

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Cuba

**Final Evaluation Project No. 1:  
Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory  
Systems & Awareness Building / Sustainable Land Management  
in Severely Degraded Ecosystems PIMS 3806**

Period November 2008 – December 2014

Project ID number in ATLAS: P1.-00049239

PIMS Number: P1.-3806

Focal Area (GEF3): OP 15 Sustainable Land Management

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I would like to express my gratitude to all the actors and agencies that have participated in the assessment of Project No.1, especially to the team of the CPP program: P1 and P5 Project. As a team you have done a great job and you notice the success achieved. When visiting the area of influence of P1 across Cuba, I saw that as a team you have not only invested your knowledge and skills, but you also put your heart in it. Your passion for the work has created something very special for the environment, farmers and Cuban society.

I want to thank the producers who received us, for their frankness and the enthusiasm with which they have participated in this evaluation, in labor days, holidays and Sundays. I wish that the effort put in your work for sustainable land management is successful and has a social, economic and ecological impact for you, and your families and your communities.

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# 1. Executive summary

**Figure No. 1: Summary of the project.**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory Systems & Awareness Building / Sustainable Land Management in Severely Degraded Ecosystems			
GEF Project ID:	00049239		<i>at endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>at completion (Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	3806	GEF financing:	3,500,000	3,500,000
Country:	Cuba	IA/EA own:		
Region:	Latin America and the Caribbean	Government:	25,192,383	37,699,281
Focal Area:	Land Degradation	Other:	629,148	
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	GEF 3 OP15	Total co-financing:	25,821,531	37,699,281
Executing Agency:	Agencia de Medio Ambiente; Ministerio de Ciencias, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente (CITMA)	Total Project Cost:	29,321,531	41,199,281
Other Partners involved:	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		17-11-2008	
	(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed:	Actual:	
			30-11-2014	

## Brief description of the project.

The Country Programme Partnership (CPP) is designed to directly implement the programmatic orientation of the National Program to Combat Desertification and Drought in Cuba and provide a comprehensive framework for the implementation of projects assisted by various agencies of the GEF.

Project No. 1: "Capacity building for planning, decision-making, regulatory systems and sensitization / sustainable land management in severely degraded ecosystems" is part of the CPP and had a duration of six years. Originally it was five years but it had an extension for another year, so its finalization was in December 2014. According to the Regulations of the GEF, this project needs a final evaluation.

The aim of project P1 is: "Train and raise awareness for planning, decision making and necessary regulation for the implementation of SLM in Cuba" and aims to respond to the challenge by building the following results:

- The planning, decision-making and coordination systems work at the national, provincial and local levels;

- Cognitive skills and the sensitization are developed, implemented, tested and validated at the local level;
- A comprehensive model of sustainable land management in severely degraded drylands for application in small scale landscapes has been tested and implemented, with potential for replication in many other places in Cuba, and
- A model for climate monitoring and land degradation has been implemented and tested with potential for replication in many other places in Cuba.

**Figure No. 2: Classification of project performance**

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

**Summary of findings, recommendations and lessons learned.**

The project design is adequate in the sense of its strategy. The goal is feasible and meets the needs mentioned. The result, products and indicators have a good articulation among themselves. The definition of risk is insufficient because it is oriented to project management and does not cover other important risks: environmental, cultural and socio-economic.

The main focus of the P1 project is focused on strengthening national capacities for Sustainable Land Management and on the demonstration in the field of alternatives tailored to the extreme weather conditions. Analysis of project stakeholders in its design is very comprehensive and covers the entire social spectrum of individual farmers, members of cooperatives, peasant leaders, community leaders, workers of state enterprises, extension of ministries and actors.

The project has good results and experiences can be replicated in projects 2, 3 and 4 and in provincial and municipal polygons for the conservation of soil, water and forest. Risk management is very effective, especially through its instrument, which is the adaptive management. Monitoring and evaluation work and the recommendations of the mid-term review have been incorporated into the annual work plans and into certain restructuring of the project.

The P1 has several key aspects: creating systemic and institutional capacity in the territories of the provinces where it was implemented, including the creation of interdisciplinary teams on the issues and institutions working for SLM criteria.

The creation of a model of integration and cooperation between the actors of the institutional and local levels with capacity building at the national, provincial and local levels was achieved, which will support national planning and coordination needs. This model is important because it matches the national policy. It is effective because it achieves results and is installing efficient investment of resources. The tuning in working with the government gives a likely sustainability.

The socio-economic impacts on communities of the demonstration sites and areas of replication is another essential aspect in the P1, achieving to change the consciousness of the producers in favor of more sustainable production that allows higher incomes than before.

The strengthening of key institutions is another essential point in the project strategy. The laboratories responsible for monitoring the biophysical soil condition in Guantanamo and Pinar del Rio are important tools for the operation of SLM; like the Meteorological Center in Pinar del Rio which has an instrument and an important methodology: The early warning weather events is a combination of different data for forecasts. This is an important condition for the success of the SLM.

Another essential element in the project strategy is the partnerships developed by P1, in its role as coordinator, working with different institutions. These alliances have managed to create and disseminate new specialists working in institutions, centers, areas of intervention and replication in the MST theme, which with its high knowledge and experience are necessary to provide sustainability to the struggle for the MST condition.

The overall probability of the sustainability of P1 regarding financial resources, socio-political conditions, institutional and environmental governance framework is likely. The project has met the essential aspects, being considered highly satisfactory.

Among the most important recommendations are the following:

### **Recommendations**

P1 actions were successful, viable and sustainable, so it is important to replicate also in the future actions of P2, P3 and P4. These actions should be prioritized so that the results of future projects are introduced in regulatory and political platforms of Sustainable Land Management. Equally important is the publication of the increases in production and of the most important advances in the results, to contribute to an international debate about SLM and the conditions necessary to implement a successful project.

For the success of future projects it is necessary to generate increases in the income of farmers, improving their knowledge and access to financing and markets, in addition to sufficient resources in consulting and training in all the demonstration sites. Sites should be expanded in the demonstration areas for the replication of good practices of SLM, which will help conserve resources like soil, water and forests, as well as increasing the diversity of animal and plant production to foster the reduction of disaster vulnerability of populations.

GEF funding should be only an initial contribution while establishing alliances with national and international donors and thus ensure the future viability and sustainability of GEF projects. The adaptation to the circumstances of Cuba in the import of equipment and supplies is necessary, considering the difficulties in this regard.

### **Lessons Learned**

Only actions that have government approval ensure long-term sustainability, so there are no contradictions between the government and the project. The policy guidelines and strategy of project P1 are attuned to the needs of producers in the SD and are the basis to produce an effective, efficient and friendly way with the environment and thus protect the long-term NR.

The exact selection of actors is important in the design of the project. For the construction of the anticipated results it is important that all stakeholders in the project are present and actively participate.

The selection of equipment and supplies that are purchased on a project of this type with imports must be acquired as early as possible, to not waste time and delay the progress of the project.

The risks can be managed with adaptive management, necessary to respond to all the problems and circumstances that arise in the way of the project.

Only an understandable language of the logical framework ensures the active participation of the producers because without them an SLM project cannot be successful.

Partnerships at all levels allow more effective and efficient use of funds. The partnership between UNDP - GEF and the government of Cuba was successful in fundraising.

Do not overload the workers of institutions with tasks outside the project to ensure the quality of their work.

## 2. Introduction

14% of Cuba's territory (1,580,996 ha) is affected by desertification, distributed in 24 edaphoclimatic subzones, generally located near the coast. The Cuban environmental strategy identifies soil degradation as the main environmental problem, with 76.8% of productive land affected by at least one limiting factor in productivity and by processes that produce desertification. *National Environmental Strategy 2011-2015*.

Four of the five environmental problems identified in the National Environmental Strategy of Cuba, are related directly or indirectly to agricultural activity (soil degradation, deforestation, pollution of land and marine waters and biological diversity) and also with the objectives underlying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, which Cuba signed in 1995 and ratified in March 1997. *National Environmental Strategy 2011-2015*.

Land degradation in Cuba and worldwide has a negative impact on mankind and on the environment. If degradation is not stopped, the food security of the population is in a great danger; meanwhile degradation has a major impact on global ecosystems: Migratory birds lose their brooders, for example; Reefs die from the pollution entering the sea through the agro-systems, therefore UNDP, GEF and the Government of Cuba work in harmony to curb land degradation and implement systems of sustainable land management. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. National Program to Combat Desertification in the Republic of Cuba, CITMA, 2000*.

The Country Program Partnership (CPP) is a form of GEF collaboration, that meets the objectives of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) due to the diversity of environmental, social, economic and biophysical factors, acting on degraded land or in a degradation process. The diversity of tools to combat them, the time required to obtain results and impacts of the implementation of actions and the number of processes acting. *Country Program Partnership, 2014*.

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