arrangements

The described arrangements were a first attempt to define a reasonably appropriate structure for the operation of this new type of operations within the GEF: the GEF-UNDP "graduated" or "upgraded" SGP programs.

As described in Section 3.1.1 Understanding the SGP nature as a Project, the upgraded SGP is not a typical GEF full-size project; it is the result of the evolution of the GEF initiative to establish and operate a window for grants directed to CBOs, NGOs and similar small organizations.

Initially, this window was operated as a GEF-UNDP corporate program, centralized at UNDP HQ and coordinated with the UNDP Country Offices. The main concept underlying this decision was the GEF interest in maintaining this window as autonomous as possible from governmental influence as governmental organizations have their own windows to access GEF funds.

Therefore, the small-grants window was set up under a centralized unit outside any recipient country and the Country Programs were run by a National Steering Committee with representation of many different sectors (Government, UNDOP Country Office, academia, civil society, and independent experts) in a way that limited the possibilities for any sector or organization to control the process.

This arrangement proved to be very successful as evidenced by the widespread adoption of the SGP throughout the world, its continuity for more than 20 years in an environment totally focused on limited 3-5 year projects, and the willingness of many Governments to consistently allocate larger proportions of their GEF allocation to the SGP.

Obviously, any open-control system like this one has weaknesses and one of the key ones is how to deal with structural problems such as unperforming programs, organizational concerns, differences of opinion between participants beyond grant allocations, etc. In other words, what is weak is the control and conflict resolution mechanism, specially when differences arise. Needless to say, this weakness has been used by persons with preferences for top-down approaches to criticize the SGP and its approach.

This situation is a basic component of the SGP nature that cannot be solved, it can just be managed and, generally speaking, it was managed as evidenced by the obvious fact that the program grows and is widely appreciated and supported.

As can be expected, the development of a structure for the new “upgraded” SGP as full-size GEF project within tha national GEF portfolios renewed the discussion described above. The new implementation arrangement structure was again developed to maintain the original characteristics of the SGP, and it seems to be successful in that regard. And, again, there are organizations and persons who will prefer a more top-down, clear-reporting-lines, approach and are not satisfied with this structure and assess it as ambiguous or ambivalent in the sense that there is not a clear line of command.

It is important not to frame this discussion in a simplistic “right-wrong” scheme. The different positions described before are based on perspectives rooted in personal experiences and views from experienced people. Therefore, what we have here is a clear tension between different views that needs to be taken into consideration. This is the reason that justifies the need for the establishment of a mechanism responsible for receiving concerns, suggestions, ideas, complaints, etc. and taking care of them to achieve an appropriate resolution. This evaluation recommends having that function assigned formally to the National Steering Committee.

One of the emerging problems of the new structure for the upgraded SGP projects is that the former connection with the centralized SGP structure has been severed; there is a coordination through a designated person at SGP HQ (the Global Technical Advisor for SDGP Upgraded Programs), but this link is just a coordination one as it can be seen in the organizational structure presented a couple of pages above. Therefore, this new situation implies additional tasks and responsibilities for the National Steering Committee whose nature is more related with management than scientific advice; this new situation does not mean that the NSC does not have scientific advisory functions any more, it just means that some management tasks are now added to its agenda. These new tasks are related with managing (receiving and solving effectively) different issues raised by the different management stakeholders (GEF, UNDP Country Office, UNOPS, etc.)

Unfortunately, it seems that the adoption of these new responsibilities was not explicitly approved and presented to the NSC and, therefore, the NSC tended to maintain their traditional role in grant analysis and allocation and general orientation of the program. Therefore, for somebody willing to pursue specific organizations or structural concerns, there is no clear mechanism to have those issues addressed or a clear decision-making mechanism for these things unrelated to grant allocations and implementation.

This situation became quite visible during the current implementation of the SGP in its OP5 in Mexico as will be discussed at the next section on project implementation (see 3.2.6).

3.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

3.2.1 Adaptive management

While adaptive management, understood as changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation, has been a constant characteristic of the SGP in Mexico, most of these adaptations took place when changing from phase to phase (OP to OP) and less during the implementation of a particular phase.

The experience in OP5 did not depart from this characteristic and it can be said that changes to project design and implementation were not significant. The same conclusion is also stated in the SGP APR/PIR of December 2013.

3.2.2 Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

As adaptive management was not a key aspect of project implementation, the M&E system provided feedback in the planned way as it did in previous phases of the SGP and it helped in refining the operation of the system but this was not a key implementation feature of this OP5 project.

3.2.3 Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)

Project partnership arrangements, as described in the previous section (see 2.5), had two different components:

a. Arrangements with the implementing/executing partners
b. Arrangements with local and national partners

3.2.4 Project Finance & Co-financing

The PRODOC identified potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing reaching satisfactory co-financing ratios. As shown in the pertinent table below, the total level of actual co-financing was better than planned, despite some non-fulfillment of expected contributions.

Generally speaking there is no evidence of problems with financial controls. The small-grants funds are disbursed directly by UNOPS through the UNDP CO to the beneficiaries, and SGP National Coordination provides the monitoring and evaluation controls ensuring that the expected results are achieved properly. The recipient organizations provide acceptable evidence (bills, accounting, bank accounts, checks, etc.) about the right use of the funds.

This evaluation also made an analysis of the 92 organizations receiving funds in OP5, looking for duplications in funding and did not find a single case. A complementary analysis was made comparing organizations funded during OP4 and OP5 and there were a small number of organizations funded in consecutive phases (and this is allowed); the analysis showed that these organizations with consecutive funding presented different proposals with different tasks and results and, in most cases, with clear evidence that the funding was supportive of evolving

processes in these organizations, a feature that the SGP is expected to support when these processes lead to sustainability of results. As shown later in Sections 3.3.6 (Impact) and 3.3.7 (Sustainability) this consecutive funding resulted in significant sustainable impacts in different areas.

The implemented audits do not show significant problems regarding the management of funds.

Co-financing tables

This aspect will be analyzed in two tables. The first one shows actual commitment and disbursement by organization. The second will present similar information by type of financing.

Actual commitment and disbursing by organization

#	Sources of Co-Funding	Name of Co-Financier (source)	Type of Cofinan-cing	Amount at design (USD)	Disbursed until May 2014 (USD)	Difference (USD)*
1	Local Government	Tabasco (Secretaria de Recursos Naturales y Protección Ambiental)	Grant	649,736.99	649,736.99	**0.00**
2	National Government	SEMARNAT - Yucatán (Delegación Federal en el Estado de Yucatan)	Grant	262,945.66	208,494.01	**(-) 54,451.65**
3	GEF Agency	UNDP	In Kind	349,360.00	283,855.00	**(-) 65,505.00**
4	GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant	1,197,189.00	0.00	**(-) 1,197,189.00**
5	CSO	National Steering Committee	In Kind	1,175,320.00	3,120,609.24	**(+) 1,945,298.24**
6	CSO	National Steering Committee	Grant	1,175,320.00	1,569,796.20	**(+) 394,476.20**
7	CSO	Sociedad Cooperativa EDUCE	Soft-Loan	147,058.82	147,058.82	**0.00**
8	CSO	The Nature Conservancy	Grant	115,863.97	24,067.53	**(-) 91,796.44**
9	Local Government	Secretaria de Fomento Agropecuario y Pesquero	Grant	459,558.82	224,531.84	**(-) 235,026.98**
10	Local Government	Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Medio Ambiente	Grant	367,647.06	0.00	**(-) 367,647.06**
Total:				**5,900,000**	**6,228,149.63**	**(+) 328,149.63**

* *Positive differences: actual larger than design.*
Negative differences: actual smaller than design

Analyzing the previous table it becomes evident that, excepting the Local Government (Tabasco), EDUCE (a Cooperative providing soft loans) and the NSC none of the other organizations fulfilled their co-financing commitments as projected at Project design. In fact, the NSC itself does not contribute resources to the project; the figures registered under NSC correspond to the aggregated co-financing contributed by the organizations (CBOs, NGOs and other) receiving SGP grants and it will be more clear if these contributions were shown in a different category. These organizations, in their proposals to SGP, should commit to a

minimum 1:1 match of cofinancing to the GEF grant, split equally between cash and in-kind cofinancing. In many cases they provided a larger co-financing through concurrent funding received from other organizations (usually Governmental). This larger co-financing by the SGP-funded organizations compensates for and surpasses the deficits in the original planned co-financing, exceeding the co-financing target at design by 5.56%

Planned and actual co-financing by type and source

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (US$)		Government (US$)		Partner Agency (US$)		Total (US$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	**Actual**	**Actual**
Grants	1,197,189	0	1,739,888	1,082,762	1,291,183	1,593,863	**4,228,261**	**2,676,626**
Loans/ Concessions	-	-	-	-	147,058	147,058	**147,058**	**147,058**
In-kind support	349,360	283,855	-	-	1,175,320	3,120,609	**1,524,680**	**3,404,464**
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Totals	**1,456,549**	**283,855**	**1,739,888**	**1,082,762**	**2,613,562**	**4,861,531**	**5,900,000**	**6,228,149**

The above table shows trends similar to the previous one, but it also shows that while the cash co-financing was smaller than planned (approximately 36% less), the in-kind support went up by 123% (more than double), and this was the component that finally raised the overall co-financing by 5.56%, as detailed above.

In the unfulfilled cash commitments the completely undisbursed grant contribution by UNDP CO constitutes the largest deviation from Project design; the cash contribution from Government was also 37% less than planned at design. On the other hand the cash co-financing from the beneficiary organizations was 23% higher than designed, in addition to the largely higher in-kind contribution.

3.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (*)

M&E Design at entry

The M&E design at entry was very thorough, and it definitely benefited from the SGP's many years and phases of operation. There is a paper from the year 2000 developed by the National Coordinator and presented to an International Colloquium in Guadalajara that presents a systematization of the evolution of the SGP M&E framework and activities since the beginning of the program and provides a detailed presentation of the M&E system in use. The same principles, with adjustments reflecting additional learning, are presented in the Project Document.

A summary of its key aspect shows that the M&E system works at different interconnected levels:

- Portfolio of upgraded SGP Country Programme projects
- Country Program level
    - Project start
    - Quarterly Project Reports using UNDP platforms (UNDP Enhanced Results Based Management Platform and ATLAS) with copies to Mexican Government organizations and GEF Focal Points.
    - Annual Project Report
    - End of Project Report
    - Learning and knowledge sharing
- Individual Grant M&E, including a detailed set of field visits, reports, final evaluation and grant audit
- M&E Workplan and Budget

RATING OF M&E SYSTEM DESIGN AT ENTRY: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

M&E Implementation

The actual implementation of the M&E System during OP5 is impressive considering the dimensions of the required effort in terms of inception workshops, field visits, review of progress and final reports, final evaluation and audits. These activities are to be repeated for each one of the more than 90 projects funded by the SGP, just considering the routine M&E process.

During this evaluation four projects were visited *in-situ* and the results from the visits were contrasted with the different reports kept in the SGP database (public access). The results of this contrasting exercise were satisfactory as the reports represented fairly well the actual situation found in the field. Similar exercises were run regarding the interviewed accompanying organizations with similar satisfactory results.

Also the different interviews provided information confirming the implementation of the monitoring visits and other planned M&E activities.

A minor comment to the M&E implementation is that the Internet-based data base is fairly complete but some recent reports were not uploaded. Probably this situation was influenced by the movement of the SGP office and premises because of the closing of the UNDP Office in Merida. This moving process was taking place at the time of the evaluation.

A more serious comment is that the results of the learning and knowledge sharing are below what is expected from a project as rich in experience as SGP Mexico. There are some documents related to this aspect, and they are very valuable, but definitely this is an area in which the SGP Mexico performance is still weak. The National Coordination informed that they are planning to intensify the work on this aspect over the next few months while attending the closure of the last few grants. Moreover, it is easy to sympathize with the level of workload weighing on the National Coordination and about urgency taking priority over importance, but the importance of documenting lessons learned and converting them into guidelines,

handbooks, guides, and similar instruments useful to many other experiences in Mexico and across the region should not be ignored,

Another significant comment is about the difficulties of reporting on achievement of Outcome targets as detailed in the PRODOC. In a previous section (3.1.2 Analysis of the Results Framework) it was described that while the overall Results Framework analysis was good, there were too many indicators (23) and targets (70) established for this project considering that SGP does not implement directly but through proposals prepared and implemented by local CBOs and NGOs on a demand-driven basis. While the approach used is consistent with the requirements of GEF full-size projects, they are not adequate for the particular type of "project" that is a SGP Country Programme.

As a consequence, while the M&E system operated smoothly and efficiently to supervise the implementation of the grants, the proper use of the funds, the achievement of expected results and other aspects already described, the system was less effective in keeping adequate track of the many targets and indicators. There are at least two reasons explaining this situation, one is that the indicators proposed and measured by the organizations submitting proposals to SGP did not exactly match the SGP targets, and the other is that the amount of work involved in translating these individual reports into the specific targets set for SGP was far higher than the time available for this task for the two-person SGP National Coordination team.

The evaluation judgment about this situation is that the partial failure of this component is due to weaknesses in project design and should not be attributed entirely to the M&E system, but it is also a problem that these inconveniences were not mentioned in the previous project reports (APR, PIR).

RATING OF M&E SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION: SATISFACTORY (5)

Based on the two aspects (M&E Design and Implementation) described above, the rating of the overall quality of the M&E System is as follows.

RATING OF OVERALL QUALITY OF M&E: SATISFACTORY (5)

3.2.6 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (*)

The analysis of the implementing/executing arrangements was already described in the previous chapter (Section 3.1.9) under Management arrangements.

A particular characteristic of the arrangements for the SGP in Mexico is that UNDP plays a double role as GEF Implementing Agency (a GEF term) as well as being called upon by UNOPS, the Implementing Partner (a UNDP term), to deliver local project tasks through a special agreement and contact between them.

Therefore, the UNDP CO finds itself in a position that theoretically ensures a high level of leverage, in a context where all UNDP Projects are implemented under UNDP authority, and confronting a new and unusual case of a GEF full-sized project that is not operating the same as the others. In this context the resulting discomfort is understandable. In essence, UNOPS is rarely the Implementing Partner for UNDP country level projects, especially in middle income countries such as Mexico.

Moreover, the SGP structure in which the UNDP CO participates, the National Steering Committee, is not taking on a new role and responsibilities under the new "upgraded SGP" situation and maintains its usual technical and scientific role with very specific tasks on proposal analysis, comments and prioritization.

In this context, UNDP CO (and eventually any other organization) with significant concerns in regard to the SGP) finds itself in a situation where it is not clear who has the authority to address and solve those concerns. The key mentioned concerns are related to issues such as a replacement strategy for the National Coordination Team close whose members are close to retirement, renovation of the NSC members, broadening the SGP reach to other regions of Mexico, the articulation of the SGP M&E system with the UNDP CO system and other. This short list shows that these are issues related to top-management decisions, not about reports or small administration aspects.

The perspective of the evaluation in this point is that in other GEF-UNDPO Projects those types of issues are under the authority of the UNDP CO. This is not the case of the SGP and that creates the perception that the SGP system is ambiguous. In fact, as said before, the system is not ambiguous; it is designed to maintain a relative autonomy of this particular GEF funding window.

But a problem remains, and it is that the authority and responsibility to deal with issues as the listed concerns is not clearly assigned creating a grey area of vagueness about who should take charge of those types of issues.

The obvious solution is to create a strategic management function to address these issues and the evaluation´s opinion is that this new function of SGP strategic management should be incorporated into the TOR of the National Steering Committee (see Conclusions and Recommendations for more details on this). The justification of this recommendation is that it is the governing structure of the SGP at country level, all stakeholders are represented in the NSC and it is a structure that already exists formally and is widely recognized. The only constraint is that this function is not currently assigned to it because, before the upgrading, it was played by CPMT (SGP Central Programme Management Team) at UNDP HQ.

This “grey area” already described and the consequent lack of attention to the UNDP CO concerns, created some tensions between the different partners, perhaps more visible between UNDP CO and the SGP National Coordination, but as neither has the possibility to solve the problem by itself, the tensions also created a sense of frustration.

This basic problem is composed by other aspects such as distance, logistics and expense. But it would be wrong to ascribe the tensions to these last issues because at times previous to the upgraded status there was better coordination and cooperation between the parts.

Fortunately, this conflict has not seriously affected the operation of the SGP, as the UNDP CO has fulfilled its administrative role in managing and disbursing funds, contracts, reports, etc., in an appropriate way.

Summarizing, the current structure to manage the upgraded SGP in Mexico needs a definition about who will handle strategic issues and concerns as those listed previously. In the absence of such definition, those aspects are not addressed creating discomfort among some partners.

The solution is to assign a strategic management function to some existing structure allowing for the analysis of the listed concerns and the pertinent decision-making. In the opinion of the evaluation this function should be formally added to the responsibilities of the NSC that is governing body of the SGP at the country level and where all stakeholders are represented.

This issue needs to be addressed as soon as possible and, in the evaluation’s opinion, the initiative should be taken by the NSC or, if this is not happening, by the GEF Focal Point in Mexico that is also part of the NSC.

In any case, it will be useful for them to consult with the Global Manager for Upgraded SGP Country Programmes in UNDP HQ in New York to find out if and how this issue has been addressed in other countries with “upgraded SGPs”.

Meanwhile all efforts should be made to maintain the regular administration operation as it is happening now in order to maintain regular SGP functioning.

RATING OF OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION / EXECUTION: SATISFACTORY (5)

3.3 PROJECT RESULTS

3.3.1 Overall results (*)

The analysis of attainment of Objectives should be done based on the particular characteristics of the Mexico SGP Project described before in Section 3.1.1 of this Report: Understanding the SGP's nature as a project.

The SGP Upgrading Country Programme Project does not implement actions directly in order to achieve its results and indicators. The SGP defines a set of objectives and indicators (aligned with the GEF priorities) and then works to achieve them through different calls for proposals to fund activities carried out by third parties (CBOs, NGOs and other) with SGP funding.

During the OP5, subjected to this evaluation, the Mexico SGP funded more than 90 projects organized under the following thematic groups:

1. Organic apiculture
2. Freshwater aquaculture with native fish species
3. Ecological agriculture and agroforestry
4. Alternative tourism

These lines contributed to attain both biodiversity conservation and climate change objective and indicators.

The following table summarizes the number of projects per line of action

LINE OF ACTION	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
Freshwater aquaculture with native fish species and sustainable fishing	21
Organic apiculture	16
Ecological agriculture and agroforestry	15
Alternative tourism	12
Conservation	10
Research and education	7
Sustainable management of non-timer forest products	6
Sustainable management of forests	5
TOTAL	**92**

Organized by GEF Areas:

AREA	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
Biodiversity conservation	59
Climate change	31
Knowledge management	2
TOTAL	**92**

The different projects implemented by third parties along the mentioned lines generated a number of products and results that were analyzed by the SGP National Coordination who allocated the specific contribution of each Project to the different objectives and indicators committed by the Project and then aggregated to generate an overall figure that can be used to analyze the level of attainment of the SGP project objectives and indicators.

As mentioned in previous sections, the large number of indicators and targets and the way in which project proposals were submitted to SGP made it impossible to develop an adequate match between both sets of data (PRODOC targets and actual results). Therefore, the following tables and paragraphs present first the actual results, aggregated as achieved by the 92 projects, followed by an attempt to match them with the PRODOC indicators and targets.

Actually achieved results (partial list)

TYPE	INDICATOR	FIGURES
Areas	Tropical Sub-evergreen tropical and montane forests areas under community protection	61,500 hectares (has)
	Mountain Forests areas protected as forest reserves in three microregions	10,500 has
	Crop areas conserving soil and water and agrodiversity germplasm	698 has
	Homegarden areas conserving agrodiversity germplasm	75 has
	Tropical Forests areas conserved under organic apiculture management	34,800 has
	Organic coffee areas under tree cover of diverse species	2.061 has
	Coastal ecosystems areas (dunes, coastal lagoons, mangroves and other) under conservation schemes	960 has
	Restored mangrove areas	50 has
Individuals of native fish species freed to repopulate wild ecosystems	Number of individuals of Petenia splendid (casta Rica) & Cichlasoma urophthalmus (Tenhuayaca) freed in their wild habitat	22,500 individuals
	Number of individuals of Lipesosteus tropicus (pejelagarto) freed in their wild habitat	80,000 individuals
Sustainable production of oyster and freshwater native fish species	American oyster	80,000 kg
	Casta Rica (Petenia splendida)	48,200 kg
	Pejelagarto (Lipesosteus tropicus)	168,400 kg
	Tenhuayaca (Cichlasoma urophthalmus)	18,000 kg
	Topota (Poecilia mexicana)	14,400 kg
Persons participating in key activities	Environmental education programs	2,900 persons
	Evergreen forests conservation	2,700 persons
	Tropical forests conservation	7,792 persons
Conservation Projects in Natural Protected Areas	Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve	1 Project
	Pantanos de Centla Biosphere Reserve	8 Projects
	Celestun Biosphere Reserve	6 Projects
	Rio Lagartos Biosphere Reserve	3 Projects
	Laguna de Terminos Flora & Fauna Protection Area	5 Projects
	Bocas de Dzilam State Reserve	2 Projects
	Yumbalam Flora & Fauna Protection Area	1 Project
	Sian Kaan Biosphere Reserve	1 Project
Research	Number of projects supported	3
Strategies& Plans	Number of Strategies and plans prepared	2

Articulation between achieved results and PRODOC Outcomes

Outcome	Products	PLANNED AT PROJECT DESIGN		ACHIEVED AT PROJECT CLOSURE	
		Number of projects	Target	Number of projects	Target
Improved conservation of forest, wetland and coastal-marine biological resources in community-owned lands in the production landscapes of Mexico's Southeastern region	1: Sustainable Forest Management Plans for certifying forest timber production and increase the income of ejido companies or forest ejidos own	4	30,000 has of tropical forests	2	5,254 has
	2: Production and marketing of non-timber forest products, including beekeeping and UMA	14	40,000 has of tropical forests	5	80,319 has
	3: Building or strengthening capacities for the establishment of trade networks for certified timber and non-timber forest products	4	100 persons trained and organized	4	140 persons
	4: Development of sustainable fisheries, especially lobster and sea cucumber.	4	2 fisheries	3	2 fisheries
	5: Sustainable Aquaculture with native fish species.	20	150 tons of production conserving 9,000 has of rivers and wetlands	20	144.50 tons
	6: Establishment of alternative tourism circuits making sustainable use of coastal environments, wetlands and tropical forest.	10	300 persons trained and organized	13	358 persons
	7: Establishment of community systems for the detection, monitoring and reporting of invasive species such as Hevea brasiliensis, Elaeis guineensis, Pterois volitans and Plecostomus sp.	4	2 systems	2	2 systems
Carbon stocks in community-owned forest lands maintained or increased	1: Reforestation and forest fires prevention in communal or ejido forest lands.	5	8,000 has avoiding 442,843 tons CO2 equiv.	6	12,783 has
	2: Restoration and maintenance of vegetation cover in communal or ejido forest lands affected by hurricanes that have lost value as community forest resources	17		17	19,969 has
	3: Community risk management plans to reduce the loss of carbon stocks and increase resilience to climate change at the landscape level	n.a.	102 plans	n.a.	91 plans
	4: Agroecology, Agroforestry and Permaculture free of slash and burn practices	15	102 has avoiding 5,600 tons CO2 equiv	15	2,059 has

	5: Determination of the land use and land use change (LULUCF) baseline and routine monitoring of the conservation of carbon stores.	3	3 documents (one per State in the Yucatan Peninsula)	0	None (no proposals submitted)
Increased project management capacity among communities and knowledge acquired through project implementation systematized and disseminated	1: Specific training activities in each microregion, according to community needs and sustainable development initiatives.	1	1 program	3	3 programs
	2: Communal, democratic and participatory education in project design, monitoring and evaluation, for adaptive management through the sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of the Maya Culture	1	1 program	1	1 program

From the above table it is clear that the project made an attempt to articulate key results to the Project Outcomes in terms of the results that could be tracked and that were significantly different to the PRODOC indicators and targets.

As explained before, this constraint is the consequence of inadequate PRODOC planning at the level of Outcome Indicators and Targets in the Strategic Results Framework and the insurmountable difficulties to make them fit with the indicators included in the project proposals submitted by the local CBOs and NGOs.

Looking at the previous table it is also evident that some indicators were not fully achieved and some others, probably the most relevant, were achieved or over achieved significantly.

Given that the reported results did not match the expected ones presented in the PRODOC the evaluation of this aspect cannot be made in an objective way, therefore the subjective evaluation given to this aspect is Satisfactory.

RATING OF OVERALL ATTAINMENT OF RESULTS: SATISFACTORY (5)

3.3.2 Relevance (*)

The implementation of the SGP in Mexico as a component of the GEF OP5 is relevant in different aspects. First and foremost, Mexico ratified both the Convention on Biological Diversity on 11 March 1993, and this project contributed to the commitments of the country in different areas (ecosystem and species conservation, control of alien invasive species, use of the ecosystem based approaches, etc.). Similarly, Mexico is also Party to the Climate Change Convention and, again, the SGP made significant contribution to Mexico´s commitments to this Convention.

In terms of national policies and processes the SGP results are consistent with both the National Development Plan 2007-2012 and the State Sustainable Development Plans prepared by the five governments of the States covered by the project. The project increased and

disseminated biodiversity knowledge and increased the area under conservation/sustainable use management.

It also integrated conservation of biodiversity and natural resources with social and economic development, and promoted ecotourism as a tool for conservation in rural areas as well as sustainable management of natural resources.

The SGP contributed to the four strategic components of the Mexican National Biodiversity Strategy (2000): (i) protection and conservation of biodiversity; (ii) valuation of biodiversity; (iii) biodiversity knowledge and information management; and (iv) diversification of the uses of biodiversity. Furthermore, the project supported the implementation of the 2010 National Strategy for the Prevention, Control and Eradication of Invasive Alien Species

The project is consistent with national and regional plans that are aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding biomass burning and enhancing sustainable forest management.

By addressing forest degradation, the project is consistent with national and regional plans that promote sustainable use of forest resources, and the design and applications of tools for the payment of ecosystem services to those communities that conserve and protect their forests.

In accordance with the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS), the project contributed to maintain or enhance carbon stocks in community-owned forestlands and to avoid the use of fire in agricultural practices. SGP will also contribute to avoid land use change in forest areas, a priority in the NCCS.

The Project was also relevant to the previous version of UNDAF. The new version was approved last year, after the initiation of the SGP project, therefore the relevance analysis was made in relation to the Framework active at the time of Project design. In this regard, the implementation of the SGP in OP-5 was relevant to the following UNDAF areas: a) Poverty and inequality reduction through the promotion of competitive and sustainable economic development conducive to more equality, opportunities for decent jobs for all, without compromising the environment; b) Ensuring a safe and productive environment, conserving the natural heritage for present and future generations, contributing to national development through sustainable and equitable use of natural resources; and c) Institutional and individual capacity development to arrest or revert environmental degradation and conserve the natural resource base of the country, and enhance participatory natural resources management and improved governance.

RATING OF RELEVANCE: SATISFACTORY (5)

3.3.3 Effectiveness & Efficiency (*)

Effectiveness

The assessment of Project effectiveness was difficult because of the already described inconsistencies between the PRODOC targets and those reported by the Project, given that the evaluation considers that the project planning process was inadequate for the SGP way of operation leading to an unreasonable high number of targets for a Project that does not undertake direct implementation.

Therefore the matrix used for rating the achievement of outcomes is the one presented in the Overall results section (3.3.1), with the following results:

Products	PLANNED AT PROJECT DESIGN		ACHIEVED AT PROJECT CLOSURE		TE COMMENTS	RATING
	Number of projects	Target	Number of projects	Target		
Outcome 1. Improved conservation of forest, wetland and coastal-marine biological resources in community-owned lands in the production landscapes of Mexico's Southeastern region						
1: Sustainable Forest Management Plans for certifying forest timber production and increase the income of ejido companies or forest ejidos own	4	30,000 has of tropical forests	2	5.254 has	Far below target due to impact of Hurricane Dean on forests	MS
2: Production and marketing of non-timber forest products, including beekeeping and UMA	14	40,000 has of tropical forests	5	80.319 has	Far above target (more than double)	HS
3: Building or strengthening capacities for the establishment of trade networks for certified timber and non-timber forest products	4	100 persons trained and organized	4	140 persons	Far above target (40%)	HS
4: Development of sustainable fisheries, especially lobster and sea cucumber.	4	2 fisheries	3	2 fisheries	On target	S
5: Sustainable Aquaculture with native fish species.	20	150 tons of production conserving 9,000 has of rivers and wetlands	20	144,50 tons	Almost in target	S
6: Establishment of alternative tourism circuits making sustainable use of coastal environments, wetlands and tropical forest.	10	300 persons trained and organized	13	358 persons	Slightly above target	S
7: Establishment of community systems for the detection, monitoring and reporting of invasive species such as Hevea brasiliensis, Elaeis guineensis, Pterois volitans and Plecostomus sp.	4	2 systems	2	2 systems	On target	S

Outcome 2. Carbon stocks in community-owned forest lands maintained or increased						
1: Reforestation and forest fires prevention in communal or ejido forest lands.	5	8,000 has avoiding 442,843 tons CO2 equiv.	6	12.783 has	Far above target. Both targets individually came above the combined target of 8,000 has. The combined achieved target is 4 times larger than the target at design	HS
2: Restoration and maintenance of vegetation cover in communal or ejido forest lands affected by hurricanes that have lost value as community forest resources	17		17	19.969 has		HS
3: Community risk management plans to reduce the loss of carbon stocks and increase resilience to climate change at the landscape level	n.a.	102 plans	n.a.	91 plans	Slightly below target. No proposals submitted.	S
4: Agroecology, Agroforestry and Permaculture free of slash and burn practices	15	102 has avoiding 5,600 tons CO2 equiv	15	2.059 has	Far above target. Almost 20 times more than expected	HS
5: Determination of the land use and land use change (LULUCF) baseline and routine monitoring of the conservation of carbon stores.	3	3 documents (one per State of the Yucatan Peninsula)	0	None (no proposals submitted)	Nothing was achieved due to lack of proposals related to this area included in the call for proposals	U
Outcome 3. Increased project management capacity among communities and knowledge acquired through project implementation systematized and disseminated						
1: Specific training activities in each microregion, according to community needs and sustainable development initiatives.	1	1 program	3	3 programs	Far above target (three times)	HS
2: Communal, democratic and participatory education in project design, monitoring and evaluation, for adapatativa management through the sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of the Maya Culture	1	1 program	1	1 program	On target	S

Therefore, the correspondence between expected results at project design and actual achievement of those results (effectiveness) is rated as satisfactory.

RATING OF EFFECTIVENESS: SATISFACTORY (5)

Risk

The Project managed its risk factors, shown in Section 3.1.3 of this Report, properly. Fortunately the region was not affected by any major hurricane during this Phase but there were cyclonic events with high rainfall, forest fires and some periods of drought longer than the average. The different activities aimed at reducing these risks seem to have been adequate because no issues of this kind emerged during field visits and/or interviews.

The resistance to change of agricultural practices is always present but the project strategy of working with women and young people also seems to have been successful because these activities are progressing well. In the places visited during the field work husbands and grown sons were either participating directly in the activities or helping other engaged family members.

The strategies for market competition are also working well in some cases (organic honey for export to European markets mostly and freshwater aquaculture with native fish species oriented to a local market with high demand of these products). There are some problems with competition with commercial tour operators in alternative tourism initiatives; they were addressed by helping to organize a regional council of CBO-based tourism groups focused on the improvement of marketing efforts, but it is too soon to identify results from these efforts.

The risk of running a grants program with civil society organizations that have a low level of technical and management capacity did not show as a risk, as the SGP was able to improve their percentage of satisfactory grant implementation compared to previous program phases.

Lessons learned about effectiveness

There is not too much to be added about lessons learned regarding effectiveness besides the fact that when the indicators and targets are not well chosen at Project design (in this case due to the strict application of guidelines designed for GEF regular full-sized projects to a model of project (SGP) that is completely different) the M&E systems are unable to capture the information to inform the achievement of those indicators and targets.

This situation, even when understandable, leads to unsatisfactory ways of effectiveness assessment. In other words, instead of comparing planned and achieved results, it is necessary to make a subjective assessment about how well the achievements fit the expectations and this is much less transparent than the preferred comparison approach.

Efficiency

Project support

The project was supported by UNDP CO in a double function - as GEF Implementing Agency and also as fulfilling tasks for UNOPS as Implementing Partner or executing agency under an agreement between the two agencies.

The support was reasonably satisfactory in terms of administration with the usual complaints from each side about inefficiencies from the other, emerging from deeper problems in

partnership arrangements (see next section). The National Coordination and some partners complain about slow processes and delays in disbursements to beneficiaries while the UNDP CO complains about incomplete or poorly completed documentation. Regardless of who may be responsible, it seems that the project has not been limited by these problems in achieving its objectives.

Partnership arrangements

This issue was already addressed in detail in section *3.2.6 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution.*

As this was the main remaining constraint in terms of partnership arrangements, readers are requested to review the mentioned section in relation with this aspect.

Use of local capacity in implementation

The use of local capacities in project implementation is an old feature of the SGP in Mexico that was maintained and improved during the evaluated phase. The "accompanying organizations" mechanism to help CBOs and other local organizations to design and implement their projects is well established and a dozen of them are actively engaged by CBOs and they are chosen by the CBOs (and not by the SGP) to ensure due transparency and empowerment of the CBOs to be able to choose whose support they would like to have. In fact, this is an area in which the SGP has very relevant experiences to share with other large, medium and small projects aiming to use local capacities for implementation.

RATING OF EFFICIENCY: SATISFACTORY (5)

Lessons learned about efficiency

Some comments emerging from the collected evidence are as follows:

- the project management costs have remained at similar levels to previous stages . Some previous studies indicate that the efficiency of PPD is comparable or better than the average of GEF projects, therefore there were no significant changes in this regard.
- regardless of the previous point, observations from the governmental institutions were registered about the need to reduce overhead costs distributed between the project implementing and executing agencies and to ensure that a greater proportion of funds reach the final beneficiaries. There were no comments regarding the costs of project coordination.
- according to the documents of funding proposals, in the Mexico SGP the recipient organizations should be able to mobilize resources to at least double the funds received from SGP . In this particular aspect, the requirements of the Mexico SGP exceed the global requirement of 1:1 co-financing. The SGP Mexico requires the applicants to commit an amount at least equal to the GEF funding to be contributed in cash by a third organizations (mostly governmental) while another amount equivalent to the GEF funding should be provided directly by the applicant organizations (at least 20 % in cash and the rest in kind). In other words, for every dollar contributed by the SGP, it is planned that at least two additional co-financing dollars will be contributed, mostly in cash. According to the final reports of projects reviewed, this co-financing became effective as planned.
- in most cases co-financing funds are delivered directly to the recipient organizations and not through SGO or UNDP CO. While this approach means reduced overhead costs, its disadvantage is that there are no records available to SGP or UNDP CO providing evidence of the disbursements.

3.3.4 Country ownership

From all evidence and comments already provided it is obvious that the level of country ownership is high. Some key elements supporting this assessment are the alignment of SGP activities with country priorities, the composition of the National Steering Committee with a broad majority of national persons representing different national organizations (Federal, State, academic, NGOs, etc), the broad participation of well developed local organizations (NGOs, civil, etc.) as accompanying organizations to the CBOs getting the grants, etc.

One of the most striking points about SGP in Mexico is that it is well known and it is highly appreciated by most of those who know it. This is an excellent piece of evidence for the high level of ownership that the country organizations (national, regional or local) feel in regard to SGP.

3.3.5 Mainstreaming

Positive and negative effects on local population

Given the nature of the SGP in Mexico the main effects of the project take place with the local population. According to the people interviewed in the field they all coincide in that the effects are very positive in many aspects such as empowerment, organization, training, critical funding to undertake new initiatives, contacts with research and academic organizations, contacts and help or marketing, contacts to get additional funding, etc.

There are so many positive effects perceived by the local population that it is really hard to find people with negative views or grievances with the SGP.

Conformity with UNDAF and CPD

As presented before in the country ownership and the relevance sections (3.3.2 and 3.3.4), the SGP is well aligned with the UNDAF version used at that moment. There is a new UNDAF prepared in 2013 and, again, the SGP activities are clearly articulated and contributing to four of the six areas identified in the UNDAF: 1. Equity and social inclusion; 2. Productive economic development, competitiveness and decent work. 3. Environmental sustainability and green economy and 5. Democratic governance

This consistency is also extended to CPD that is an instrument aligned with UNDAF.

Contribution to preparedness and coping with natural disasters

The SGP in a previous phase was the place of origin of the Program on Disaster Risk Reduction due to the high impact of climatic events (hurricanes, cyclones, drought and other) on the Yucatan Peninsula. This Program was very successful and grew on its own outside SGP and is now a full-fledged program implemented by the Governmental organizations and UNDP who that have extended its influence to other States outside the Yucatan Peninsula.

Due to its common origins, the SGP and this Program maintain close contact and coordination and share many organized groups at the community level. Therefore, through this process the SGP is contributing actively to preparedness and coping with natural disasters in its region of work

Consideration of gender issues

While the SGP does not have a specific gender component it works with a clear gender approach in the broad sense, meaning the consideration of women and other disempowered groups such as natives, youth, poor and other. From the reviewed information, interviews and visits to projects the incorporation of women, youngsters, elder, natives and other disadvantaged groups is evident in almost all projects supported by SGP. The SGP supported directly many of the organizations where these disadvantaged groups participate as well as other activities oriented to the different activities of those groups (domestic, productive, educational, training, organizational, funding, marketing, etc.).

The evidence collected in the evaluation points to a conclusion that the SGP takes into consideration different gender aspects in a significant and appropriate way.

3.3.6 Impact (*)

Overall project impact is visible on the ground and in the communities and groups who have implemented activities with SGP funding. The level of impact varies along the different lines of work of the project, as summarized below.

Organic apiculture (organic honey production). In this line, a strong consolidation of the entire value chain was verified, starting with the individual organic certified producers (and many others in transition to organic) and continuing with their organizations gathering the product and starting very successfully its traceability chain. The process continues with the wholesale concentration of the product by the EDUCE Cooperative and the subsequent export to organic honey international markets in Germany, France, Japan and other countries in commercially significant volumes (600 tons/year estimated for 2014 and growing). This scheme brings together 20 organizations gathering about 600 beekeepers. In terms of biodiversity conservation, organic apiaries must fulfill the rule stipulating an area with a radius of 2 km around the apiary that is maintained free of crops, roads, housing and productive activities that generate any pollution. This condition to access the organic honey markets is regularly verified by different certification organizations, and it generates a very important contribution to the conservation of secondary forests under ecological succession processes. Given that honey production is a traditional activity in the Peninsula and that production of organic honey is growing throughout the region, this conservation feature is also expanding.

Freshwater aquaculture with native fish species. This line, developed in the deltaic area of Tabasco (Grijalva-Usumacinta delta in the area known as Pantanos de Centla) and surrounding areas, has also made progress to the point of virtually complete consolidation. It includes the commercial production of native fish species like “pejelagarto”, several species of “mojarras” (castarrica, tenhuayaca) and, hopefully soon, “robalo” currently under advanced research. Of the 86 aquaculture organizations supported at various stages by the SGP, 72 are operating successfully and providing technical assistance to others; the entire production is consumed in the local markets and it seems that this market can still absorb substantial increases in production. The significant success of these efforts led to the establishment of an official Product-System of Native Fish Species led by SAGARPA (the leading national governmental organization in this sector), the State of Tabasco and different private organizations (cooperatives and individual) linked to the supply chain of these species. This Product-System ensures adequate Governmental funding for existing and new producers and for all other stakeholders engaged in transportation, processing, packaging, marketing, etc., making it possible to consider this line of work as fully consolidated. In terms of conservation impact, the success of this line is quite important in terms of conversion of tilapia producers to producers of native species, restocking of wild populations of native species, reduction of populations of invasive alien species (tilapia, grass carp and other) and reconstitution of the natural food chains and inter-specific balances essential to the conservation of various ecosystem services. The joint work of academic (research) organizations with communities and producer organizations supported by SGP made a major impact in the progress of this line later joined by other State and Federal (national) agencies and different private sector companies. The evidence of the impact of the SGP supported initiatives is based on both the establishment of the Product-System of Native Fish Species and the extensive scientific research that made possible the biological, reproductive and productive studies allowing the development of profitable commercial aquaculture based on these native fish species.

Ecological agriculture and agroforestry. In this line important impacts were verified at scales different than the previous ones. On the one hand the consolidation of organizations producing organic coffee and conservation coffee in the Sierra Madre de Chiapas was achieved, resulting in the conservation of shade coffee systems very valuable to complement the biodiversity conservation function of the Core Areas of the El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve. This line of work also includes actions to work on family plots (home gardens) of different families in peasant communities seeking to improve food security, increase food sovereignty, improve soil conservation, reduce contamination, improve cash availability for families and empower women. These "solares" (the Spanish name for these home gardens) do not generate large incomes, although many participants sell surplus vegetables, fruits and animal products without problems; they basically reduce the living costs of rural poor families by increasing self-sufficiency in food supply while diversifying their diet. The latter is increasingly important since several studies conducted in this region show a significant increase in diet-related conditions such as obesity and diabetes resulting from the introduction of foods with low nutritional quality in their diets. The impact of this line does not take place only in participating communities; it also helped to develop effective links between the academic sector (in this case several units and experts from Yucatan Autonomous University - UADY - in agroecology, human nutrition, economics, psychology and other areas), State agencies (such as SEDESOL of the State of Yucatan) and NGOs (such as the Tropical Forestry Action Program) that are now engaged in joint activities. These linkages between organizations are usually considered more comprehensive and more stable than individual efforts but achieving them also proved difficult, and that's why this is considered as a significant impact of the project. As the same time, this impact has also been noted elsewhere in this report, thus it can be taken as an indication that they are not isolated cases but the products of deliberate Project actions.

Sustainable forest management. This issue is more complicated to analyze because the great progresses that were made in previous phases of the SGP suffered greatly at a later stage from the impacts of Hurricane Dean (Category 5, crossed the Yucatan peninsula in August 2007) that toppled thousands of hectares of managed natural forests in Quintana Roo. Post-hurricane SGP grants supported groups to use the fallen timber with portable sawmills and then focused on a difficult task: to avoid the conversion of these forests under regeneration to other land uses (agriculture and livestock) while the regeneration takes place and sustainable use can be resumed. In the future, the impact of the project in this line will be measured in terms of forest land remaining as such, evidencing that conversion to agriculture and cattle husbandry was prevented. The task is difficult because of the few existing productive alternatives consisting basically of honey production, alternative tourism, elaboration of handicrafts, use of non-timber resources and others supported by the SGP project and/or by other organizations. Some of these activities are part of lines already presented in this report (honey production, ecological agriculture and agroforestry). The level of success that can be achieved at the end of the forest recovery process is difficult to assess due to the slow growth of forests and the lack of alternatives. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that there will be no resumption of logging until the last years of this decade. While it is definitely expected that the undertaken activities will have a positive effect and generate expected results, it is difficult to foresee the extension of these results in terms of recovered forest areas and number of communities remaining active in sustainable forestry.

Alternative tourism. Alternative tourism has been successful and has achieved significant results in the formation of groups (mostly composed of young sons of peasants without access to "ejido" -communal- land), in their training, in the development of basic local tourism infrastructure (trails, visiting points, basic food services and other) and the integration of different groups in "routes" that can offer multi-day tours to visitors while preventing competition between the same groups. This process, which has successfully advanced to the aforementioned achievements, is still incomplete. The groups capture most of their visitors, who are not necessarily looking for such alternatives, in the region of the Riviera Maya (Cancun, Playa del Carmen and neighboring areas). Moreover, in these places they must compete at a disadvantage with local operators based in the Riviera with a closer reach to these customers and with better marketing resources and infrastructure (vehicles, equipment). Obviously those "routes" closer to the influence of the Riviera are the most affected and have more problems standing up, while the most distant are in a stronger situation and were able to continue their development. To overcome this basic constraint and to achieve growth and sustainability, it is necessary that the groups are organized in a larger scale structure to be able to develop comprehensive and effective marketing efforts better focused on the type of visitors looking for the products they offer. This process is already under way but its results are still far from being achieved. As a first step in this direction, the groups have established COTACY (Community Alternative Tourism Council of Yucatan) and in the coming months it will be starting its marketing activities. Since the impact of marketing in visitation is not immediate, it is reasonable to assume that support to these groups must continue for a few more years to ensure they reach sustainability.

A final but important aspect to consider regarding the impact of SGP in Mexico is the limited number of publications, guidelines, methodologies, systematization and other knowledge products derived from the SGP's long and rich experience of 20 years. Moreover, in cases where these products exist, the access to them is limited as they are not uploaded to the project website and are accessible just through the authors. This limitation also implies reduced possibilities to extend and share experiences with many other organizations in the country and beyond that are addressing similar problems and can get significant benefits from these experiences. Obviously this situation constrains the potential broader indirect impact of the Mexico SGP.

RATING OF PROJECT IMPACT: SIGNIFICANT (3)

3.3.7 Sustainability (*)

After presentation of SGP project impacts in the previous section (3.3.6), it is obvious that sustainability of the results changes from line to line depending on the line itself and the nature of the sustainability aspects considered. The different aspects are briefly analyzed, presented and rated as follows.

Financial resources

The financial risk of the different lines is not similar. Some lines such as organic apiculture and freshwater aquaculture based on native fish species can be considered as already sustainable; a similar criteria, perhaps less emphatic can also be applied to the ecological

agriculture and agroforestry line. The other lines, sustainable forest management and alternative forests are not yet sustainable but they have very good probabilities of achieving that situation if they are supported in the next OP (OP6) of the SGP project in Mexico.

Therefore, the overall rating for financial sustainability is "moderately likely", using a conservative criteria by adopting the lower value.

RATING OF FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: MODERATELY LIKELY (3)

Socio-economic

The socio-economic sustainability of the achieved results is high; in other words the risks in this area are negligible. This evaluation is based on the high level of acceptance of the funded activities by the local groups. This acceptance is strengthened by the fact that the implemented activities are identified, proposed and implemented by the groups, improving the sense of ownership and eliminating (or significantly reducing) the impact of cultural and social issues that may affect the achieved results. In economic terms there is no significant reason to expect that market conditions for the different activities and products are going to change dramatically. Therefore, the rating for this aspect of sustainability is that it is "likely"

RATING OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY: LIKELY (4)

Institutional framework and governance

The institutional framework is supportive of most SGP supported activities in OP5. Organic production, food security, food sovereignty, development of economic alternatives based on the use of native species, community organization, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, tourism, and other activities are all initiatives promoted and supported by Government at its different levels (National, State and Municipal). Interviews made with different Governmental officers during the field visit reinforce this assertion.

The local governance framework is also supportive of these initiatives. Many of them are based on "ejido" organizations and groups, and they need to be supported by the "ejido" assembly to be submitted and, later, implemented. This process also contributes strongly to results sustainability in this area of analysis.

Based on the previous considerations, the rating for this aspect is also considered as "likely".

RATING OF INSTITUTIONAL / GOVERNANCE SUSTAINABILITY: LIKELY (4)

Environmental

The environmental sustainability of the activities is difficult to assess because of its complexity. On the one hand the region is regularly affected by hurricanes and cyclonic events affecting different parts of the Peninsula every few years. Generally speaking the local population has proved resilient to these impacts, and they usually reestablish their activities affected by extreme weather, but there is no way to ensure that this behavior will continue without change.

But extreme weather is not the main aspect related to environmental sustainability; climate change is that critical in this respect. Current climate projections for the Yucatan Peninsula based on the present models estimate significant reductions in rainfall by the end of the century and worsening. Other projections estimate a displacement of the hurricane corridor towards northern latitudes probably reducing the impact of these events and the rainfall associated with them. While climate change is no longer under debate, the estimations based on models still have a lot of space for improvement and while their general tendencies can be accepted, the actual estimated values of future temperatures and rainfall need to be taken with more caution.

Therefore, and considering the nature of these factors and their time-frames, a low-confidence rating of "moderately likely" is assigned.

RATING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: MODERATELY LIKELY (3)

Based on the ratings of all considered factors, the overall sustainability rating is "moderately likely".

OVERALL RATING OF SUSTAINABILITY: MODERATELY LIKELY (3)

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

4.1 Conclusions

After reviewing documents, interviewing a broad range of stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, and visiting and observing several field locations of SGP activities, the main conclusions of this evaluation are:

1. The SGP in Mexico during its Fifth Operational Phase is a satisfactory project that has achieved significant impacts in one of the most challenging areas for conservation: biodiversity conservation outside Protected Areas, while contributing significantly to improve the well being of local communities.

2. These successful results cannot be attributed to OP5 alone; they were built on the long history of SGP in the region of Mexico where it is active (Yucatan Peninsula and, less significantly, Chiapas). For 20 years the SGP has patiently fostered the development of capacities, strengthening of local organizations, identification and use of intelligent alternatives to foster conservation while improving the wellbeing of rural communities. This was possible through the articulation of different actions such as identification of market opportunities and forging alliances between governmental, academic, civil and private organizations to weave networks of interacting and complementing organizations and processes that reasonably ensure the long-term sustainability of these processes.

3. Specifically, the development of organic apiculture with value chains going from individual small farmer production to the export of certified organic honey to very demanding markets such as Germany and other European countries, is one of the areas of great success as the overall chain operates now independently of SGP and will continue doing so even if SGP is discontinued. A similar story can be told about freshwater aquaculture based on native species of fish (pejelagarto, mojarra and others) where the alliance with academic organizations allowed for the development of the scientific research required to provide a strong basis for the following phase of actually developing aquaculture farms managed by small cooperatives and groups in the Usumacinta delta and neighboring areas of Tabasco. Currently, the whole circle is closed by the high local demand for the products and the recent formation of a Native Aquaculture Production System by the State and Federal authorities. This System ensures the technical and financial involvement of governmental, private, academic and civil organizations in the operation of this value chain (aquaculture with native fish species) and its extension beyond Tabasco State to access other markets with fresh products and also different industrial processing alternatives. Again, this value chain is now well established and fairly independent of SGP involvement. A similar history can be told about home-gardens in rural communities, an initiative fostered by the SGP that now has involved other organizations (State and Academic) ensuring the continuation of these efforts that are very relevant to address food security issues in communal areas (ejidos). Other lines are less advanced and not entirely sustainable yet, such as sustainable forest management (due in part to the incidence of catastrophic hurricanes), alternative tourism (still progressing in key areas but still not well developed in terms of marketing) and others such as environmental education.

4. These results and impacts, and the level of sustainability achieved, demonstrate clearly that the GEF vision of a small-grants window for CBOs and NGOs is correct, and the chosen mechanism, the SGP, is adequate. This small-grants mechanism is providing the right complement to the other GEF mechanisms such as the full and medium-size projects among others.

5. Moreover, the examination of more operational aspects such as logistics, beneficiaries and authorities' satisfaction, the use of GEF funds, leveraging, co-financing, project-selection criteria and procedures, monitoring and evaluation, costs (even when Federal organizations still feel that the international overhead structure is heavier than necessary), and management in general, are also satisfactory. A specific mention should be made to highlight the fact the Mexico SGP in OP5 was able to exceed the co-financing levels agreed at Project design by 5%.

6. The SGP upgrading process for those programs in countries with longer and more successful experiences such as Mexico has brought mixed results requiring attention. A highly positive result is that in OP5 Mexican institutions maintained their commitment to the SGP and funded it from the GEF country allocations exactly as they said they would do. This is not a minor achievement; it meant that the positive assessment of SGP in Mexico was authentic, and the country maintained a coherent position by incorporating SGP into its national GEF portfolio.

7. The new administrative structure of the upgraded SGP in Mexico maintained a key and distinctive feature of the SGP, that is, to maintain the program under a balanced control by their different stakeholders, instead of putting it under the direct authority of a single organization. This balanced governance allows for the participation of all stakeholders and for consensus-based decision making, resulting in a greater level of commitment by the stakeholders who actually perceive that they are part of the project management. This participatory governance structure at the country level under the form of the National Steering Committee has been highly beneficial for the SGP because it ensures reasonable autonomy and transparency leading to more credibility and commitment by the different private, civil, governmental, non-governmental, academic and international stakeholders. This is an achievement considered essential for the success and future of SGP and it should be preserved.

8. The new administrative structure also left a grey area in high-management decision making that was not properly filled yet. In the regular (non-upgraded) SGP structure, all Country Programs are executively coordinated by the SGP central office at UNDP HQ in New York (CPMT). With the SGP upgrading process, this function was lost and was not assumed by any other structure generating this mentioned "grey area". Specifically, this "grey area" means that no one has the authority and the responsibility to take care of key management issues such as National Steering Committee renovation, evaluation of National Coordination, decisions about broadening SGP reach to other parts of the country, etc. (see section 3.2.6 for additional details) . In the view of this evaluation, the most reasonable option is to incorporate this strategic management function into the SGP National Steering Committee duties (see Recommendations below). These changes aim at introducing adjustments in the current role of the NSC now focused on technical and scientific issues and, most important, evaluation and selection of project proposals received by SGP for funding.

9. In the particular case of the Mexico SGP Country Program the situation described in the previous points led to delay in addressing such a key issue as the analysis of the process to deal with the members of the National Coordination team reaching retirement. It is necessary to define how to address the situation properly, how long should this process be, when to do it, etc. All these steps are requirements to organize a well-planned transition process ensuring that the experience gathered in 20 years is adequately transferred. Even when these questions were analyzed by the NSC in Mexico in OP4, at that time the decisions were postponed due to other challenges regarding the new OP5, and remained unanswered. This is the sort of strategic managerial issues that needs to be assumed by some structure in replacement of the former role of the SGP Central Program Management Team in New York; the evaluation considers that this role should be taken up by the NSC as detailed in the previous point.

10. Another aspect emerging from the SGP upgrading process is related to fitting the SGP Country Program's particular structure and way of operation (a structure to channel GEF funds to CBOs, NGOs and similar organizations through small grants) with the regular requirement of the GEF full-sized projects included currently in the GEF national portfolios. The OP5 experience in this regard was reasonably satisfactory because the project operated well, achieved most of its results and kept the different field processes in operation without major disruptions. During this evaluation it became clearer that the planning requisites and structures for the SGP require more significant adjustments, specifically at the level of outcome targets. The general structure of the Strategic Results Framework was useful and was completed satisfactorily, but there were too many indicators and targets for a program that is not implemented directly. The used indicators and target are better suited for the regular GEF full-sized projects where there is a project team carrying out the project activities, generating products and achieving results by themselves with the support from partners and other contracted parts. The situation is completely different in the case of the SGP Country Programme who does not directly implement and achieves its results through open calls for proposals and selects and funds those proposals that are closer to its indicators and targets but cannot avoid issues as absence of proposals for some targets, or commitments to achieve results based on the real capacities of the proposing organizations

11. Consistent with the previous point on planning, the obvious consequences were some difficulties for monitoring and reporting on 70 planned targets included in the PRODOC. As reported in the main text, the SGP M&E system to track and evaluate the use of the funds granted to the different organizations is very good, but the conversion of results from more than 90 projects to categories fitting the Project targets proved to be very laborious and difficult to achieve by the small National Coordination two-person team.

12. Finally, but not less important, the SGP Mexico Country Programme has a lot of room for improvement in the area of analysis of its own experiences, extraction of lessons learned, use of those lessons to develop guides, manuals and other orientation materials, and dissemination of them (and the pertinent supporting experiences) to a large national and regional Mesoamerican audience in need of those experiences. There is no doubt that the Country Programme has made efforts in this area and produced some materials, but it is also clear that the gathered experience in hundred of projects over 20 years largely exceeds what documentation is available.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

1. To maintain the existing administrative and operational structure for the SGP Country Program of OP5, with UNOPS as the project executing agency (or Implementing Partner as per UNDP terminology), UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency, and the SGP National Steering Committee as the decision making body of the Project with the SGP National Coordination reporting to the NSC. The exchange of information and coordination between the SGP Country Program (NSC and National Coordination) with the UNDP Global Technical Advisor for SGP Upgraded Programs in CPMT New York should be maintained as it is. This structure has shown itself to be adequate for SGP operations, and there is no obvious reason to change it.

2. To add strategic management duties to the tasks of the National Steering Committee aiming to have a clearly defined instance able to receive, analyze and decide on strategic managerial aspects at country level. Currently the main tasks of the NSC are related to technical and scientific orientation, advice and to the selection of proposals submitted mainly by CBOs and NGOs to be funded by the SGP. These tasks should be maintained but it is necessary to add a short number of key strategic management tasks to the existing lists. These key strategic management tasks should include:
    h. Annual evaluation of the National Coordination
    a. Periodic validation of the National Coordination team through open calls to fill the position allowing current Coordinators to participate and revalidate their positions
    b. Regular renewal of the NSC members
    c. Thematic and geographical reach of the SGP in the country
    d. Supervision of the SGP monitoring, evaluation and reporting system
    e. Supervision of the SGP knowledge management processes
    f. Other issues presented to the NSC and considered as strategic by the NSC

    In defining the strategic management tasks it is extremely important to keep them clearly differentiated and not overlapping with those of UNOPS and SGP National Coordination, in order to maintain separate and coordinated areas of work among them. The evaluation also recommends that this task should be initiated and coordinated by the UNDP Global Technical Advisor for SGP Upgraded Programs in CPMT in order to ensure consistency across the group of upgraded SGP Country Programs.

3. To define and adopt a more flexible approach for the identification of SGP Project Outcome Indicators and Targets allowing for the use of indicators and targets that are more generic without losing their alignment with the GEF Focal Areas and their indicators and targets that orient the entire GEF operation in each Operational Phase. These adjustments in the planning process and products will, in turn, have positive effects on the monitoring and evaluation system that is already working satisfactorily.

4.2.2 Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

4. The most important action for maintaining, reinforcing and continuing the development of the lines of work that are not yet sustainable is to maintain the SGP Country Program in Mexico as a GEF full-size project for OP6. According to the interviews maintained during the evaluation the different Mexican Governmental organizations related to the SGP have a positive view about this, in ways similar to those expressed by State Organizations, Academic groups and beneficiaries. All these stakeholders have different ways to access the GEF National Commission and make a strong case for the SGP to remain active during OP6.

5. According to what was seen, heard and analyzed during this evaluation the key areas to be considered by SGP for OP6 are those whose sustainability is still in process such as sustainable forest management, alternative tourism, home-gardens, environmental education and others. These priorities should not preclude the assignment of resources to organizations and groups willing to join the highly successful lines on organic apiculture and freshwater aquaculture with native fish species, as many groups willing to enter into these activities still require support to be able to make the change.

4.2.3 Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

6. Important emerging cross-cutting themes are how to create better opportunities to retain the youth in the rural areas, avoiding emigration to urban areas and/or other countries. It is also necessary to strengthen local stakeholder capacities to deal with the increasing changes in land tenure and ownership of communal lands (ejidos) which are the source of conflicts in making decisions about resources and has other implications in different initiatives (access to land, tourism attractions, rights of transit, etc.).

7. For the next Operational Phase (OP6) it is very important for the SGP Upgraded Country Program project to include a strong component on analysis of its own experiences, extraction of lessons learned, use of those lessons to develop guides, manuals and other orientation materials, and dissemination of them (and the pertinent supporting experiences) to a large national and regional Mesoamerican audience in need of this knowledge and information. This is a delayed duty that should not be postponed.

4.2.4 Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

A program with a history of 20 years as the Mexico SGP had many opportunities to improve and adjust its operations, and it is evident that they have been using them to advance an operation that performs very well. Therefore, even if there are minor things to be improved here and there, none of them are relevant enough to be included at the same level of relevance of the group presented in this chapter. Just the two following aspects fulfilled this relevance criterion and are described as follows.

8. The National Steering Committee should make a thorough analysis of the SGP experience to extend its influence to the neighboring State of Chiapas, which is separate from the Yucatan Peninsula despite some basic common (and distant) origins of parts of its population. SGP Mexico extended some of its activities into Chiapas in both OP4 and OP5. While this evaluation did not have a focus on this issue, the evidence shows that there are

mixed results from this experience, some of it good and some problematic. The closure of the UNDP Office in Chiapas did not cause the problems but contributed to the difficulties in overseeing SGP activities in Chiapas, providing adequate technical assistance and attention, generating co-financing, etc. The evidence collected in this evaluation did not allow for a clear recommendation about maintaining or closing the SGP presence in Chiapas, but it allows for this recommendation to be made to the NSC to look at this issue carefully and make a decision about it for OP6.

9. Related with the previous point there is another issue that was put on the table a few times by different persons. The basic question is: Can, or should, the SGP be extended nationwide? Again, this is an issue larger than the scope of this evaluation, but the perspective of this evaluation based on the collected evidence is that the SGP, as it is, should remain focused in the States of Yucatan Peninsula. The level of work and the need for close interaction with local organizations and other stakeholders makes it almost impossible to effectively extend the program so broadly. Nevertheless, what can be done is to replicate the program in other parts of the country using the experience, methods and procedures used by the SGP in Yucatan. The construction of these "replicated programs" needs to be careful in order to not confuse SGP operational procedures with SGP's ethos or nature; failing to understand and consider this difference will compromise the success of the replicated programs. In concrete terms, the SGP is not just a system to deliver funds to CBOs and local NGOs; therefore, just taking these aspects (how proposals are prepared, submitted, analyzed, funded and supervised) into consideration does not guarantee the success of the new "replicated programs". Other essential aspects differentiating SGP from other granting initiatives are
    a. who controls the initiative (in SGP this control is distributed among several stakeholders and no one of them has complete control, as explained abundantly in this report);
    b. how to achieve a proper balance between biodiversity conservation and improvement in people's wellbeing (not just a mechanism to transfer funds to groups in need);
    c. how to develop real networks of CBOs, academic and governmental organizations working together and providing the necessary knowledge, technical and financial support and committed beneficiaries that will develop the value chains (production, processing, marketing) leading to sustainability;
    d. how to maintain an effective and efficient management (avoiding overstaffing, lengthy or complicated procedures and time-consuming processes) contributing to maximizing the proportion of funds reaching the final beneficiaries; and, not the least important,
    e. how to develop a program that is locally owned by the communities and the States where it is active in a political context where the States are very protective of their autonomy and right to decide and almost always somewhat suspicious of exogenous initiatives.

The previous list is not an exhaustive one, but it was included as an example of the complexities to be considered when developing SGP replications in other parts of the country and to be included as things to learn from the GEF SGP Mexico Country Program's experience in addition to the procedures and formats for grant allocation.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

Evaluations of the GEF-financed Full-Size Projects for the Fifth Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kenya and México

The five projects listed here were approved in GEF OP5 as upgrading country programme projects financed by the GEF. Upgrading SGP Country Programme projects are products of the policy approved by GEF Council at the November Council of 2008. Under this policy, countries were encouraged to finance their SGP Country Programmes with a higher amount from their STAR allocations. The average GEF financing per upgrading country programme is USD 4.6 million.

Upgrading Country Programmes follow SGP Operational Guidelines, in particular in regard to the composition of the National Steering Committee and the role of the National Coordinator. The four-year standard Country Programme Strategies have been substituted by UNDP-GEF Project Documents in which a logical framework delineates the expected outputs and outcomes to be produced as a consequence of a focused grant making scheme. In the case of the five UCPs listed here, UNOPS remains the executing agency.

The evaluations of the five projects consist of one Terminal Evaluation (Mexico) and four Midterm Reviews (Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Kenya). UNDP-GEF supplies standard TORs for Terminal Evaluations (page 2-13) and Midterm Reviews (page 14-25), which can be found below. The project evaluations will require assessment, against the outcomes and outputs of each project, of the impacts achieved or in progress, identification of lessons learned, identification of bottlenecks and obstacles to further implementation and development of the Country Programmes for the future. The evaluator will produce an individual written assessment report for each project, as well as an overall synthetic, comparative report across all projects which will identify trends and patterns in design and implementation as input to SGP programme analysis overall.

Annex 1

TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the ***Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Mexico*** **(PIMS #4519.)**

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows: (*fully complete the table below*).

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:				
GEF Project ID:			*at endorsement (Million US$)*	*at completion (Million US$)*
UNDP Project ID:	4519	GEF financing:		
Country:	Mexico	IA/EA own:	UNDP	
Region:	LAC	Government:		
Focal Area:	MFA	Other:		
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):		Total co-financing:		
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:		
Other Partners involved:		ProDoc Signature (date project began):		
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed:	Actual:

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to: *(provide a project summary including project goal and outcomes. Also, in cases where the GEF funded project forms part of a larger programme, specify if the TE is to cover the entire programme or only the GEF component).*

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.
The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method[2] for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact,** as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR (*fill in Annex C*) The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.
The evaluation 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, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to (*location),* including the following project sites *(list)*. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum: (*list key stakeholders*).

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in Annex B of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see Annex A), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.** Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in Annex D.

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	***rating***	**2. IA& EA Execution**	***rating***
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	**rating**	**4. Sustainability**	**rating**
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

[2] For additional information on methods, see the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, Chapter 7, pg. 163

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US$)		Government (mill. US$)		Partner Agency (mill. US$)		Total (mill. US$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.[3]

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions**, **recommendations** and **lessons**.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the global manager for the SGP Upgrading Country Projects, assisted by UNOPS, as the executing agency for these projects. UNOPS will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

[3] A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: ROTI Handbook 2009

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be *XX* days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	*03*	*date*
Evaluation Mission	*08*	*date*
Draft Evaluation Report	*07*	*date*
Final Report	*02*	*date*

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to global manager for SGP Upgrading Country Programmes, UNOPS, UNDP CO, and National Coordinator
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To National Coordinator, UNDP CO
Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	To global manager UCPs, CO, NC, NSC
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to global manager UCPs, UNDP CO, NC, NSC

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team will be composed of *(1-2 international /national evaluators)*. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. (*If the team has more than 1 evaluator, one will be designated as the team leader and will be responsible for finalizing the report).*The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Team members must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum *XX* years of relevant professional experience
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s)
- (*additional skills based on project particulars*)

EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

(this payment schedule is indicative, to be filled in by the CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based on their standard procurement procedures)

%	Milestone
10%	At contract signing
40%	Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft terminal evaluation report
50%	Following submission and approval (global manager UCPs, UNDP-CO) of the final terminal evaluation report

ANNEX A: PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

(to be added)

ANNEX B: LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE EVALUATORS

(to be added

ANNEX C: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This is a generic list, to be further detailed with more specific questions by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based on the particulars of the project.

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
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 levels?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•		•	•
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•

ANNEX D: RATING SCALES

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution	***Sustainability ratings:***	***Relevance ratings***
6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML):moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR) ***Impact Ratings:*** 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
Additional ratings where relevant: Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A		

ANNEX E: EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM

Evaluators:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[4]

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

Name of Consultant: _______

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant)**:** _____

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

Signed at *place* on *date*

Signature: _____

[4] www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

ANNEX F: EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE[5]

i. Opening page:
- Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
- UNDP and GEF project ID#s.
- Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
- Region and countries included in the project
- GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program
- Implementing Partner and other project partners
- Evaluation team members
- Acknowledgements

ii. Executive Summary
- Project Summary Table
- Project Description (brief)
- Evaluation Rating Table
- Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations (See: UNDP Editorial Manual[6])

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
(In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (*) must be rated[7])

3.1 Project Design / Formulation
- Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
- Assumptions and Risks
- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design
- Planned stakeholder participation
- Replication approach
- UNDP comparative advantage
- Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Management arrangements

3.2 Project Implementation
- Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
- Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/ region)
- Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management
- Project Finance:
- Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (*)
- UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (*) coordination, and operational issues

[5]The Report length should not exceed *40* pages in total (not including annexes).

[6] UNDP Style Manual, Office of Communications, Partnerships Bureau, updated November 2008

[7] Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory, see section 3.5, page 37 for ratings explanations.

3.3 Project Results
- Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*)
- Relevance(*)
- Effectiveness & Efficiency (*)
- Country ownership
- Mainstreaming
- Sustainability (*)
- Impact

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
- Evaluation Question Matrix
- Questionnaire used and summary of results
- Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

ANNEX G: EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

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

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by
UNDP Country Office
Name: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____
UNDP GEF RTA
Name: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

ANNEX 2. Itinerary

The field visit was conducted between 1 and May 1, 2014 in accordance with the following schedule agreed with the National Coordination with support from the UNDP Country Office

Day & time	Thursd. May 1	Friday May 2	Saturday May 3	Monday May 5	Tuesday May 6	Wednesday May 7	Thursday May 8	Friday May 9	Sat. May 10
8:30		Transfer to SGP Office		Travel to UADY for meeting with PROAFT A. C.	Travel to EDUCE Cooperative.: Calle 53-C No. 410 x 58 y 60, Fracciona-miento Francisco de Montejo, Mérida.		Transfer to SGP Office		
9:00		Visit new SGP Offices	Travel to Celestún	Interview with PROAFT and partners: Juan Jimenez, Margarita Zarco y Angel Lendechi.	Interview with Miguel Angel Munguía, Director, EDUCE S. C. and other staff	Travel to Xul with Ricardo Pasos, Environmental Communications Project Director and James Callaghan, Director, Kaxil Kiuic A. C	Presentation of the Program on Acuacukture with Native Fish Species by Gabriel Márquez Project Director S. P. R. Otot-Ibam. Interview to Mr Marquez	UNDP CO Mexico: Montes Urales 440, Colonia Lomas de Chapultepec, C. P. 11000.	
10:00	Travel from Costa Rica, arrival and transfer to hotel.	Meeting with SGP National Coordina-tion. Opening aspects.	Visit to the Project Jaltún de Celestún Ecotourism and Recreation Park , operated by the CBO Sociedad Cooperativa Turística Pesquera Jaltun de Celestun. Interviews to José Anastasio Rodriguez Chay, Cooperative President and Armando Sastre COTACY.	Travel to Tipikal community and visits to farmers' home gardens .	Travel to Izamá area and visit organic apiculture groups (Stabentun Cooperative)	Visit to two high schools in local communities in Xul. Interviews with High School Directors and professors participating in the Environmental education program of Kaxil Kiuic	Meeting with SGP National Coordination. Closing aspects	Meetings with UNDP CO Program Officer for SGP Meeting with UNDP CO Resident Representati ve and RR Deputy	Return trip to Costa Rica

Día y hora	Jueves 1º Mayo	Viernes 2	Sábado 3	Lunes 5	Martes 6	Miércoles 7	Jueves 8	Viernes 9	Sábado 10 de mayo
14:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
17:00		Meeting with SGP National Coordina-tion	Field visit to Ría de Celestún	Return to Mérida	Return to Mérida	Return to Mérida	Meeting with SGP National Coordination. Closing aspects	Meeting with GEF Focal Point at Sec. Hacienda y Credito Publico (SHCP) - Insurgentes Sur No.1971 Torre III. Piso 3 Colonia Guadalupe Inn, Delegación Alvaro Obregon,	
18:00									
19:00		Return to hotel	Return to Mérida	Interview to Eduardo Batllori Sanpedro Secretary of Ecology, Yucatan State Government	Interview to Ana García and Héctor Ruiz, NSC Members		Travel to México City		
20:00		Hotel night	Hotel night	Hotel night	Hotel night	Hotel night	Hotel night	Hotel night	

ANNEX 3. List of persons interviewed

The list of persons interviewed for this evaluation includes:

Organizations and persons at the community level

1. José A. Rodríguez Chaine, Celestún
2. Don Boni, Celestún
3. Doña Eneida, Tipikal
4. Doña Abelina, Tipikal
5. Basilia de Castillo, Red de parcelas agroforestales
6. Martha Patricia Cralera Tuyub, Red de parcelas agroforestales
7. Rosa María Eván, Red de parcelas agroforestales
8. Manuel Jesús Euanche, Dzoncauich
9. Manuel Damián Euanche, Dzoncauich
10. Honorio Chin, Dzoncauich
11. Florencio Euanche, Dzoncauich
12. Víctor Canche, Dzoncauich
13. Elvira Canche, Dzoncauich
14. José Pilar Canche, Dzoncauich
15. Nicolás Pech, Oxkutzcab
16. Rubén Magaña, Oxkutzcab
17. Gustavo Mendoza, Yaxhachen
18. Carlos Xiu, Yaxhachen
19. Georgina Ramos, Yaxhachen
20. Rosa María Cab, Yaxhachen

Organizations accompanying community organizations

1. Armando Sastre. COTACY
2. Juan Jiménez Osornio, UADY
3. Angel Lendechi, UADY
4. Margarita Zarco, UADY
5. Aurelio Molina, UADY
6. José Luis Cámara, UADY
7. Mariana Arteaga, UADY
8. Miguel Angel Munguía, EDUCE
9. Juan Antonio Carranza, EDUCE
10. Roberto Pech, EDUCE
11. James Callaghan, Kaxil Kiuic
12. Ricardo Pasos, Kaxil Kiuic
13. Gabriel Márquez Couturier, Otot Ibam

Yucatan State Governmental Organizations

1. Eduardo Batllori, Secretario de Desarrollo Urbano y Medio Ambiente, Estado de Yucatán
2. Marisol Sosa Padilla, Programa Producción Social Familiar de Traspatio, SEDESOL, Estado de Yucatán

Mexico Federal Organizations

1. Martín Bosco, Titular de la Unidad de Asuntos Internacionales de la Secretaría de Hacienda de la Federación, GEF Administrative and Technical Focal Points
2. Jonathan Ryan, SEMARNAT

Oficina de País del PNUD

1. Marcia de Castro, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP
2. María del Carmen Sacasa, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP
3. Edgar González, Director, Sustainable Development Program, UNDP

SGP National Coordination

1. Raúl Murguía
2. Armida Avilés

SGP National Steering Committee

1. Jonathan Ryan, SEMARNAT, NSC President
2. Ana García Silberman, CINVESTAV
3. Héctor Ruiz, Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano y Medio Ambiente, Estado de Yucatán

Global Coordination of the GEF-UNDP SGP upgraded projects

1. Nick Remple, UNDP Global Technical Advisor for SGP upgraded programs

ANNEX 4. Summary of field visits

Saturday May 4th, 2014

Place: Jaltún Celestún

Project: Parque Recreativo Ecoturístico Jaltún de Celestún II

Interviewee: José Rodríguez Chaine, President, Jaltún de Celestún, S.C. de R.L.

Armando Sastre, COTACY

The Project recovered the aquaculture facilities that were abandoned. In the site there were large amounts of trash because it was used as a landfill. It implied an intense working period.

By the moment it is well recovered and maintaining tasks are kept to avoid sedimentation in the water courses. The mangrove and other vegetation is recovered giving habitat to many native and migratory species. Visitors can watch many of them, is the diversity of birds that can be found in a tour is remarkable. The Park also receives species that are rescued from poachers or accidents, all with the corresponding official authorization.

The Cooperative activities include educational experiences (lectures, celebrations and visits) that include near school students, as part of an environmental education initiative. The park receives visits from students and tourist from other Mexican states and countries.

Among the cooperative members future initiatives are to offer a restaurant service to visitors and to draw their living from the full work in the Tourist Project. By the moment they need to combine the cooperative income by other activities. They are also planning to increase the solar power panel energy, to improve their page in internet and the marketing strategy.

Monday May 5th, 2014

Place: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
Project: Maya communities learning of natural resources sustainable management and use. Network of agroforestry homegardens in-situ conservation. (Chaztinkin)

Interviewees:

- **Aurelio Molina (Agroecology)**
- **José Luis Cámara (Biology)**
- **Juan Jiménez Osornio (Agroecology)**
- **Mariana Arteaga Cote (Psicology)**
- **Angel Lendechy Grajales (Nutrrition)**
- **Margarita Zarcó (Pedagogy)**
- **Marisol Sosa Padilla (Backyard Social Family Production Program (Programa Producción Social Familiar de Traspatio, SEDESOL)**

Visit Chaztinkin: two homegardens

There was an overview presentation of the Project in the UADY headquarters, after that we moved to Chaztinkin community where were received by two families. They showed us an organic orchard growing in their home yard. One of them has established a biodigestor, it was in the process to make it operate properly.

During lunch time a group of women shared their experience of the Network of Agroforestry Backyard of Conservation in situ Project. They develop an organic orchard in a yard that belongs to a Technical School, they collectively plan and share the work and production. They belong to a network of women that develop similar activities; as a network they meet every one or two months to interchange their learning and to plan

how to improve the outcomes. They are planning to obtain legal recognition to be able to receive grants. Mariela Castillo Martínez from UADY gives them counseling in the implementation of the network.

They are also considering introducing to the school curriculum the agroecological production. They will plan along with school teachers, learning experiences for students.

The representatives of the Network of Agroforestry Backyard of Conservation in situ were:
Baislia de Castillo
Martha Patricia Cralera Tuyub
Rosa maría Eván
Mariela Castillo Martínez (UADY)

Evening interview: Eduardo Batllori. Secretario de Ecología y Ambiente del Estado de Yucatán

He explained the articulation of the Yucatán State environmental needs and the SGP projects. A synthesis of how the NDC works was discussed. The secretary describes the SGP strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Tuesday May 6th, 2014

Place: EDUCE S. C. headquarter
Interviewee: Miguel Angel Munguía, Director, Roberto Pech Technical Professional, Juan Antonio Carranza in charge of Projects.

Visit to the Izamal area where a group of beekeeper presented their project organic honey production. Interviewee Project: Flor de Xtabentun Producers, S.C. de R.L. de C.V.

It was possible to visit the warehouse where the new operation machines are installed; the warehouse was built and the machines purchased with the SGP grant.
During the interchange they recall their history and changes in the ecosystem management associated with organic honey production.
The producers 'association is organized in different committees, women take charge of checking the fulfillment of the organic standard production in the field, they belong to the Inspection Committee an important task in the association.

They are motivated by the sustainable use of the ecosystem and revenues draw by the export of the organic honey to European countries.

Evening: interviewee Ana García (CINVESTAV) y Héctor Ruiz, members of the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC)

They described the work of the Committee in analyzing and prioritizing proposals for SGP funding and their knowledge about different projects. They contribute to describe strengths and opportunities as well as risks and threats of the OP5 SGP project. They also analyzed the coming OP6.

Wednesday May 7th, 2014

Place: Oxkuibac y Yaxhachen
Interviewee: Ricardo Pasos, in charge of the Environmental Dissemintation/Awareness Project, and James Callaghan Head of the Kaxil Kiuic A. C

Visit to two different Telesecundarias: Telesecundaria Mariana Azuela, Oxkuibac
Headmaster: Rubén Maya
Telesecundaria Ignacio Allende, Yaxhachen
Headmaster Gustavo Mendoza Manzanares

The learning material provided by the Education Secretary has an approach that is far away of the context the students belong. This material makes harder for the teacher to promote significant learning experiences for students. The project goal is to provide schools with socio-cultural context relevant material as a support of the science, environmental, and mathematic curricula.

In both institutions the staff explains their active participation in the process to develop the Environmental Education contextualized material to improve their work with students. They have a great expectation about the implementation of the program and they are eagerly looking forward to have the printed material and visual aids.

It was also possible to visit the Biocultural Center Kaxil Kiuic and having an overall view of its local, regional and international projection.

Thursday May 8th, 2014
Place: SGP office

Interviewee: Gabriel Marqués Couturier
Project: Aquaculture Sustaintable production of native fish species
Organization: Otot-Ibam, S.P.R. de R.L. de C.V.

The Project is supported by a thorough scientific study of the native species that was developed by the Universidad in Tabasco. The pejelagarto reproduction and commercialization was adopted by many former tilapia growers. It reaches a very successful commercial performance many of these growers became themselves counselors of others producers.

The Tabasco State is incorporating a Product System Initiative that will articulate the value chain actors to grant the economy sustainability and income distribution.

The project also helps to reduce the impact of exotic fish species introduced in the Tabasco State by controlling their reproduction.

Friday May 9th, 2014

Place: UNDP Country Office, Mexico City

First meeting

1. **Jonathan Ryan, SEMARNAT, President of the National Steering Committee**

Second meeting

2. **Marcia de Castro, United Nations National Resident Coordinator**
3. **María del Carmen Sacasa, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative**
4. **Edgar González, United Nations Sustainable Development Program Director.**

In these interviews some of the aspects covered were: SGP performance, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities for OP6. It was also considered the transition process and projection of lessons learnt to other regions and scales. It was also discussed the articulation among SGP and regional and federal authorities, and the communication and support between the SGP and the UNDP CO.

Place: Secretaría de Hacienda de la Federación, Mexico City

1. **Jonathan Ryan, SEMARNAT**
2. **Bosco Martí Ascencio, International Affairs Secretary**

These interviews were similar to the previous one but focused on the perspective of the GEF Focal Point played by the Secretaría de Hacienda

ANNEX 5. List of documents reviewed

1. Mexico SGP Project Document (PRODOC)
2. 2013 Annual Project Review (APR)
3. Marco de Cooperación de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo en México (UNDAF) 2008 - 2013
4. Marco de Cooperación de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo en México (UNDAF) 2014-2019
5. UNDP Country Program Document Mexico (CPD) 2014-2018
6. National Steering Committee Meeting Acts (several)
7. SGP Quarterly Project Reports (several)
8. SGP National Coordinator Mission Reports (several)
9. Murguía Rosete, Raul. Seguimiento y Evaluación de Proyectos Socio Ambientales. El caso del Programa de Pequeños Subsidios a Organizaciones no Gubernamentales.
10. Project M&E Reports (55 reports)
11. SGP National Steering Committee Directory
12. Murguía Rosete, Raul. Practicando un modelo de desarrollo. La experiencia de los programas ejecutados por el PNUD en la Península de Yucatán
13. Murguía Rosete, Raul. Asistencia Preparatoria del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollopara la Formulación de un Programa de Desarrollo Sustentable para el poblado de Punta Abreojos B.C.S.
14. Project Proposal Jaltun de Celestun
15. Project Proposal Kaxil Kiuic
16. Project Proposal Flor de Stabentun
17. UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects
18. UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results
19. GEF Evaluation Office. The ROtI Handbook: Towards enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects
20. UNEG. UNEG ethical Guidelines for Evaluation
21. Quezada Sergio. Historia Breve de Yucatán
22. CICY. Biodiversidad y desarrollo humano en Yucatán
23. Del Castillo R., y Jimenez O., J. Manual de calidad para sistemas agroforestakes de conservación in situ de la agrodiversidad de Yucatán
24. Castillo Rocha, C. et al. Estrategias de comunicación para la conservación de la diversidad biológica y cultural en el Sur de Yucatán

ANNEX 6. Evaluation Questions Matrix

As defined in the Inception Report and the TOR, the Evaluation Questions Matrix is as follows:

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology*
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 levels?			
• What are the objectives of the GEF focal area?	• List of GEF Objectives for the FA	• GEF Documents	• DR + I
• What are the priorities of UNDP development environment?	• List of UNDP priorities	• UNDP Documents	• DR + I
• What are the objectives and indicators of the project?	• Projects Objectives & indicators	• PRODOC & Reports	• DR + I
• What is the level of correspondence between the above? Why? What can be improved?	• Level of correspondence	• Evaluator's criteria	• Comparison analysis
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
• What are the Project Objectives and Outcomes?	• Proposed Objectives and outcomes	• PRODOC	• DR + I
• What are the achievements of the project?	• Achieved Objectives and outcomes	• Project Reports • Partners & beneficiaries • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• What is the level of correspondence between proposals and accomplishments achieved? Is it satisfying? Why? What can be improved?	• Level of correspondence	• Evaluator's criteria	• Comparison analysis
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
• What are the project implementation costs? How are they structured? Why?	• Project costs and costs structure	• Project information	DR + I
• How many people staff members (permanent and temporary) have the project? Why? What proportions of costs are involved? What human resources were mobilized outside the project?	• Project Staff • Staff from other organizations • Staff from beneficiary organizations	• Project information	DR + I
• What was the cost of the project? What other resources were mobilized? What results achieved?	• Project total cost (GEF + co-financing) • Project direct and indirect benefits	• Project information	DR + I
• In what areas the project was efficient and what can be improved?	• Evaluator´s criterion on efficiency level based on other experiences	• Evaluator's criteria	• Evaluative analysis

Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
• What are the different types of risks to the sustainability of the project results?	• List of financial, institutional, economic and environmental risks	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• What is the likelihood that these risks actually happen?	• Probability of occurrence	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• How far the most likely risks endanger the permanence of the results?	• Potential impact of the risks on the results	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• What measures have been taken to prevent or mitigate these risks? Are they adequate? What can be improved?	• Existence of prevention and mitigation measures and their degree of relevance	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Evaluator´s criteria	• DR + I + Evaluative analysis
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
• What are the major pressures on the environment related to the themes of the project in the region? What are being reduced?	• List of environmental pressures and trends	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• What aspects of the project have improved the ecological situation in the region?	• List of aspects in which the ecological situation has improved	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• How the project has helped to reduce pressures and / or improve the ecological situation? What could have been improved?	• List of achievements and results of the project on related environmental, ecological and socio-economic issues	• Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Evaluator´s criteria	• DR + I + Evaluative analysis

ANNEX 7. Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[8]

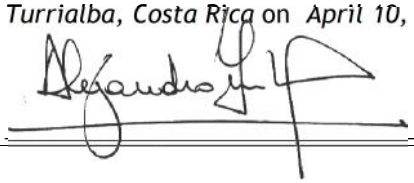
Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: __Alejandro Carlos IMBACH_____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant)**:** ____Not relevant_____

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

Signed at *Turrialba, Costa Rica* on *April 10, 2014*

Signature: 

[8] www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct