

UNDP/GEF Support to
**Conservation of Biodiversity in Productive Landscapes of the
Honduran Moskitia**

TERMINAL EVALUATION



Final Report

July 2016

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GEF ID: 3592
UNDP PIMS ID: 3989
Project type: Full Size
GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity
GEF-4 Strategic Program (s): BD-SP4, BD-SP5
Evaluation conducted : February - May 2016

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PROJECT INFORMATION

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|--|---|---|---|--|
| Project Name | <i>Conservation of Biodiversity in Productive Landscapes of the Honduran Moskitia</i> | | | |
| GEF ID #: | 3592 | Funding | At Approval (Million \$US) | At Closing (Million \$ USD) |
| UNDP PIMS ID: | 3989 | GEF Funds: | \$2,375,230 | \$2,018,300 |
| Country: | Honduras | TRAC: | \$ 80,000 | \$ 223,051 |
| | | IADB: | \$4,600,000 | \$4,600,000 |
| | | Government: | \$ 162,000 | \$ 162,000 |
| | | World Bank: | \$ 250,000 | \$ 250,000 |
| | | Beneficiaries: | \$ 648,000 | \$ 648,000 |
| Region: | Central America | Total Co-financing: | \$7,758,300 | \$7,901,351 |
| Focal Area | Biodiversity | Operational Program: | GEF 4 Strategy Program BD-SP4, BD-SP5 | |
| Executing Agency | UNDP (<i>Direct Implementation Modality</i>) | Total project expenditures: | | |
| Other involved shareholders | MASTA, FINZMOS, Mi Ambiente, ICF and DIGEPESCA | Actual start date from signing of ProDoc: | December 2009 | |
| | | Operational Closing date: | Planned: (originally 49 months) December 2013 (project was signed on 8-Dec-2009 + 4 years' duration) | Actual: July 2015 (68 months) |
| Mid-term review/evaluation. (planned date): | | Terminal Evaluation Starting date: | February 2016 | First draft 16 May 2016 |
| | | TE Final Approval: | UNDP Comments Received: | TE Final Approval Date: |

Acknowledgements

The TE team appreciates the tremendous support given by all those people who either directly or indirectly provided their valuable time and energy to organize meetings, coordinate field logistics, give interviews and provide documentation throughout the evaluation. We especially thank ICF's Director of Wildlife, Said Láinez, Ing. Tomas Manzanares from the Regional ICF office and Miguel Suazo, Alberto Marley and Lenin from DIGEPESCA. Alexis Irías and Delton Alenn from the executing agency provided us with invaluable information and logistical support, while Ing. Dennis Funes, Ing. Cony Tinoco, Ing. Rafael Calderón, Luidgi Ludo and especially Elina Kaartinen, were important in providing a good overview of the institutional memory of the project throughout its development and execution. Staff from the Central UNDP Office in Honduras - Irati Barrera, Daysi Rodríguez, Carles Rodríguez and Mayela Abudoj were helpful in adding additional support and evidence for the TE.

We also thank others who shared their experiences with the project, in particular Dr. Ayax Irías and Biol. Ester López, Biol. Francisco Portillo, Carlos Mejía y Gerson Granados of PATH, Héctor Portillo of INCEBIO and our friend Dr. Jorge Travieso who shared his tremendous knowledge about the Moskitia.

Finally, we want to give a special thanks to Norvin Goff, and other helpful people representing from MASTA, FINZMOS and not least, the communities of Mábita, Mokorón, Kruta and Auratá, for their tireless work to create the enabling conditions for ensuring that the vision of conserving biodiversity, reducing poverty and improving governance in the region so that the GEF seed project will continue for another decade. They provided us with some of their knowledge and perspective about what it is like to be abandoned repeatedly by so many governments, and for sharing their vision of how their lives could improve with relatively small investments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following report presents the findings of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the *Conservation of Biodiversity in Productive Landscapes of the Honduran Moskitia* project, which was developed in response to concerns about sharp declines in biological diversity (BD) in a remote area of global importance¹. This BD hotspot joins with two World Biosphere Reserves² and when combined, the area comprises around 17% of Honduran territory and contains most of the country's biodiversity, including the five large native cats, tapir, manatee, sawfish, as well as other threatened and endangered species. Pilot areas were strategically selected to help build a natural barrier to human predators that clear the landscapes for cattle farming and hunting not only for food, but to earn money from selling pelts, capturing juvenile red and green macaws to sell them as pets. These pilot experiments tested different management practices (based on economic incentives, social norms and scientific recommendations) and institutional arrangements in order to help stabilize and recover the losses flora and fauna inhabiting the remote 16,000 Km² (1.60 million hectares) of contiguous broadleaf and pine forests and 112,000 Km² Karatasca Lagoon system.

The project was not only *Highly Relevant* to the needs of the Miskito people and for protecting the region's rich, but threatened biodiversity, it was also consistent with Government Plans and Strategies, particularly the Plan Nación and the Strategy for Conserving Biodiversity, fit well with UNDP's Strategy and Vision for Honduras and GEF-4's Strategic Program (SP4 and SP5). However, addressing these issues alone would not have led to meet the project's objectives and outcomes without improving governance and confronting barriers to effective implementation.

Any initiative to conserve the Moskitia's rich biodiversity the isolated and forgotten region represents a formidable challenge that can only be met with strong government support, effective landscape governance processes and efficient aid delivery mechanisms, all of which must continue far beyond the initial four-year GEF funding period that provided seed money to create some basic enabling conditions. Nonetheless, the same Honduran government institutions (ICF and DIGEPESCA) that formally committed themselves to support the project provided little support, while the necessary leadership from the central and regional authorities was weak, at best and in many cases, worked against the best interests of the project. Despite repeated calls for government assistance to reduce pressures on biodiversity, the government provided little support and it failed to take action until the end of the project. For example, ICF ignored repeated calls to follow the proposed legal channels to remove illegal colonists and prevent further bloodshed, while DIGEPESCA offered little assistance to help fishermen develop the tools for confronting the collapse of the Karatasca Lagoon fishery. These are major reasons that the project was unable to achieve all of its outcomes and the lack of government intervention to confront these problems created an unlevel playing field from the start and the ET rates the government ownership in the project as being *Unsatisfactory* (U).

¹ The region is only accessible by plane, boat, by foot or horseback not only makes it an important piece of Central American and global biodiversity and other ecosystem services that are crucial for survival of the indigenous populations inhabiting the region.

² The project area is also an ecologically important buffer zone between three adjacent biodiversity-rich areas - the Bosawas World Biosphere Reserve in Nicaragua, the nearby Rio Plátano World Biosphere Reserve and the Tawahka Asagni Antropological and Biosphere Reserve and the extensive tropical broadleaved moist forest that include the poorly studied forests and biodiversity covering the karst mountains bordering these two areas, provide critical habitats for several threatened and endangered species (IUCN Red List) to complete their life cycles.

Inefficient project administration and financial disbursement by the executing agency during the last year of project implementation further compromised the technical team's effectiveness to operate in the field. Their dedication and professionalism, together with support from two key Miskito organizations - MASTA and FINZMOS, and the leadership of the UNDP Country Office Resident Representative during the final phase, were the main reasons that the project not only achieved most of its expected outcomes and is likely to continue for another decade. The GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) also made important contributions by creating helping Miskito shareholders strengthen women's groups, territorial governance and provide tools for conserving biodiversity and managing natural resources sustainably.

One of the most successful interventions was the development of the Karatasca Lagoon Management plan that integrates both, traditional forms of fishery resource management and government regulations. After being on the verge of collapse, the fishery now appears to be recovering thanks to many of the management strategies that were developed by the project. There is greater awareness about the importance of mangroves in mitigating the impacts of climate change. On the land, forest fires have been reduced around Mábita, but not in other areas, the number of breeding pairs of scarlet macaws and white-tailed deer appear to be increasing in several areas. However, the Moskitia is a vast area and there is still considerable work to do for ensuring that these management plans are effective and not simply paper plans that do little for conservation. This will require considerably greater involvement on the part of the government, particularly in enforcing the rule of the law equitably.

These and other enabling conditions are highly likely to result in positive, long-term social, economic and environmental changes that could not have happened without GEF support and the high level of involvement by UNDP Country Office were fundamental for securing ample, medium-term funding for the ALLIANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOSKITIA, supported by the Swiss and German governments, UNDP, as well as a new level of commitment from the highest level of the Honduran government who has allocated significant funds from the national budget to support this new initiative. Given these impressive achievements despite so many obstacles, the ET rates the project *Satisfactory* and the project is *Likely* to continue for another decade.

While the evidence clearly shows that the project strengthened governance mechanisms and capacities of Miskito shareholders³ to claim their rights at the regional and local landscape levels, efforts to build an accountable, responsive and transparent mechanism for government institutions at the national and regional levels were unsuccessful. This notwithstanding, the project was instrumental in securing land titles for Miskito base organizations, developing good practices for biodiversity conservation and fishery management for many areas.

Although the ProDoc was developed using excellent background information and good baselines for several species, its logical framework was flawed as it place great emphasis on timber products and a source of income by supporting the cooperative model, both of which had serious problems, as described herein. Further, it was based on weak assumptions and as shown in the reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) pathway in Annex 7, it did not follow the most direct route to achieve the objective. Considerable emphasis was placed (on marketing and selling timber that was centered on a

³ The Evaluation Team (ET) prefers to use the term shareholders, rather than the classical and inaccurate term stakeholders, which originates from poker games in the US wild-west. In that sense, a stakeholder is an impartial entity who guards and oversees the stakes at play, in this case biodiversity. Ideally, this should be a government, but given that no such entity exists, it is more accurate to refer to people who have a share in the outcomes.

model built around cooperatives, reflected in the disproportionate number of indicators for outcomes #1 and #2 indicators). However, the prices for timber in the Moskitia are not competitive with more accessible markets on the north coast and the cooperative model does not fit with Miskito culture – in fact, the model for basing alternative income-generating activities on the forestry cooperative model has repeatedly failed for many reasons, including that it benefits relatively few families compared with the more appropriate Community Forestry Development model, the high transaction costs and the poor oversight and enforcement of regulations by the Institute for Forest Conservation and Development and Protected Areas (ICF). This created serious divisions within the Miskito stakeholders and turned many stakeholders against the project.

Much of this could have been flagged and the path toward meeting the overall objective could have been corrected if the project had developed a results-based monitoring and evaluation system as the ProDoc stipulated. But most importantly, it could have been flagged if the timber and cooperative issues had been included in the project's risk and assumptions, which were weak at best (Annex 7) and the measures used for mitigating those risks were inadequate. One most striking gap was the failure to assume that the government would provide the necessary support at the regional and central levels, and that they would take action to reduce the repeatedly volatile climate caused by land tenure-related conflicts caused by land-grabbing outsiders – this seriously undermined the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation process.

Although these weaknesses, and the lack of a dynamic monitoring and evaluation system made it difficult to capture lessons learned and carry out adaptive management *in a systematic manner*, there were some examples (e.g., the late emphasis on securing land titles for territorial and communal lands) of how the project adapted in an *ad hoc* manner. These, and other actions by the project's technical team helped hold the project together, especially after the *coup de etat* in 2009, when the Miskito leaders turned to the UNDP Country Office when they lost trust in the new government. The resulting negotiations and subsequent actions by the Country Office Resident Representative were instrumental in building synergies that helped move the project beyond the impasse of the conflict between Miskito leaders and the government, and especially in avoiding bloodshed related to the conflict between the residents of Auka and the terceros. Although the TE rates the performance of the technical staff *Highly Satisfactory*, weak administrative support from UNDP Country Office during the last year resulted in inefficient financial disbursement that affected the overall effectiveness of field-related activities. However, the active involvement of the Country Office's Resident Representative helped overcome this weakness and therefore the TE assigns the project an overall rating of *Satisfactory* (S).

The project generated several good lessons that include the following:

- 1) **Patience** - Conserving biodiversity conservation through alleviating poverty (and vice-versa) in remote areas like the Moskitia not only requires the creation of biodiversity-friendly jobs and a coherent policy framework for biodiversity conservation, but also an environment that is regulated by credible and accountable institutions that enforce the laws effectively. Social, economic and environmental sustainability are unlikely without these elements in place and the best procedures and planning for biodiversity protection are of little value unless environmental and human rights are effectively enforced. This lesson can be applied to many GEF projects working in similar remote areas with weak traditions of governance. It runs a high risk of failure unless greater attention is placed on reducing inequality resulting from traditionally weak governance lacking accountability, leadership and balanced enforcement of the rule of law.

- 2) **Direct implementation models can be effective** in the absence of government ownership, but they should always be a last resort option. UNDP clearly demonstrated that with a strong commitment from the Resident Representative and her staff, it is possible to create a model for filling gaps in government leadership, strategically and relentlessly forging a strong, three-way partnership process for engaging the government, a responsive and engaged executing agency and integrating shareholders and beneficiaries in that process. Without such a partnership, GEF projects are likely to fall far short of their objectives and the investments will probably be poorly spent.
- 3) **A systematic approach to adaptive management can help reduce the reaction time to correct errors** in intervention models, as well as replicate successful actions. Such an approach, linked to a responsive, results-based M&E system could have helped systematically collected lessons learned from the overall implementation process and these could have aided in increasing the project's overall efficiency. Instead, the emphasis was on maintaining the standard UNDP monitoring tools, while not following the UN approach on results-based monitoring (Brester 2012, UNDG 2012). Pilot approaches that do not measure change and capture lessons that can be used to adapt them are highly likely to fail (Bille 2009)
- 4) **A Community Forestry Development approach is likely to be more accepted and more cost effective than Forestry Cooperatives** - building productive, alternative income-earning projects that involve cooperatives in the Moskitia are likely to fall short of expectations due to the historical failures of forestry cooperatives. Instead, family units are the most acceptable form of collaboration, as was shown for the eco-tourism project with red macaws in Mábita and the jellyfish project in Kauma. Until the government resolves the final taxing scheme for Miskito territories (private versus territorial land classifications), it will be impossible to develop a model for reinvesting the savings into biodiversity conservation.
- 5) **Effective legal and political conditions require a government that is accountable for its decisions** and creating the right set of enabling conditions. Such enabling conditions can take many forms and may require context-specific implementation modalities that may take much longer than the GEF-allocated funding period to blossom fully, especially in remote project areas that face formidable financial and logistical limitations in delivering results. Without the active, hands-on and persistent involvement by the UNDP Country Office, the project would have likely failed.
- 6) **Effective, fluid and transparent communication is fundamental for building confidence between a project and its beneficiaries** by building on cultural governance networks, bolstering their knowledge about the overall vision of the project. Getting communities to express a vision of the kind of future can play an important role in communication how the project can link to that vision and the Plan de Vida was an important tool for achieving that goal.
- 7) **The project provides an excellent example of how shareholders can be empowered through blending their culture-specific knowledge** with new knowledge, and engaging them in constructing plans to manage their future, which relies heavily on protecting biodiversity and other ecosystem services. However, without a champion with close connections to both the local level and the highest levels of government in order to move the entire process forward patiently and tirelessly, future GEF projects are likely to fall short of their goals. The direct implementation modality is an effective mechanism for achieving this only when there is a high level of commitment from the executing agency's leader.

- 8) **In the absence of an exit strategy, strong synergies with an eye toward securing continued support must start early in the project cycle.** Effective performance of an executing agency can be instrumental - not only for attracting funds to continue a solid and meaningful initiative, but also to engage the highest levels of government in supporting the effective implementation of biodiversity conservation projects. The project was fortunate to have a committed Resident Rep who effectively worked with high levels of government and interested donors to help secure sufficient funding to allow the project to continue as the Alliance for Development in the Moskitia, with a badly needed focus on improved governance. This was essentially the exit strategy, although it was an ad hoc one and not formulated from the start, but during the final year of the project.
- 9) **A holistic project that integrates women and other marginalized members of society is a key ingredient** for connecting many of the missing links that are essential for delivering long-term benefits to society and the environment.
- 10) **GEF's one-size fits all model may not be functional for remote and weakly governed areas like the Moskitia.** Unless greater attention is paid to biodiversity governance and placing strict conditions on governments to meet their obligations of supporting future projects, there is a likelihood that the projects will not be sustained over time.
- 11) **Fluid and timely disbursements with financial efficiency are essential for effective projects.** The low efficiency of the Country Office ability to disburse funds (including salaries) and the lengthy delay in approving a person to carry out project administration in the region was one of the elements that severely affected the project team's effectiveness in very difficult conditions in the field. The team went long periods without receiving funds and frequently and to borrow money to make ends meet.

The TE offers the following recommendations to UNDP, the Government and the stakeholders in the region:

Recommendation #1: Future interventions to conserve biodiversity and alleviate poverty in the Moskitia must prioritize the insertion of multiple levels of Governance (e.g., transparency and inclusive participation in decision-and policy-making, leadership accountability) into the project design. This governance must be strengthened at the national, regional and local levels, and it should especially focus on reducing inequities in resource allocation and other root causes of biodiversity loss in the region. New projects also require a robust ToC framework that includes well-formulated outcomes, well defined risks and assumptions and mitigation measures to confront them.

Recommendation #2: Future donor-funded projects should develop both incentives and penalties for engaging partner countries to assume greater ownership and they must insist that projects are designed in a way that will help overturn the general lack of political will that is common in these kinds of projects. Governance is a key ingredient, but it must focus heavily on fostering greater accountability on the part of government shareholders.

Recommendation #3: Future GEF projects should develop a responsive, results-based M&E system that is capable of detecting failures early on in the social-cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of the project and correcting them on a timely basis, rather than waiting for a mid-term or terminal evaluation. It would be invaluable for the executing agencies to have such an integrated, results-based M&E system built into the project design and using it from the time of startup in order to be in a good position to correct any issues identified by the project's required mid-term evaluation, rather than having a time lag that complicates corrections during the final months of a project.

Recommendation #4: Future alternative income-generating projects in the Moskitia should focus on working at the family or kinship level using the Community Forestry Development model, rather than the failed forestry cooperative modality. New projects should also work to develop sustainable financing models that can re-invest tax savings into biodiversity conservation activities and the mechanism for collecting and reallocating those tax savings must be transparent and accountable to all shareholders.

Recommendation #5: The project offers a model for future GEF projects facing logistical challenges for achieving results in remote areas. Engaging the executing agency in the direct implementation model should be explored carefully under such conditions when government support is weak or non-existent.

Recommendation #6: Future projects designed for the Moskitia must be built on transparent governance mechanisms that promote accountability and strengthen local leadership, build effective transversal mechanisms that clearly communicate how the project contributes toward strengthening the local visions for the future. Only when these basic building blocks are in place, can local shareholders develop the kind of trust and vision for actively engaging them in planning and managing their ecosystems.

Recommendation #7: Future GEF projects located in remote parts of the world where human security, long distances to intervention areas, low levels of education, language and cultural considerations areas must be flexible in allocating additional financial and human resources to deal with these conditions. Such complex projects are also likely to require longer than the relatively the typical 4 year funding period tied to donor allocation cycles, and therefore a longer-term commitment should be strongly considered. It is recommend that the direct implementation modality be carefully considered in these types of projects, but only when the executing agency is ready to give its complete commitment to seeing the process to its completion, as the UNDP office in Honduras has done

Recommendation #8: Future projects should build an exit strategy into their design. However, giving that the circumstances at the time of exit may change, it is crucial for the executing agency to build synergies with other donors and the host government from the outset of project implementation in order to prepare for contingencies should the planned exit strategy fail.

Recommendation #9: Future projects in the Moskitia should further strengthen opportunities for women to play an even greater role in building resilient ecosystems. They should also integrate other marginalized members of Miskito society, particularly handicapped divers who have few opportunities for employment. The local resource mapping data developed by the University of Kansas, MASTA and the Pedagogical University could be invaluable for a more integrated M&E system that uses baselines that are collected by resource users and involving them in tracking changes using local knowledge.

Recommendation #10: The UNDP Country Office must improve their project administration capabilities, particularly when it comes to streamlining financial disbursements and ensuring that there is a permanent regional administrator in place at all times. This was a serious impediment to the performance of the technical team and it reduced their effectiveness in an already complex working situation. The recommendation specifically applies to the UNDP country office and any future work to be done outside of Tegucigalpa.

The table below summarizes the overall rating performance of the project:

| Project Performance Rating | | |
|--|---------------|--|
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| Monitoring & Evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall quality of M&E | S | M&E documents were in place, although the reporting on PIRs was sporadic. However, the absence of a results-based approach is a major limitation for being able to collect lessons and adapt in a systematic manner. |
| M&E design at project startup | S | The log frame was in place, although few of the indicators were SMART and assumptions were superficial, thereby making it difficult to conduct a results-based M&E. |
| M&E plan implementation | MS | M&E documents were in place, although the reporting on PIRs was sporadic, but there was no results-based M&E as generally practiced by other UN agencies |
| IA & EA: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall Quality of Project Implementation/Execution | S | The project technical team and the UNDP Country Office Res. Rep. were the major reasons that the project is rated as satisfactory. The conditions for implementation were extremely challenging and it is a tribute to these actors, MASTA and FINZMOS that the project was able to achieve as much as it did, although it did not reach its full potential for reasons below. |
| Implementation Agency Execution | MS | Neither ICF nor DIGEPSCA provided the necessary and agreed upon support to the project. This created major challenges that would have otherwise ensured failure were it not for the actions by the UN country office during the last year, |
| Executing Agency Execution | S | The lengthy delay (approx.. one year) in approving a project administrator for the regional office in Puerto Lempira led to inefficient financial disbursement and this affected the effectiveness of the project's technical team already working under very difficult and dangerous conditions in the field. However, the strong leadership of the Resident Rep of the UNDP country office was a major factor in turning the project around during the final year and creating conditions that make financial sustainability likely. |

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| Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall quality of project outcomes | S | The project achieved many of its outcomes |
| Relevance: Relevant (R) or not relevant (NR) | R | The project was highly relevant to the Miskito Region and to conservation efforts to protect this Central American biodiversity hotspot. |
| Effectiveness | S | Given the challenging conditions in the region, it is remarkable that the project team was able to help the project effectively meet many of its expected results. However, this effectiveness was reduced by the weak government support and the inefficient financial disbursement by the executing agency. |
| Efficiency | MU | Overall the efficiency was good and disbursements were timely until just after mid-term when the regional project administrator resigned. It took the country office one year to hire someone to fill the position and during that time, excessive bureaucratic procedures seriously reduced the overall effectiveness of the |

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| | | project and severely disrupted morale of the stakeholders who were unable to receive crucial funds in a timely manner. |
| Sustainability: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Unlikely (U) | | |
| Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability | L | The recently approved Alliance for Development of the Moskitia with support from at least two key donors will substantially reduce risks to sustainability because in addition to providing alternative livelihoods and incomes, it will have a strong focus on governance. The fact that the national government has agreed to commit funds for the project is an important indicator that the level of risks will be greatly reduced. However, caution should be advised, as there was a commitment (albeit a small financial one) for Project Moskitia bring considerable funding for the next decade and allows the project to continue developing and strengthening many good practices and to test new interventions. |
| Financial resources | L | The Alliance for Development of the Moskitia will bring considerable funding for the next decade and allows the project to continue developing and strengthening many good practices and to test new interventions. |
| Socio-economic | L | The creation of new income and livelihood opportunities, as well as improved governance makes this likely. |
| Institutional framework and governance | ML | This could go either way and it remains to be seen at this time. And if there is a new government, questions remain about whether they will continue on the same path as set forth by the Alliance for the Moskitia. |
| Environmental | ML | The same argument used above applies here. |
| Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N) | | |
| Environmental status improvement | S | The protection of the macaw population and their habitat, as well as the approach for creating more sustainable fishing in the immense Karatasca Lagoon were major achievements |
| Environmental stress reduction | MS | The level of environmental stress is still high, mainly due to the presence of terceros, the lack of jobs, poor education and health services. Until these are addressed, the problem will continue to be volatile. |
| Progress toward stress/status change | S | The project made some major contribution to move forward, although effectiveness was greatly compromised by the weak government support and inefficiency in financial disbursement during the final year of implementation. |
| Overall Project Results | S | It is remarkable that the project achieved a satisfactory status, given the numerous barriers described above. It is a tribute to the technical team and the UNCO Resident Rep and her staff during the final months of the project, and the fact that the project has now contributed some key enabling conditions and good lessons that will be built upon and move the original objectives forward in the next decade through the new Alliance for the Moskitia. |

Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| AFE-COHDEFOR | The defunct Honduran Forestry Development Corporation |
| APR | Annual Project Review |
| BD | Biodiversity |
| CAMBIO | Central American Markets for Biodiversity |
| CITES | Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species |
| COSUDE | Swiss Development Agency |
| DBIO | Department of Biodiversity (SERNA) |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| FINZMOS | Miskito Federation serving as an umbrella for 22 Territorial Councils |
| FSC | Forestry Stewardship Council |
| FSP | Full Sized Project |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GIZ | German Technical Cooperation |
| GoH | Government of Honduras |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) |
| ICF | Institute for Forest Conservation and Development and Protected Areas |
| IADB | Inter-American Development Bank |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| INA | National Agrarian Institute |
| IR | Inception Report |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature |
| KfW | German Development Bank |
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| MAREA | Management of Aquatic Resources and Economic Alternatives Project |
| MASTA | Mosquitia Asla Takanka (NGO) |
| MOPAWI | Moskitia Pawisa Apiska (NGO) |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PC | Project Coordinator |
| PD | Project Director |
| NTFP | Non-timber forest product |
| PA | Protected area |
| PAMUPEL | Miskito Artisanal Fishermen's organization in Karatasca Lagoon |
| PATH | Land Administration and Titling Project for Honduras (WB) |
| PIF | Project Identification Form |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| PPG | Project Preparation Grant |
| PRONADEL | National Program for Local Development |
| PSC | Project Board/Project Steering Committee |
| RCU | Regional Coordination Unit |
| REMBLAH | Broadleaf Forest Management Network of Honduras |
| RPBR | Rio Plátano World Biosphere Reserve |
| SERNA | Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (<i>Mi Ambiente</i>) |
| SGP | Small Grant Program (GEF) |
| TNC | The Nature Conservancy |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Program |
| UNCO | Development Program Country Office |
| WB | The World Bank Group |
| WWF | Worldwide Fund for Nature |

1. PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROJECT

1. The following report presents the findings of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the *Conservation of Biodiversity in Productive Landscapes of the Honduran Moskitia* project, which initiated in 2009 and ended in December 2015. It aimed to test different management practices and institutional arrangements in the Miskito region, the home to over 80,000 indigenous (Miskito, Tawahka and Pech) and mestizos, by focusing on six Miskito pilot communities. These experiments aimed to help stabilize and recover the losses flora and fauna inhabiting the remote 16,000 Km² (1.60 million hectares), one of the largest wilderness and contiguously forested areas that has survived deforestation in Central America. The forests are comprised of broadleaf rainforest, pine savannah, mangrove forests, and extensive coastal wetlands that border the Karatasca Lagoon, one of the largest coastal lagoons on the isthmus (Figure 1). These ecosystems provide food, shelter and habitat for numerous red-listed mammals, resident and migratory birds, reptiles and amphibians, some of which are endemic to the region. The region and its 80,000 plus inhabitants, mainly Miskito people, are reachable mainly by

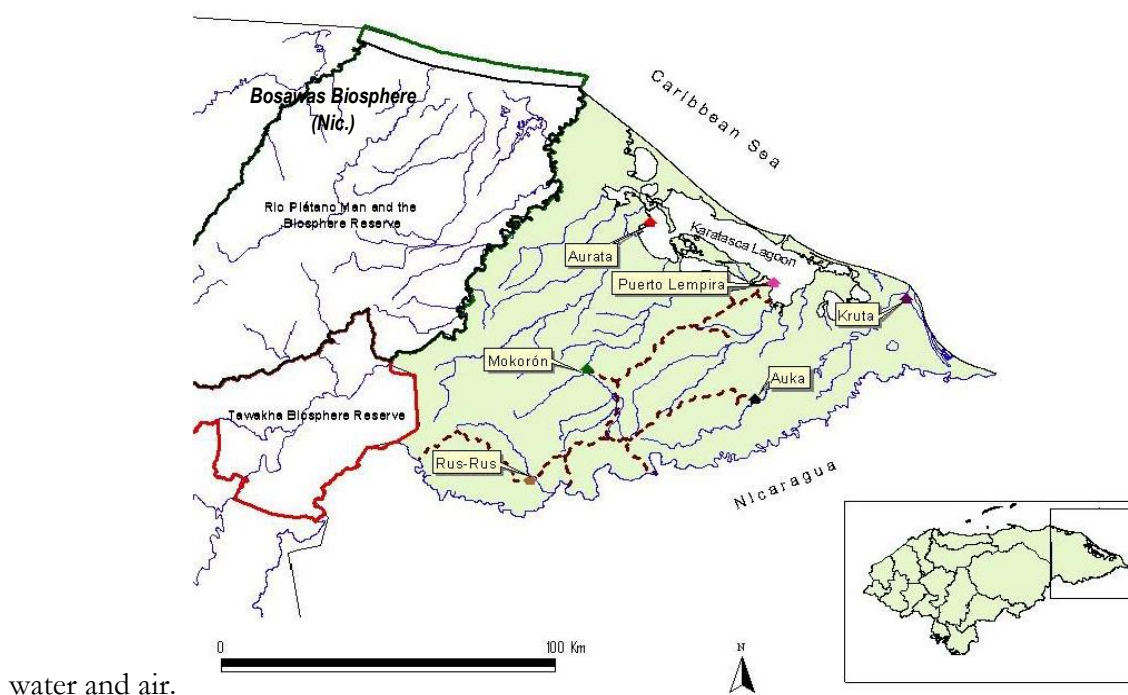


Figure 1: Map of the Moskitia (pilot areas are names in the boxes) and the adjacent Biosphere Reserves.

2. When the epic geological land bridge rose from the sea and joined the North and South American continents some twenty million years ago, the event launched the greatest explosion of new species the earth has experienced in a region today called the neo-tropics. Migration patterns, seed dispersal and gene flows spread many of these recently arrived flora and fauna across the Miskito lowlands today. The Rio Coco is one of the three largest rivers cutting across Central America that not only serves as waterway allowing freshwater and euryhaline species to complete their life cycles in new areas, but also for connecting Miskito families and merchants moving freely between Honduras and Nicaragua. Prior to the Nicaraguan civil war of the 1980s, the Moskitia harbored

⁴⁴ The other contiguous forest is in Guatemala.

the planet's newest tropical plants and animals, including many of the other species found nowhere else on earth. However, the war forced many Nicaraguan families to flee across the big river into Honduras and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees took emergency action to establish numerous camps within the bio-diversity rich Honduran Moskitia. The populations of Rus Rus and Mokorón, two small pilot communities selected for the Moskitia project with several hundred families, swelled with the arrival of more than 25,000 refugees – most were hungry but others were small, but newly arrived entrepreneurs that extracted timber and firewood, and severely reduced the wild animal population in and around these communities (17,22,23). One interview stated that one group of Nicaraguan refugees killed 20-25 jaguillas, but only consumed the legs and threw away the rest of the animal (H. Portillo) and large numbers of white tailed deer were killed and eaten (ProDoc).

3. As the war ended, most refugees returned to their Nicaraguan homes, but the hard-hit biodiversity only began to recover over the next 25 years, until colonists referred to as *terceros*, began to take over Miskito territorial lands, whose titles have been given to Miskito Territorial Councils by the GoH. Terceros are increasingly expanding their presence while clearing neo-tropical landscapes (ProDoc 2009;17,22,23) and at the time of this report the government has yet to take action to remove them. Recently, a new influx of Miskito refugees from Nicaragua escaping colonists taking land on the other side of the Coco River.
4. Given the above, the project could not have come at a better time. The process leading to its formulation initiated in 2007 at the first Miskito Forum in Tegucigalpa funded by the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP), which had been a major supporter of small, but relevant projects in the Moskitia. The Forum was designed to raise awareness within the country's decision-making apparatus, about the harsh realities of life in the Moskitia and the population's needs. Ironically, the legislators and decision-makers knew little about the region and were generally negative about its people, while the Miskito generally were well aware of the political, legal and institutional weaknesses of the government in the region. The project began working closely with FINZMOS, one of 12 Miskito Territorial Federations represented by MASTA, the principal representative of the interests of the Miskito population in Honduras who played an increasingly greater role in driving the project and ensuring that the needs of the Miskito people were fully taken into account. MASTA, which officially integrated into an inter-Institutional Commission on the Moskitia in 2010, is politically astute and started building bridges with the UNDP Country Office (UNCO) in Tegucigalpa. (38).
5. The original project contemplated a total budget of US\$ 7,614 million, of which US\$ 2,159 million came from a donation from the GEF (US\$ 0.141M was used to formulate the project through a PDFB, and US\$ 2.01 million was designated to execute the project). The remaining US\$ 4,384,190 million was part of a co-financing package from the Inter-American Bank (IADB) through the government-run Pronegocios Program (\$961,730), GEF Small Grants Program (\$569,983), communities (\$ 1,075,143), the UNEP Mangrove project, USAID-MAREA (\$450,000) and other community in-kind co-financing (\$ 1,327,334).
6. The project has continually faced with a wide range of challenges, some of which were seemingly impossible to overcome. First, MASTA argued strongly that the project was poorly designed as most are for the Moskitia because they fail to take the cultural realities and economic hardships into account (48) and most conservation projects pay little attention to the human dimension.

⁵ UNDP (2015) estimated that the wild deer population was reduced from 20,000 to less than 5,000.

⁶ **NOTE:** The italicized numbers refer to statements taken from interviewees.

Further, the model to create forestry cooperatives rather than communal forestry projects showed little understanding of Miskito culture, as will be described later. Arguably the biggest challenge came from the strong counterforces of government inaction throughout the project and this prevented the project from reaching its full potential, despite the efforts of the executing agency and those Miskito shareholders implementing the project on the ground.

7. This notwithstanding, the project managed to build a solid foundation by strengthening territorial governance, good technical support and dialogue mechanisms, as well as demonstrating good and replicable practices involving Miskito shareholders to improve incomes in several communities, promoting ecosystem resilience, developing management approaches that were consistent with the Miskito "*cosmos-vision*" and bringing greater attention to the role that women can play in contributing to the long process of biodiversity conservation.
8. However, the major achievement was the assistance the project gave to MASTA and FINZMOS to obtain inter-communal land titles. The importance of these titles cannot be over-emphasized because they offer powerful legal tools support Miskito demands for rights to their historical lands and other natural resources as well as developing inclusive governance mechanisms with the Honduran Government (GoH) and doing so by developing rules and regulations fit within the Miskito cultural context – *provided that those rights are enforced by the government*.
9. These ingredients further strengthened MASTA's bilateral relations with the UNCO in Tegucigalpa and this attracted support from COSUDE (the Swiss Development Agency) for the *ALLIANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOSKITIA*, which MASTA and the UNDP tirelessly developed. The new Alliance that MASTA had conceived early during the Miskito Biodiversity Project and its vision of establishing a United Nations Office in Puerto Lempira became a reality in April 2016. This also resulted in a major reversal of the GoH's sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of the Miskito nation, as demonstrated by new support from the Honduran President's office.
10. Therefore, the Moskitia's efforts to create new economic activities centered on biodiversity conservation transformed significantly from relying on strong and continuous GEF-SGP support, to a full GEF project and finally a multi-million dollar Alliance anchored to governance and human rights, which will continue harvesting results from the GEF's investment and further strengthening the governance structures that MASTA tirelessly fought for.
11. Based on these findings, the Evaluation Team (ET) finds that the project achieved a high level of success and rates it as being *Highly Satisfactory* and the shortcomings identified in this report are minor, as will be describe in this report, when compared with the project's overall achievements.

1.1 Evaluation objectives

12. The TE Report follows the guidelines set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR, see Annex 1) and uses an evidence-based analysis of the project's achievements in light of the project's original objective, its expected outcomes, and the assumptions. The project's main purpose was to provide the GEF, UNDP, the Government of Honduras (GoH), two key Miskito organizations (e.g., MASTA, FINZMOS) and communal governments (Territorial Councils and Councils of Elders)

⁷ COSUDE, Germany and several other key donors who will provide more than \$30 million over the next ten years.

⁸ FINZMOS, the biggest of the Miskito territorial councils with its 22 communities covering 372 295 ha of the Moskitia. It has developed its own regulation, which was agreed to by all of the communities it must answer to. The project facilitated and financed this process.

with knowledge, new information and good practices that could help strengthen future programming and implementation.

13. The report examines the level of accountability and institutional learning at all levels, and the degree to which the UN office in Tegucigalpa and its UNDP staff built partnerships and created synergies for confronting multiple challenges that included weak governance structures, the remoteness of the region and lack of human and financial investments by the government threats, as well as the extreme danger facing well-intentioned conservationists who interfere with powerful, heavily armed interests from outside.
14. Given the above, the TE undertook the following activities directed toward:
 - Evaluating the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the expected project outcomes in achieving its objective.
 - Comparing the expectations in the original Project Document (ProDoc) with the modified indicators in the Logical framework (Log Frame) shown in Annex 7b and the reconstructed theory of change analysis (ToC) in Annex 7a.
 - Analyzing the project's reporting, monitoring and evaluation system, as well as its use of technical assistance and the use of financial resources, as well as synergies created with its partners.
 - Evaluating the level of planned versus real co-financing, as well as the available project audit reports.
 - Assessing the degree to which the project integrated UNDP's priorities, including poverty reduction, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters and gender equity issues.
 - Identifying any early signs of any impact and the sustainability of the outcomes, including the contribution to building the capacities of local indigenous beneficiary organizations, Government of Honduras (GoH) government shareholders and the achievement of global environmental objectives, as well as verifiable improvements regarding the state of biodiversity and pressures on the ecological systems in the pilot areas.
 - Identifying/documenting the lessons learned that are likely to improve the design and execution of future UNDP/GEF projects.
 - Making recommendations with a view to inform decision-making and improve development and implementation of policies in the host country, as well as inform UNDP-GEF and interested donors on how to improve future interventions in the Moskitia when working with the GoH, particularly in relation to establishing the necessary governance and accountability especially when political will is a chronic problem.

1.2. Evaluation Methodology

15. The TE was developed in five phases that included:

Phase 1: Preliminary phase documentation review - The evaluation team carried out a review of the available documents related to the project and assist in identifying the evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators for guiding the evaluation process. The evaluation matrix shown in Annex 2 was invaluable for structuring, analyzing and finalizing this report.

Phase 2: Inception report (IR) - An inception report was prepared proposed the evaluation structure (evaluation matrix, evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators, sources of information and collection methods), proposed sites to visit and people to interview. It was then submitted to, and subsequently approved by the UNDP CO, as well as a work plan for the entire evaluation.

Phase 3: Field mission in Honduras, interviews with shareholders in The Moskitia and visit to seven reference sites - Upon approval of the inception, the international and the national evaluator

initiated interviews in the Cabo Gracias A Dios Department and the pilot areas. The evaluators conducted focus group interviews, presented the field questions to government staff and local community leaders and members of the Territorial and Elder Councils. Annex 4 provides a list of more than 50 shareholders that the team met. Interviews terminated with key stakeholder meetings in Tegucigalpa, which included ICF's Wildlife Director at ICF, DIGEPESCA and the UNDP team who were involved with the project (the field mission timeline is presented in Annex 2). Annex 5 shows the field interview questions and it contains some valuable information for several of the most important interviews.

Phase 4: Review and analyze documentation and interview results - the evaluation team conducted an in-depth review and analysis of available documentation, stakeholder interviews in person and by phone (see Annex 3). The analysis and triangulation of this information was used to answer the evaluation questions (see Bibliography for a full list of the reviewed documents). These quantitative and qualitative data were further analyzed and triangulated (validated) by cross-checking them in such a way as to provide a firm basis for the analysis, the findings and the lessons learned from the project.

Phase 5: Draft report - The evaluation team submitted a draft report to UNDP three weeks after the field mission, who submitted it to other shareholders for their comments .

Phase 6: Final report -The comments received from the UNDP Country Office, the government and shareholders in the Moskitia.

1.3. Frame of reference for the evaluation

16. This section presents the tools used to structure the evaluation approach, including the structure of the operational analysis (evaluation questions, indicators and information sources) of the evaluation questions (**EQs**) that have been adapted to the project's context and new information that became available after the IR was submitted (see Annex 4). The final EQs address the five OECD/DAC criteria, namely: (i) Relevance, (ii) Effectiveness, (iii) Efficiency, (iv) Impact, and (v) Sustainability. In order to ensure consistency between the ToR and this TE report structure proposed in the ToR (Annex 1), we have grouped our EQs in the "Outcomes and Conclusions" section of the report under sections on the Project design, Execution and implementation and Outcomes as follows:

Project design

EQ1. To what extent was the project design logical, and its proposed implementation strategy adequate, and were the planned activities, relevant to the outputs, the expected outcomes and the achievement of the project objectives, as well as the strategic objectives of the GEF, the UNDP intervention framework and national and regional development policies and strategies? (*Relevance*)

Execution and implementation

EQ2. To what degree did the project achieve its expected outcomes and objectives, and did the different national and regional shareholders take active ownership in the project and its interventions? (*Effectiveness and Efficiency*)

EQ3. Was the implementation of the project efficient, in accordance with national and international standards? (*Efficiency*)

Results

EQ4. What contribution did the project make to the achievement of the expected outcomes and the objective, and the reduction of pressures on biological-ecological and sociocultural diversity, and their well-being in the Moskitia? (*Effectiveness and Impact*)

EQ5. How have the three dimensions of sustainability been addressed and what is the likelihood replication and mainstreaming of the outcomes and best practices following implementation of the project? (*Sustainability and Impact*)

EQ6. To what degree did the project create financial and partnership synergies to strengthen the effectiveness of implementation. (*Synergies and effectiveness, sustainability*)

EQ7. What has been the role of considering the cross-cutting issues (governance, gender, poverty reduction and climate change issues) in contributing to continued implementation of the outcomes? (*Cross-cutting issues and Sustainability*)

17. The entire list of EQs, corresponding judgment criteria, indicators and judgments are presented in the evaluation matrix attached in Annex 4. This matrix, the main tool used to structure and collect information for this evaluation, summarizes the evaluation questions and the sub-questions and indicators (I) which inform each evaluation question. The collection methods and sources of information used to inform indicators are also identified and presented in this matrix.

1.4. Evaluation report structure

18. Having given a concise description of the objectives of this evaluation and the methodology followed, this evaluation report firstly presents the evaluation context and gives a brief description of the UNDP/GEF Support to EP III project. It then presents the evaluation team's findings in relation to the various evaluation questions set out above and the corresponding evaluation sub-questions. A summary conclusion is systematically presented for each evaluation question. These findings are structured into three main sections, namely: (i) Project design; (ii) Execution and implementation; and (iii) Outcomes. After presenting these findings, the report brings the various conclusions together in a special section before introducing the recommendations.
19. Following the evaluator's code of conduct, all names of the people interviewed for this assignment remain confidential, as was agreed with each interviewee at the start of the interview session. The numbers associated with the list showing the names of the people interviewed in Annex 4 was randomized. Therefore, all names are associated with italicized numbers in parentheses next to any statement attributed to those people as evidence that supports the findings.

2. THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 The Moskitia's biodiversity and the need for the project

20. The Moskitia Biodiversity Conservation Project was developed in response to concerns about sharp declines in biodiversity (BD) in a remote area of global importance⁹. This BD hotspot joins with two World Biosphere Reserves¹⁰ and when combined, the area comprises around 17% of Honduran territory and contains most of the country's biodiversity, including the five large native cats (jaguar, puma, ocelot, tigrillo, and jagarunda¹¹), tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*) and other threatened and endangered species. Pilot areas were strategically selected to help build a natural barrier to human predators that hunt the cats and sell their pelts, capture juvenile red and green macaws to sell them as pets and clear the forests to raise cattle.

⁹ The region is only accessible by plane, boat, by foot or horseback not only makes it an important piece of Central American and global biodiversity and other ecosystem services that are crucial for survival of the indigenous populations inhabiting the region.

¹⁰ The project area is also an ecologically important buffer zone between three adjacent biodiversity-rich areas - the Bosawas World Biosphere Reserve in Nicaragua, the nearby Rio Plátano World Biosphere Reserve and the Tawahka Asagni Anthropological and Biosphere Reserve and the extensive tropical broadleaved moist forest that include the poorly studied forests and biodiversity covering the karst mountains bordering these two areas, provide critical habitats for several threatened and endangered species (IUCN Red List) to complete their life cycles.

¹¹ The Latin names for the species are respectively: Jaguar = *Panthera onca*; Puma = *Puma concolor*; Ocelot = *Leopardus pardalis*; Margay = *Leopardus wiedii*; Jaguarundi = *Puma yagouaroundi*.

21. The driving force of lowland ecosystem services in the region comes from the extensive (>800 Km²) and complex system of wetlands (rivers and coastal lagoons) that include over 230 Km of mangroves (Carrasco & Colindres 2012), the largest concentration in the country. These ecosystems support large populations of fish and invertebrates that are not only the major source of subsistence and income for local livelihoods, but if managed correctly, they offer new economic opportunities for the region and the country (ProDoc 2009; Carrasco & Colindres 2012). The mosaic of nutrient-rich rivers and estuarine habitats offer food, shelter and nursery grounds for shrimp (*Penaeus* and *Trachypenaeus* spp), crab (*Callinectes* spp), snook (*Centropomus* spp), mullet (known locally as Cuyamel -*Joturus picbardii*) and the threatened manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), all of which spend different parts of their life cycles in aquatic habitats between the coast and the Caribbean sea. Recently, scientists discovered an unreported brackish-marine species (INCEBIO 2012), further supporting the importance of the project.
22. In addition to the ecosystem services and important economic and subsistence benefits that the rivers, lagoons and the Caribbean Sea provide, terrestrial landscapes are an important part of Miskito culture. They provide hunting grounds, sources of surface and groundwater as well as basic agricultural goods that include rice, beans, plátano and bananas, which are important staples in the Miskito diet. In good years, the excess harvests are sold for profit. Other sources of food and income include small-scale cattle farming (3-7 head per family), hunting (which is on the increase), as well as wild fruit and fiber that not only supplement dietary requirements, but provide traditional medicines and materials to construct homes.
23. The Moskitia contains the largest pine forests in the country, offering potentially large economic and subsistence benefits to the Miskito communities that also require effective management to controlling the *gorgojo* pest that has devastated the pines in other parts of Honduras. It is imperative that natural resources be processed and given added value in the region to create jobs, and that profits are distributed equitably (Portillo 2012). The extensive savannahs and pine forests (*Pinus caribaea* var. *hondurensis*) also provide a critical landscape for red and green macaws, as well as other threatened birds, reptiles, jaguar, deer and other mammals.
24. ICF's predecessor (AFE-COHDEFOR) signed a 40-year land use agreement for 680 Km² with the Miskito NGO MOPAWI and the indigenous federation called FINZMOS in 1995. It allowed FINZMOS and its members to carry out natural resource management and conservation, including the implementation by local cooperatives of forest management plans (covering 16 Km², or 24% of the area covered by the land use agreement). However, only 16% of this area is under forest management plans. Three quarters of the area consists of broadleaved forest, including mahogany and pine forests.

2.2 Pressures and their root causes

25. The aforementioned ecosystems and their inhabitants face numerous pressures from uncontrolled human interventions due primarily to clearing of Miskito territories by outsiders slashing and burning broadleaf and pine forests¹² and fencing them off to establish grazing areas on the cleared landscapes. With the loss of natural habitats and preferred prey species, jaguar and other predators view the newly arrived cattle as easy food, and it is easy to understand why ranchers offer up to

¹² There are many reasons why the project was considered by the Government and the GEF to be of global importance, but the main reason is that this remote and expansive (17,000 Km²) Moskitia region (**Figure 1**) contains large areas of three globally important Eco-regions (*sensu* Dinerstein *et al.*, 1995) including the regionally outstanding: i) Moskitia pine savanna complex (high conservation priority); ii) Caribbean Miskito Coast Wetlands (high conservation priority); and the vulnerable Central American Atlantic Moist Forest (moderate conservation priority).

US\$600 for anyone to kill the big cats. Deliberate burning of the forests also eliminates habitat for other the previously mentioned Red-listed species.

26. Some of the root causes driving these pressures include: i) a political economy that favors profitable ladino cattle ranching; ii) the creation of alternative income-generating opportunities that rarely include Miskitos; iii) weak government institutional capacity; iv) limited financial resources to manage the ecosystems and apathy on the part of many government staff; and v) an uneven playing field in which wealthy and well-connected actors seem to perpetually enjoy impunity for violating laws and regulations designed to protect the local population and the biodiversity that they depend on for their survival.
27. From a social-cultural perspective, the resulting effects of the historical neglect of the Miskito region include high levels of poverty, low quality of education and school attendance, and appallingly inadequate health care, save for the presence of a Missionary hospital and clinic run by volunteers in Rus Rus. From an institutional perspective, regional offices representing fisheries, environment and health are weak and receive little support from the central government, and capacity is weak.
28. The project designers formulated *three outcomes* for confronting the main pressures on this unique hotspot, and to meet the project's main objective by: i) developing capacity for the communities to use conservation-friendly productive systems (e.g., artisanal fishery and forest management); ii) promoting a legal and political environment that allows development activities that are compatible with biodiversity conservation; and iii) creating the necessary conditions that will ensure that procedures and regulations are established in a way that makes it possible for Authorities to improve their planning of actions that are compatible with biodiversity conservation.

3. GENERAL FINDINGS

The following subsections describe the results of the TE's analysis of the project formulation and its intervention logic, and the project's performance based on five evaluation criteria.

3.1 Project Design

EQ1: To what extent was the project design, and its proposed implementation logical and strategy adequate, and were the planned activities, relevant to the outputs, the expected outcomes and the achievement of the project objectives, as well as the strategic objectives of the GEF, the UNDP intervention framework and national and regional development policies?

3.1.1 The Project Design Process

29. The project idea arose shortly after the previously mentioned 2007 Miskito Forum in which some ideas were subsequently presented at a National Biodiversity workshop in Tegucigalpa. Attendees included among other, representatives from the Secretariat of Natural Resources and Environment (SERNA), international development assistance organizations, UNDP and NGOs. The aim was to identify priority ecosystems and geographical areas that required immediate attention, and the Moskitia was given a high priority by the group, leading UNDP and SERNA to prepare a concept proposal. After considerable discussion, the project idea was accepted by the GEF, who granted \$141,000 to hire 5 consultants to collect information and formulate a project document under the supervision of UNDP and SERNA-DBIO.
30. The ProDoc focused on addressing three barriers that were viewed to impede conserving biodiversity sustainably: i) the low level of capacity at the Miskito and governmental organizational, technical and entrepreneurial levels; ii) an inadequate investment policies and

support for Miskito interests; and iii) inadequate governance conditions for managing natural resources. The document was technically well-prepared, it included ideas and comments from a wide range of Miskito shareholders, including women and young adolescents who were interviewed in order to raise awareness about the importance of conserving biodiversity and the importance of developing environmentally friendly forms of economic productivity for future generations (22,23,27,34,38). Although the data collected from the field clearly justified the importance of funding a project in a region with high biodiversity facing numerous threats that threatened its continued existence, MASTA argued that the approach was no different than other “square” conservation projects in the Moskitia (22,38,40), because it focused on more outside consultancies, building forestry cooperatives that were doomed from the start and it failed to integrate Miskito cultural realities adequately into the approach (16,22,37,38). After repeatedly insisting that the project required a serious transformation because it lacked a human dimension, MASTA gained the support of the UNDP Resident Country Representative and the Project Coordinator and the transformation process was given even stronger support by the UNDP Environmental Program Officer who took over as the new project director. The project then shifted its original focus on strengthening forestry cooperatives to community forestry development and MASTA considers that the greatest success of the project took place during its final years (38).

31. Another weakness was that the project design neither mentioned gender issues, nor did it provide indicators or baselines on the degree to which women participated in conservation and artisanal fisheries. Miskito culture is highly centered on men, while women are given little consideration outside of their traditional role of managing the family and the household. Although they do play an important role in the fishery sector, no baselines were collected before the project started. Recognizing this shortcoming, the UNDP Country Office took steps to fund workshops to get women together to talk about these issues and later, workshops to develop their capacity were given over the rest of the project implementation period.
32. Many of these problems with the poor project design came to a turning point around mid-term when the technical team argued for a need to re-structure parts of the original approach, especially the indicators, one of which was the outcome indicator on wood storks, which was not realistic. Migratory patterns and reproduction for the wood stork are beyond the project’s control and it is impossible to predict what happens to their habitat in other countries, and the changes were made after discussions with ICF and an official from MASTA within the local project board. After 4 workshops and discussions with INCEBIO, the irrelevant indicators were replaced and re-submitted to the GEF, in coordination with the UNCO and the Regional office in Panama.

3.1.2 Adequacy of the Intervention Logic

33. Nonetheless, the project’s intervention logic – examined through a Theory of Change (see ToC in Annex 2a) analysis by the evaluation team (ET) indicated that the ProDoc was missing several outcomes to carry it toward achieving its overall objective - *to conserve biodiversity in the production landscapes managed by indigenous people in the Moskitia*, which also aimed to link conservation with poverty alleviation in the pilot communities. This was also noted in the Mid-Term Evaluation (Witt & Colindres 2012). As described later, the assumptions in the ToC were inadequate, mainly because they ignored some basic assumptions about Miskito culture.
34. The linkages between biodiversity conservation and poverty are complex and dynamic than most people assume (Billé 2012), and despite its good intentions, the ProDoc failed to tackle the real

issues, or the root causes of poverty and biodiversity loss in the Moskitia – namely, giving greater attention to reduce inequality resulting from traditionally weak governance that has lacked accountability of the government’s leadership, especially its uneven enforcement of the rule of laws. Although the ProDoc aimed to promote genuine stakeholder participation in how biodiversity and other ecosystem services could be allocated, incongruent sectorial policies, clouded transparency and poor information sharing were not considered, even though they are at the root of the problems facing the Moskitia. For example, many forest activities regulated by the Forest Law are not protected – while the Law protects 150 meters on both sides of the watersheds, it does not regulate deforestation in water production areas¹³. Further, no impact evaluations are conducted before or after the trees are cut and ensure that the management techniques were appropriate. While Presidential Agreement 0001-90 prohibits the taking or sale of wildlife, it does not prohibit the possession of wildlife, which implies a prior taking or sale. Also, there are policy inconsistencies between ICF and the National Agrarian Institute – the former is charged with protecting biodiversity while the latter provides technical support, diploma courses and training for agricultural practices that weaken ecosystem services in the name of economic growth and poverty alleviation. Until the government gives more attention to reducing these inequities, projects such as this one will continue placing bandages on the surface of profoundly deeper wounds.

35. There were, and continue to be serious issues related to environmental governance in the Moskitia and there has been no action taken by the government to improve biodiversity losses resulting from the invasion of *terceros* who have seized land within Miskito Territories. Although the project made good progress with improving intra-cultural governance regarding biodiversity conservation, the ProDoc essentially ignored inter-cultural governance, even though it was at the heart of many of the project’s problems. While it has been argued that the limited budget and strong biodiversity focus precluded any attempts to focus on inter-cultural and inter-governmental governance, the TE argues that ignoring these issues was one of the major reasons for the project failed to reach its full potential in terms of effectiveness. For example, the root causes of a volatile situation developed in after repeated hunting, illegal logging and clear-cutting for cattle grazing near in the FINZMOS territory and Wamaklinasta, near Auka (17,22,23,24), the attempted assassination of an ICF staff and burning of his family home in the community of Rus Rus (see Figure 1) was related to the government repeatedly ignoring calls for help from the Miskito communities in this area. In the absence of swift and decisive government interventions to halt the increasing numbers of heavily armed outsiders who were illegally taking over Miskito territorial lands, increasingly fueling greater social insecurity and biodiversity loss, a group of Miskito adolescents captured 27 *tercero* families and held them hostage (17,18,34), demanding that they be removed from Miskito communal lands. The Government finally intervened to negotiate the hostages’ release, but despite an eight-point agreement to diffuse a highly charged and dangerous situation between the two groups, the government has not met its obligations to date.
36. The evidence suggests that the formulators naively believed that everything would fall into place by creating alternative incomes linked to biodiversity conservation, developing new regulations based on Miskito norms and raising awareness to engage shareholders to participate in the implementation process – and that the government would allocate human and financial resources

¹³ Although Article 90 of the Environment Law stipulates that water replenishment zones that supply water to the population for diverse uses should be subject to a special management regime, it is broad and ambiguous, as it does not define “special management regimes” and it gives discretionary decision-making powers to public employees, a serious problem that the TE found in the Moskitia.

- to backstop those actions. The reality is that there was little political will to enforce the regulations and the governance mechanisms fell far short of what even the most basic dialogue until after the project ended.
37. However, according to the ET's Theory of Change (ToC) analysis the expected outcome indicators were weak - only five of the twenty-two proposed outcome indicators were actually capable of measuring outcomes - and most of the indicators were actually formulated as outputs. The five indicators that could actually measure outcomes, failed to meet the SMART criteria¹⁴, mainly because they all lack the time-bounded (T) variable. This is explained in greater detail in the reconstructed ToC (also known as the pathway to development impacts) analysis presented in Annex 2b and in Section 3.3.
 38. The MTE conducted in 2012 also highlighted these and other weaknesses in the ProDoc, and this led to the reformulation of several indicators, as well as the elimination of others. These revisions, which the TE found to be necessary, were endorsed by the UNDP/GEF. However, the TE finds that the final indicators remained deficient, and this finding is further supported by UNDP-GEF's internal monitoring procedure (PIR 215a).
 39. The ProDoc makes no explicit mention of lessons learned, even though there have been several other relatively recent GEF, USAID and KfW-funded projects within the Moskitia region, and this appears to be a common problem in many GEF projects in Nicaragua and Honduras (*Ryan, unpublished data on over 35 GEF-funded projects*).
 40. The risks and assumptions (described in detail later) were also inadequately formulated and this made it difficult to accurately pinpoint the weaknesses in the development intervention model that was designed for the project. This made it difficult to systematize the lessons learned from implementing actions aiming to promote local development, reduce poverty and conserve biodiversity. Although the ProDoc raised some concerns about infringement by outsiders, or *terceros*, on indigenous land use rights and their personal safety, it failed to include measures to mitigate the risks that land grabbing presented to the project and the assumption that the government would stand up to the *terceros* who had illegally seized Miskito lands. The ProDoc also failed to list the assumption that the Miskito people could effectively stand up to the armed *terceros* and get them to stop their land clearing, which history in the region has shown is impossible without the active support from the GoH. The ProDoc's assumption that indigenous communities have a strong conservation ethic is incorrect (18,22,37,38,40). The reality is that they are trapped in a situation that is related to being historical excluded and marginalized – poor educational and health care systems, the lack of employment opportunities and the resulting poverty are some of the root causes that have forced many communities to exploit biodiversity for economic gains and this forces them to diverge from their traditional practices. Selling highly valued macaws and jaguar pelts, hunting wildlife for and selling the meat, or cutting forests for *terceros*) helps to earn money to feed their families until the government comes up with a creative economic relief package like the new Alliance for the Moskitia that was signed in April 2016, and described later in this document.
 41. While Outcome # 1 was adequate, Outcome #2 incorrectly assumed (22,23,24, 34) that Moskitia Biodiversity would return to being a paradise simply by developing environmentally friendly income-earning activities, good laws and providing secure land rights to the Miskito communities, without enforcing laws and Miskito territorial rights. However, the assumption that these legal

¹⁴ SMART indicators are *Specific* (exactly how will the action will lead to an expected change in the status quo?), *Measurable* (what is the quantity of quality of the expected outcome), *Attainable* (can the objective and outcomes be realistically achieved?), and *Relevant* (to the measurement of the objective or outcome?).

- tools would be seriously enforced was a fatal one that severely impeded the project from reaching many of its indicators. One serious flaw in the ProDoc was its focus on building and strengthening forestry cooperatives, despite the fact that most of them have failed in the Moskitia (22,23,24, 34, 45) for several reasons that include formidable barriers created by ICF (44,45), as will be described in Section 3. Another reason is that unlike communal forestry development projects, forestry cooperatives concentrate their income and communal lands in the hands of a relatively small number of families, rather than benefitting the majority living in these isolated communities. However, another and it is not surprising that MASTA and most Miskitos oppose them (44,45).
42. Further, few of the productive activities listed in the ProDoc were not consistent with conservation goals (see MTR 2012). For example, it was unclear how increasing forestry harvests would improve biodiversity, because the issue is more complicated than simply providing people with alternative incomes so that they won't cut down the forests. Couple this with the indigenous groups' powerlessness to enforce the laws against illegal and heavily armed colonists seizing land, hunting wild animals and threatening anyone who tries to stop them, and why the project was unable to reach its full potential. The ProDoc also fails to mention how the biodiversity conservation strategy in the pilot areas is linked to other protected areas, and isolated initiatives such as those that were proposed will have little overall impact unless they are clearly linked with other biodiversity protection actions in the region. It is important to mention however, that after the mid-point of implementation, the project developed management plans for Karatasca (Carrasco and Colindres 2012) and it also created a Conservation Plan for a Miskito Reserve covering all of the pilot areas (Portillo 2015b).
43. Then there is the municipal government's strong opposition giving land titles over to the Territorial Councils, arguing that it affects their autonomy to administer land resources and collect tax revenues. MASTA argues that all lands are national territories with the exception of those for which the government has given titles to Municipal Corporations and now that the reason for the opposition is that all other titles to the Territorial Councils effectively eliminates the opportunity for municipal staff to be involved in the land transaction business (44,45). Outcome #3 follows a similar line of reasoning and the ProDoc assumed that regional offices have the power, the financial and human resources and most importantly, support from the central level support from ICF, MI AMBIENTE and DIGEPESCA and the political will to enforce the laws, protect biodiversity, reverse the situation and stop the illegal invasions that continue to destroy the land and its associated biodiversity. Thus the ProDoc developed an approach to confront the *symptoms*, rather than the *root cause* (widespread impunity, inability to enforce certain laws and regulations, narrowly focused macroeconomic policies and the failure to mainstream the protection of biodiversity and other ecosystem services into agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectorial development plans) of the multiple problems associated with conserving biodiversity in the Moskitia. The best procedures and planning for biodiversity protection are of little value unless environmental and human rights violations are effectively enforced, and this was beyond the scope of the way the ProDoc was formulated.
44. Nonetheless, the ProDoc provided some good baseline information for several of key pieces of biodiversity and reasonable targets to for protecting them by the end of the project - *in an ideal world*. However, the immense size of the Moskitia, inherent logistical difficulties, the high costs of sampling, limited political will and poor government funding are the realities that make it nearly impossible for even the most experienced researchers to collect and monitor representative biodiversity samples sizes. This notwithstanding, the baselines collected by the local communities

and scientists are among the best in Central America (4,27,34) and it could have been much richer had greater emphasis been placed on taking advantage of the impressive local knowledge on wildlife and the habitats associated with different stages of their life cycles¹⁵. Furthermore, the baseline studies are not always in line with the orientation of the ProDoc.

3.1.3. Relevance to national and regional conservation policies

45. Honduras ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity¹⁶ in 1995 and later gazette the National Biodiversity Strategy (SERNA 2001). The government's Fourth Communication on Biodiversity placed a high priority on protecting the pine forests and savannahs of the Moskitia (SERNA 2010) and the presence of relatively large numbers of endemic and threatened species, further giving weight to the government's request for GEF funding in the six pilot areas. Furthermore the Project was coherent with the government's initiative on decentralization and many of the ProDoc's activities are in line with *Plan de Nación* (the Country Vision), which is promoted by the present government. Therefore, the ProDoc was completely in line with these important milestones, offering a set of concrete actions within six pilot experiments aiming to promote the coordinated actions for protecting biodiversity in ways that are in harmony with traditional knowledge and practices of ethnic and local populations.
46. The project also supported international agreements signed by the GoH, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention for the Conservation Central American Biodiversity and Protected Areas. It is also noteworthy that although Honduras has ratified the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal People under the International Labor Organization (ILO)¹⁷, and as described later, in 2012 the project provided key support to an amendment (Agreement #169) to that Convention.

3.1.4 Relevance of project objectives to beneficiary needs

47. The project was developed to address diverse human pressures issues that even today continue to threaten the well-being of both present, and future generations living in the Moskitia who depend on the region's biodiversity and other ecosystem services. Given that it is a pilot approach, the beneficiaries of the project are the inhabitants of *Mokorón, Auka, Mábita, Auratá and Kruta*, MASTA and FINZMOS as local beneficiaries. These communities rely on ecosystem services to produce *both* commercial and subsistence benefits. However, given the high levels of poverty, it is subsistence that trumps economic development at this stage, since many people struggle to meet their daily nutritional requirements.
48. Despite good intentions, the final project document failed to meet the expectations of MASTA or FINZMOS, representing most of the local population, who viewed the draft document as just another 'packaged' approach from the GEF, with heavy emphasis on more research and consultancies, rather than focusing on solutions to the real problems facing the Miskito people in

¹⁵ Hector Portillo, one of Honduras' most respected naturalists and researchers praised one individual from the Mábita pilot community, commenting that he (Hector) soon learned that he was merely student of this individual (who is also a co-author of an internationally published book on Honduran wildlife), who has no formal academic training. Two former red macaw collectors who turned to be protectors of the animals have rich knowledge about the ecology and behavior of these rare birds.

¹⁶ The Convention calls upon its signatories to "respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices;" (Article 8(j))

¹⁷ ILO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that has not only developed binding international agreements and mechanisms for countries to address these very real problem, but also put in place a procedure to allow indigenous persons to complain if they believe that their state is not fulfilling these obligations.

the region (1,14,18,22,23,27,34, 44,45). It became apparent in subsequent consultations that the new project must focus on economically productive activities. Although the GEF initially raised questions about a changing the approach (38,44,45,48), but finally agreed to re-oriented the final ProDoc as part of UNDP's adaptive management process. This helped ensure that biodiversity conservation was tied to economically productive activities that created jobs and that wherever possible, there should be a strong focus on human rights, health care and governance (44). This led to the artisanal fishery initiatives in the Karataska Lagoon and the forestry management activities, which were subsequently guided by rules established by the communities with help from scientists, although the cooperative-based approach to forestry continued receiving support. What emerged was an approach that involved establishing activities in pilot sites that could be replicated elsewhere by the territorial councils, Miskito communities, MASTA and ICF. However, the TE team views the pilot approach is intuitively facile, but something that in reality is rarely successful, based on theory and global experiences (Billé 2009) because it fails to integrate broader issues such as governance into the planning and implementation framework.

49. The revised project targeted some of the threats identified as a high priority in those communities and they include: i) the deforestation of broadleaf forests that are being converted into cattle pastureland by both small-scale, landless ladino migrants coming from other parts of the country without adequate farmlands and by large scale cattle ranchers; illegal cutting and burning of the pine forests by hunters and cattle ranchers, which eliminate critical habitat for the red and green macaws ; iii) destruction of habitat for the five cat species, being paid by ranchers to kill them to protect cattle and/or to profit from selling valuable pelts; iv) illegal trafficking of macaws (as many as 70% of the young hatchlings are believed to be sold in illegal market sales); v) land seizures by illegal colonists; and vi) indiscriminate hunting of wildlife in order to feed workers of the illegal farmers; erosion and sedimentation in rivers and estuarine areas and indiscriminate cutting of mangroves.
50. It also aimed to break down some of the barriers that for confronting these priorities include: a) low levels of organizational, business and technical capacities among producers; b) inadequate investment policies and economic opportunities for the Miskito population and c) inadequate governance for the benefits of ecosystem services such as biodiversity and natural resources.¹⁹

3.1.5. Relevance to GEF strategic objectives

51. GEF's funding support focused on Strategic Program 4 (SP4), which addresses the Strengthening Policy and Regulatory Frameworks for Mainstreaming Biodiversity by modifying how the Government interacts with local communities in support of BD friendly options that include among others, incorporating BD criteria and regulations into technical, financial and marketing support programs, and to motivate increased investment in support of BD. This included providing information to decision makers on the potential benefits that these investments could produce, strengthen governance structures in Miskito communities and capacities in local and national Government for planning and regulating resource management. Additionally, the project's co-financing included attention to SP5, or *fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services* by assisting producers to develop viable small business with market access for BD-friendly forms of production (ProDoc 2009).

¹⁸ Locally called the Guara verde and Guara roja, *Ara ambiguus* and *Ara macao*, respectively.

¹⁹ The rate of deforestation was variable at the time of the ProDoc was as high as 7,500 ha per year, or an annual loss of between 2 and 5% of the total area (ProDoc).

52. The project chose to address the GEF's Strategic Objective 2 (SO2) for the Biodiversity Focal Area, namely to mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors", given Miskito communities' high level of dependence on natural resource and biodiversity, as well as their traditional mistrust externally-supported initiatives of exclusive protected areas that have historically infringed upon their traditional rights to take decisions on how their lands are used (ProDoc 2009).

3.1.6. Relevance to the UNDP intervention framework

53. The Project took place during the course of two UNDP Program strategies. The first was between 2007 y 2011, when the program focused on three areas: Elimination of Poverty, Democratic Governance, Environment and Risk Management. However, the political crisis that ensued after the 2009 *coup d'état* interrupted the official relations with the government until February 2010, and UNDP worked exclusively with local governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) during that time (1,34; Witt y Colindres 2012).
54. The next UNDP- GoH Program Strategy (2012-2016) was developed in consultation with the GoH and followed UNDP's new Development Assistance Framework. The Strategy, which primarily supported the Government's priorities defined under the National Plan (Plan de Nación), and other sectorial plans, is anchored to a strategic objective aiming to strengthen human rights and reduce inequity gaps, with a special focus on the cross-cutting issue of gender.
55. During this last period, UNDP worked to strengthen the National Planning System in order to help the government achieve its National Plan. Support has been largely concentrated on generating information, designing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, operationalizing local mechanisms for implementing public policies and promoting disaggregated statistics that can help contribute to more inclusive social policies.
56. UNDP's approach to reduce poverty and inequity aims to create dignified work opportunities in rural areas, prioritizing small producers, especially women and youth through creating new capacities and professionals, promoting small companies and cooperatives, increasing access to credit and promoting productive uses of remittances from families outside of Honduras. Another strategy involves creating infrastructure for productive activities in rural areas, seizing on the lessons learned and good practices from donors.
57. The democratization of governance and social safety program involves supporting the national reconciliation process, deepening democratic foundations and strengthening human rights through removing barriers to women's participation in the National Plan for Equality and Gender Equity and supporting the National Plan for Human Rights in close collaboration with the UN High Commission.
58. Regarding security, UNDP supports the implementation of an integrated policy for civil society's safety with a focus on gender and crime prevention, working with local governments. This includes support to implementing local security plans and the continued strengthening of alternative crime prevention mechanisms (1,34; Witt and Colindres 2012).
59. After the Project was adjusted, further strengthened its focus on biodiversity-friendly economic alternatives for local shareholders, conversations held between the UNDP Resident Representative (Mrs. Consuelo Vidal) and key government functionaries, particularly the Ministry of Government Sectoral Coordination and the Ministry of Economic Development highlighted the multiple conflicts between the powerful and less-powerful *terceros* who were grabbing land and this introduced the important topics of social inclusion and governance into the project. For

that reason, there was an additional focus on finding new work opportunities and competitiveness within the alternative biodiversity-friendly productive activities.

60. None of this materialized until after the project ended when the President of Honduras, the UNDP Representative, and high level representatives from the Swiss and German development agencies pledged support to the previously mentioned Alliance for the Moskitia by signing an agreement on April 11, 2016 at the inauguration of the UNDP office in Puerto Lempira.

3.1.7. Institutional arrangements and implementation modalities

61. The institutional arrangements were defined in the ProDoc and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was supposed to have been established between UNDP and SERNA²⁰ for the developing strategies to conserve biodiversity in the Moskitia through the Directorate of Biodiversity (DBIO). DBIO was bound by annual contracts to coordinate all project interaction with the communities within the reference sites and to oversee the formulation of the project, as well as work with research organizations and institutes, as well as NGOs involved with the implementation process. As mentioned previously, the key Miskito organizations opposed this institutional arrangement involving SERNA and thus, ICF²¹ took over responsibility as the government focal point after the coup. DIGEPESCA²², the Army (working closely with ICF on illegal terrestrial activities, *when ordered from above*) and the Navy (who also work with ICF, and DIGEPESCA on illegal marine and inland water issues - *when ordered from above*) were the other governmental organization having offices at the central and regional levels. A member of Honduran Parliament representing the Legislative branch of government was appointed, as was the Ministry of Social Development. However, the Ministry designated the Program on Sustainable Social Development (PRONADERS), executed by the IADB-funded program called PRONEGOCIOS (Pro-Business), as its replacement.
62. At the regional level, the ProDoc designated several key Miskito organizations as the non/governmental institutions and MASTA was designated as the local focal point not only because is the main Miskito umbrella organization, representing 12 Miskito Territorial Councils and 8 Federations and signed an agreement each of the Miskito territories would coordinate with their territorial councils, following the traditional governance mechanisms. MASTA represents over 70,000 Miskitos who work with forestry products and more than 50,000 fisherfolk, mainly subsistence fishers and over 2000 commercial fishermen that belong to the PAMPUNEL organization. Later in the process FINZMOS, the largest Miskito organization, representing 22 territorial councils, became actively involved. The regional government is the central government's representative in the Moskitia and it has played a fundamental role in removing illegal settlers from Miskito territorial lands, although they have been ineffective toward this end for several years. Four municipal²⁴ governments were mentioned in the ProDoc as important local governmental institutions, but in practice, none actively participated in the project and it has been

²⁰ SERNA is the rector institution responsible for natural resources and environment. And is part of the National Committee representing the Project, participating in actions that are coordinated by the central government. In 2014 it took responsibility for the mining sector and its name changed to SERNAM, also called *Mi Ambiente*.

²¹ ICF is the government authority for the forest sector, but also charged with conservation and management of all Protected Areas. Its Department of Wildlife was the main institutional link between the project area and the central government. However, the department has no control over the ICF office in Puerto Lempira, who answers directly to the Executive Director of ICF.

²² DIGEPESCA is the national authority responsible for supervising and promoting activities within the fishery sector and it has supported a regulation on fisheries in the Karataska Lagoon and to create incentives for artisanal fishermen to use the three mile territorial limit that has been heavily fished by industrial fishermen.

²³ It is estimated that there are more than 75,000 Miskitos living in the Cabo Gracias a Dios Department (UNDP 2015).

²⁴ The municipality is responsible for planning and enforcement of social issues, infrastructure and environmental issues, including land use planning. The municipal government has been heavily opposed to the land titling of communal lands as it sees this as an infringement on its mandate.

extremely difficult to communicate with them and get their feedback²⁵. Ladinos (mestizos), Pech and Tawahkas, none were included in any of the project activities (Table 1).

63. Although the ProDoc mentions other groups of Hondurans such as Garifunas, 1 lists the management objectives and number of beneficiary families (average family is 5-6 people) for ten communities (all Miskito) who implemented different project actions at the pilot area level. Pilot areas were selected based on important features that they possessed, such as important ecosystems, endangered species, fisheries or forests under pressure, as well as the presence of forestry management plans.

| Community | Mgmt objective | # Families |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Auka | Forest mangmt. | 680 |
| Mocorón & Walpakiakira | Forest mgmt. | 40 |
| Mocorón & Sirsitara | Forest mgmt. | 90 |
| Mabita y Rus Rus | Wildlife mgmt. | 35 |
| Rundín | Forest mgmt. | 54 |
| Auratá | Art. fishery mgmt. | 45 |
| Nuevo Amanecer & Kruta | Art. fishery mgmt. | 115 |
| Kalpu y Cocotinne | Art. fishery mgmt. | 65 |

Table 1: Management objectives & # beneficiary families

3.1.8. Incorporation of the gender approach

64. As mentioned earlier, the original project design failed to consider gender as a transversal issue and therefore, no indicators were developed. Not explicitly stated in the ProDoc, the project targeted women among the beneficiaries. In general, Miskito culture is “machista” and women are generally excluded from assemblies and territorial governments (16,21,34; Pineda 2015). However, the project re-oriented its focus and began developing the capacity of women, but few showed up for the sessions at the beginning. Other training workshops focused on the communal projects and today one woman is the treasurer in Mábita, although not without problems from men who prefer to handle the money (16, 21, 34). This gradually increased after the project conducted several workshops for women only and today, women are playing an important role in the territorial and communal assemblies and especially have strengthened their capacity in the fishery sector by taking a more business-like approach to marketing and commercialization of the products.

3.2 Execution and implementation

This section addresses the effectiveness and efficiency of the project’s execution and of the implementation in the pilot areas. It focuses on the following EQ.

EQ2. To what degree did the project achieve its expected outcomes and objectives, and did the different national and regional shareholders take active ownership in the project and its interventions? (*Effectiveness and Efficiency*)

3.2.1. Allocation of human and logistical resources

65. Although the country has strong environmental laws and regulations for protecting biodiversity, most government institutions lack capacity (funding, staff, and facilities) to carry out their mandate of managing biodiversity and other ecosystem services efficiently and effectively. While these weaknesses were highlighted in the project document, the ProDoc failed to do a rigorous analysis of the underlying causes, or drivers of BD loss in the Moskitia. Effective BD conservation require well/thought out, rather than simplistic interventions that are not in tune with the realities of the Moskitia, and this was one of the major criticisms that MASTA expressed from the outset and then repeatedly throughout the project. Although is difficult to good grasp the root causes behind

²⁵ However, the Puerto Lempira municipality donated a piece of land where a forest products purchasing facility was established.

²⁶Women are traditionally involved with commercial aspects of seafood sales and the project gave them a stronger role as the fishery started to rebound and incomes improved once the management plan was implemented.

BD loss - or the drivers — because they are complex, interlinked and politically loaded (Hall 2013), the ProDoc failed to conduct a sufficiently rigorous analysis of the drivers behind the high levels of impunity enjoyed by well-connected and/or powerful interests, the government's lack of political will to enforce environmental laws and confronting the high levels of social insecurity for anyone who stands in the way (PIR 2013, 2015;1,2,4,27,34). This is surprising, given that so much money was being invested by the GEF and other partners. Thus, it was not reasonable to expect that the capacity development approach (UNDP2009) or awareness-raising for government staff and politicians achieve their expected outcomes when there was so much uncertainty about the lack of political will.

66. Further, there was no analysis of the historical difficulties associated with weak-to-nonexistent inter-sectoral coordination in achieving biodiversity conservation. The fact is that neither DIGEPESCA or ICF improved their capacity significantly, and neither agency took the necessary steps to strengthen departmental office and staff in Lempira (1,2,4,12,16,18,24,27,34) as was expected in one outcome indicator and what was agreed to the GEF and UNDP.

3.2.2 Level of ownership of project activities by beneficiaries and their involvement in implementation

67. Although the project was successful in increasing the awareness of some government officials and other actors regarding the realities and needs in the Moskitia (PIR 2013), the resulting actions are not impressive. For example, the low level of engagement by ICF and DIGEPESCA at the regional level strongly shows a low level of government ownership. One explanation offered in many interviews was that the low level of funding that went to provide support for equipment and logistics within ICF's regional office was part of the problem (1,2,4,12,16,18,24,27,34). ICF and DIGEPESCA faced serious budgetary challenges to carry out their mandate and support the project, but neither of the central offices for these institutions offered solutions to the problem (PIR 2013). While the regional ICF office became actively engaged at the start of the project - to the extent that its involvement was often viewed as being overly paternalistic— its support weakened and is almost nonexistent today²⁷, largely because of a dispute about the per diem rates for field visits not being in line with existing policies (16,18,24,27). When land conflicts arose, ICF's regional office stated that they could not act without support from the central government.
68. When the problems of overfishing and illegal land seizures and deforestation reached a critical stage in which the government took no action, UNDP convened a meeting with key government authorities (ICF, SERNA, DIGEPESCA) to explain the seriousness of the problem in Tegucigalpa in 2011, a decision was made to re-orient the project in a way that met the expectations of the Miskito shareholders and after considerable discussion, the requested modifications were subsequently accepted.
69. Many strongly believe that the DIGEPESCA is ineffective and the regional office has no authority to take decisions, as everything is managed from the Tegucigalpa office, which is equally non-operational (16,18,24,27,44,45). The regional office lacks office equipment, transportation and personnel, making it difficult to provide the kind of support that the Project required (44,45).
70. Only when the Karatasca Lagoon started to collapse did the director of DIGEPESCA take action to address serious fishery issues in the Moskitia, but in the end it was the Miskito fisherfolk, FINZMOS and MASTA who stepped in a took concrete actions to confront the problem

²⁷This low level of ownership appears to be a common pattern that has been repeated in several other donor-funded projects trying to assist ICF (46,47,48,49,50) and ICF support is frequently terminated once donor supported funding ends.

(27,28,32,34). Non-governmental technical experts also provided the support to help turn the overfishing issue into an opportunity. Nonetheless, it is not surprising that even today local fishermen have little confidence in DIGEPESCA and this is at least one reason that they have actively participated in their own management and self-enforcement plan (27,28,34), who continues to ignore violations of the three mile artisanal fishing zone by industrial shrimp fishing boats. The director of that institution recently visited the Miskito Cays and pledged his full support for acquiring boats and equipment to support the region (44).

3.2.3. Quality of implementation by UNDP

71. There is ample evidence that without the commitment and active engagement of the project's technical team throughout the implementation period and the solid leadership of the UNDP's Resident Representative during the last year, this project would have fallen short of its targeted outcomes and it would have ended once funding expired. Together, they created synergies that created the necessary enabling conditions that included strengthened Territorial Councils and fishery governance, and titling of Miskito lands. This also put some key ingredients into place that provided an opening for p MASTA develop a strategic process for addressing indigenous people's human right. This process also opened new opportunities to engage the heretofore GoH, heretofore detached from the entire process, to become an active member of this new development agenda -ALLIANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOSKITIA - described earlier. (34,44,45). According to the President of MASTA, the UNDP ONU (was instrumental in strengthening IPs rights, particularly through their involvement in defusing the previously mentioned crisis in Auka, avoiding bloodshed and involving the government in the crisis. While the neither the technical team nor UNDP could be expected to resolve the issues surrounding the terceros, nor help the Miskitos enforce their rights, their effort to accompany the indigenous population throughout the process, create for a for dialogues and contributing to the formulation of this development agenda and reversing the stigmatization of the Miskito people has been crucial.
72. UNDP was forced into a direct implementation modality in response to the MASTA's position against the GoH after the coup, the government's weak ownership of the project and its failure to confront the terceros' landscape grabbing and destruction (24,25,27,28,32,33,39,43). UNDP also assumed a leadership role and maintained neutrality in mediating the conflicts between the national government and the indigenous federations in order to improve the security situation of the Moskitia and the conditions of the local communities (PIR 2013). This increasingly gave UNDP a comparative advantage over other actors in generating trust among the different shareholders, especially those who were averse to work with the government (24,25,27,28,32,33,39,43).
73. One of the major strengths of the project was UNDP's role in creating synergies with different shareholder groups, NGOs and donors, thereby securing additional funding. These partnership arrangements were adequately properly identified, and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval and they have continued without much active participation from the government.
74. These positive achievements notwithstanding, the Country Office created numerous obstacles that prevented the technical team from doing their work efficiently during the last half of the implementation period. The problem began around mid-term after the project administrator left and the project coordinator left. The UNCO took nearly one year to approve and hire a new

project administrator. It also introduced bureaucratic disbursement approval procedures, which complicated all field work that already faced many obstacles with the weak government support, death threats to the team and the ever-expanding pressure from the terceros that the government ignored (27,28,34,39) Although this demoralized the team, they survived by taking out loans and continuing their work despite these difficult conditions that the very executing agency imposed on them.

3.2.4 Consultation, coordination and management bodies

75. The unexpected change of government in June 2011 led to the creation of a National Committee, comprised of SERNA-DIBIO, ICF, DIGEPESCA ²⁸ and UNDP, as well as the Political Governor of the Gracias a Dios Department and MASTA, representing more than 75,000 Miskitos. The Committee meets annually (the ProDoc called for semi-annual meetings) in order to discuss annual work plans focusing on outputs and not outcomes. They also served to help facilitate decision-making by the competent authorities. The lengthy time between meetings and the fact that they are not held in the region are considered by many local leaders to be unacceptable (1,24,25,27,28,32,33,34,39).
76. The local Management and Coordination Committee includes the Governor of Cabo Gracias, the representatives from the regional ICF and DIGEPESCA offices in the Moskitia, MASTA and the project Coordinator and their function was to analyze the projects advances in greater detail and make the necessary adjustments as required. This was the level of coordination that built bridges between the national Committee and the indigenous communities who implemented the pilot project activities.

3.2.5 Administrative, accounting & financial management arrangements procedures

This sub-section addresses the EQ related to efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project, specifically:

EQ3. Was the implementation of the project efficient, in accordance with national and international standards? (Efficiency)

3.2.5.1 Level of disbursement²⁹

77. The project established several innovative procedures to help overcome the difficulties associated with working in the remote Moskitia, the high transaction costs, weak banking infrastructure and the lack of professionals in the region, as well as the unsatisfactory delivery rate of 66% during the 2012-2013 PIR period with an accumulated rate of only 72% (PIR 2013). In fact, the project was scheduled to close on 1 November 2013 but an extension was granted through the end of March 2015 due to this relatively poor implementation rate. Therefore, it is a tribute to the executing agency that at termination, the project had executed at a Highly Satisfactory rate of 95% of the US\$ 2,018,300.00 disbursed by the GEF grant³⁰. Although a total of US\$ 96,452.64 was budgeted in 2016, no information was available on how it was spent until it was subsequently learned³¹ that

²⁸ These three government agencies at the central and local levels who have the political and legal mandate to ensure that biodiversity and natural resources are managed sustainably.

²⁹ The exchange rate for converting dollars to lempiras fluctuated around 22 lempiras per USD and this was based on the official rate established by the Central Bank.

³⁰ An additional US\$ 141,000.00 was used to design the project.

³¹ During the Communal Assembly held in Mokorón in 17 February 2016, the community of reported that they had received a donation for the Project and would use it to construct a facility to transform timber.

the funds were donated to the community to build a center for transforming timber and the remainder was used to pay for the consulting services related to this TE. Table 2 summarizes the disbursements by activity for each the 7 years the project was running. The greatest expenditures were for Activity 4 and most of the disbursement was spent during 2010.

Table 2: Annual execution of Project funds by activity.

| Activity ³² /Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|------------------------------|---------|------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|------------|
| ACTIVITY 1 | 0 | 63,852.09 | | 125,136.08 | 137,577.54 | 52,788.34 | 763.12 |
| ACTIVITY 2 | 0 | 10,675.23 | 24,999.15 66,285.97 | 132,581.17 | | 122,746.72 | 52,402.45 |
| ACTIVITY 3 | 0 | 27,321.51 | | 177,592.77 | 96,517.54 | 37,961.71 | 78,129.23 |
| ACTIVITY 4 | 4000.00 | 158,102.16 | 124,254.34 95,848.49 | 82,713.07 | 40,029.40 88,913.12 | 54,809.83 | 65,846.33 |
| Subtotal | 4000.00 | 259,950.99 | 311,387.95 | 518,023.09 | 363,037.60 | 268,306.60 | 197,141.13 |

78. Initially, funds were disbursed in two ways: i) Contracting services or specific labor through UNDP's central offices; and ii) through a revolving petty cash fund that was managed in Puerto Lempira and replenished when the financial execution report was approved. As mentioned earlier, a number of bureaucratic requirements for approving disbursements were introduced just after mid-term and not only resulted in greater inefficiency of disbursements in a region where the banking system is ineffective and the team required accessible funds to complete their work. Not only were cash advances prohibited during the final months of the project, but there were considerable delays in getting the money to the team so they could carry out their programmed work (REFs). For example, there was more than one occasion where the technical staff could not traveling to some of the more remote pilot areas due to delays in disbursements from the central UNDP country office, salaries were frequently late in arriving and the team was forced to take out loans to survive. *It is a tribute to the perseverance of the technical team that they were able to continue their work under very difficult conditions that were created by the main stakeholders responsible for the project.*
79. The disbursement of US\$ 36,023.15 for various workshops in Puerto Lempira during 2012 was especially burdensome because it required mobilizing representatives from 15 communities and experts to accompany them at 8-day workshops in order to develop project profiles. Additionally, the costs of several consultancies were more expensive than normal reference values because there are few qualified professionals in the region, and due to the remoteness and security concerns.
80. UNDP reported a high level of execution (>92%) of funds, something that is impressive given the remoteness of the pilot areas. For many reasons the Project was an atypical model because it was both coordinated and executed by UNDP, large resulting from the Miskito leaders' lack of confidence in the government and the gap created in the absence of a project director. However, the delays in disbursements had a major impact on the project teams' ability to carry out their

³² **NOTE: Activity/Output #1:** Locals have the capacity to apply modified and alternative productive systems (subsistence, artisanal y commercial at the community level) that favor biodiversity (BD) conservation; **Activity /Output #2:** BD-friendly forms of production supported by a facilitating political and investment climate. **Activity/Output #3:** BD-friendly biodiversity conservation in the forestry and fishery sectors that are subject to planning, monitoring and compliance that is in agreement with local norms and national legislation; **Activity/Outputs# 4:** Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback and evaluation.

work (27,28,34,39). Although this is not mentioned in any of the documentation and only through interviews and further triangulation was it possible to determine this serious problem.

3.2.5.2 Mobilization of Co-financing

81. The Pro Doc contemplated various sources of co-financing that might be available through parallel and complimentary projects such as BID-Pronegocios (US\$ 4,600,000), World Bank-PATH (US\$ 250,000.00), as well as in-kind resources coming from the local beneficiaries that were on the order of US\$ 648,000.00, as well as from the government (US\$ 162,000.00).
82. The IADB wrote a letter promising the Project that it would contribute over \$5 million to support productive initiatives through its PRONEGOCIOS program. However, it was later learned that it was impossible to access these funds because the communities in this remote and impoverished region could not even come close to providing the necessary matching funds that the program required for disbursements³³. However, the director of PRONEGOCIOS opened the doors for the Moskitia Project and readjusted the requirements to fit the realities of the region and eliminated the cash payment.
83. Italy's *Sapiensa University* donated over 1000 high quality solar panels and these were used to meet the beneficiaries' matching requirement (28,34,40,48). However, rather than being planned, it was more of an impromptu donation that was negotiated by someone *outside the project* and the project had to pay an unexpected delivery fee to receive the shipment, further reducing the overall budget for executing the project and the project had relatively little to do with obtaining the donation – they just paid for the import costs (28,34,40,48).
84. This paved the way for support from three funding sources - USAID-MAREA, UNEP-Mangroves and the GEF's SGP –funded a one week seminar in Puerto Lempira that resulted in proposals for 20 projects ranging from wildlife management, community forestry, community tourism and fisheries that totaled between \$4-5 million dollars. The funding was provided by these same agencies, the Moskitia Project and PRONEGOCIOS (1,34, R. Sambula, UNEP-Mangrove Project Coordinator).
85. Interviews with the project's former technical staff highlighted that one must be highly certain about any promises of matching fund and this is what happened with the IDB's promise. These funds could not be accessed because the qualifying criteria for accessing productive projects were almost impossible for the people in the Moskitia because of their high levels of poverty and low incomes. Nonetheless, it was possible to access co-financing funds from other sources such as UNDP's TRAC, which amounted to US\$ 223,839.22 at the end of the project and another US\$ 36,023.58 budgeted in 2016 (see Table 3).

Table 3: Additional funds used during the Project execution (US\$).

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2009 | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | 30,853.16 | 51,617.38 | 48,382.23 | 56,667.85 | 18,878.10 | 17,440.50 | 36,023.58 | 259,862.80 |

³³ PRONEGOCIOS had 3 requirements to fund productive activities: i) demonstrate productivity; ii) add value to the product; and iii) demonstrate rentability of the business. Additionally, the counterpart had to come up with 50% of the project's value and 25% of this had to be in cash. The minimum amount required would have been one million lempiras, which would have been impossible for virtually everyone in these poor communities.

86. The GIZ contributed US\$ 30,000.00, while the GEF-SGP provided US\$ 539,983.00, in relation to biodiversity-friendly conservation activities associated with the Karatasca Lagoon Management Plan (see Table 4). This was matched with US\$ 1,303,285.09 in local matching funds for a total of US\$ 1,843,268.09.

Table 4: GEF-SGP funded projects.

| PROJECT | PPD/GEF US\$ | Matching US\$ | Total US\$ |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Lighting the Moskitia with solar energy in the Tansing indigenous community. | 40000.00 | 17950.07 | 57950.07 |
| Promoting food security as a mechanism for protecting the conservation of the Auka forests. | 50000.00 | 98536.50 | 148536.50 |
| Promoting knowledge about Climate Change in Miskito youth in seven communities within the Kruta area, and in the use and management of mangroves and the conservation of Róbalo. | 50000.00 | 3779.00 | 53779.00 |
| Kau Lauu Kau Inska, Kau Lilia, Kaukira (Mas Mangle, Mas Peces, Mas Ingresos, Mas Alegria, Kaukira) | 50000.00 | 32000.00 | 82000.00 |
| Conservation of Natural Resources of Auratá and development of tourism infrastructure as an economic alternative for sustainable development. | 49983.00 | 52494.00 | 102477.00 |
| Mistruck Ritska Kainasunanka (Development of community tourism promoting the natural riches of Mistruck) | 50000.00 | 67937.96 | 117937.96 |
| Conservation of Róbalo and the mangrove forests in Río Kruta for the sustainability of fishing activities in the Honduran Moskitia | 50000.00 | 47570.00 | 97570.00 |
| kau Clin lilliam Bris (Disfruta de Kaukira Limpia), Commercializing Solid Wastes | 50000.00 | 39902.56 | 89902.56 |
| Conserving the natural richness and promoting ecotourism in three Miskito communities in Puerto Lempira, Gracias a Dios | 50000.00 | 878300.00 | 928300.00 |
| Management and protection of the communal forest of Mavita-Rusrus as a mechanism for the conservation of threatened species and the sale of tourism services | 50000.00 | 42455.00 | 92455.00 |
| Lighting the Moskitia with solar energy in the Pranza indigenous community. | 50000.00 | 22360.00 | 72360.00 |
| Total | 539,983.00 | 1,303,285.09 | 1,843,268.09 |

87. Other co-financing sources included: a) BID-Pronegocios and USAID MAREA who funded US\$ 1,137,198.01, together with local matching funds of US\$ 1,233,553.32, for a total of US\$ 2,370,751.33; b) WB-PATH US\$ 250,000.00, which supported titling in favor of the Territorial Councils; and the Government who gave US\$ 162,000.00.

3.2.6 Externalities, Risk and Adaptive Management

88. The biggest threats to biodiversity are closely related to the insecurity of local communities and project staff associated with activities of the terceros who enjoy complete impunity from illegally occupying Miskito territorial landscapes and thereby reducing the resilience of numerous ecosystem services (e.g., production of biomass for food and timber, regulation of clean water, etc.). This is further exacerbated by the unchecked occupation of territorial lands by over 3000 Nicaraguan Miskito women and children refugees fleeing similar, but more violent land invasions across the border. At the time of writing this report, the government has not taken any action to diffuse this volatile situation. The strong external interests to extract natural resources in the

Moskitia, the general lack of employment and the weak commitment by the government to allocate the necessary resources to its regional offices in the Moskitia (PIR 2015; 1,24,25,27,28,32,33,34,39,44,45) further exacerbate this serious situation. Therefore, it is not difficult to envision that any expectations of having positive conservation outcomes and sustainably managing natural resources are unlikely to happen until the government fulfills its mandate for environmental protection, providing security of indigenous populations and abide by its agreements with the GEF Secretariat. In retrospect, the project was far too optimistic to expect that government institutions could be counted on to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the project results and this risk was severely underestimated (PIR 2013).

89. Table 5 summarizes key risks that the ProDoc identified as being only moderate (first column) and the measures it proposed to mitigate. The third column summarizes the effectiveness of those measures. The most serious externality was the impact that heavily armed *terceros* had on the project. Although the ProDoc mentioned that outsiders were illegally deforesting at least 2-3% of the area each year, it was only considered to be a *moderate risk*. Not surprisingly, the ProDoc recommended inadequate measures to confront this, and other risks (shaded red in the table), and this short-sightedness affected the overall implementation efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 5: Summary of risks and mitigation measures presented in the ProDoc and the ET's assessment of those measures.

| RISK | Mitigating measure | TE Conclusion |
|---|--|--|
| Inadequate conditions of governance, including conflicts between shareholders | The project will strengthen community-based organizations and will promote the establishment of mechanisms and experiences of alternative conflict management. | While Miskito governance structures have been strengthened, <i>no alternative conflict management mechanisms have been developed</i> and the situation is more conflictive than before the project started. |
| Emergence of major new markets or actors that impose additional extractive pressures on resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to spatial planning of extraction in order to ensure that provision is made for resource regeneration (for example through set-asides) • Strengthening of community-based norms and enforcement, awareness raising and environmental education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has not been enforced by government institutions. • Awareness has been raised significantly and community norms developed with project support. <i>Enforcement is impossible looking down the barrel of an AK-47.</i> |
| Failure of Government to make genuine long term commitments to supporting Miskito interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising of awareness in central Government of the economic benefits of sustainable natural resource management. • Provision of methodological support and pilot activities to facilitate adaptation of Government programs to local conditions. • Support to advocacy in central Government to accelerate formalization of occupancy and use rights. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No response from the government, only promises according to interviews and correspondence. • Little interest or support from government institutions • Rights have been formalized. The issue is the government refuses to take any action against <i>terceros</i> and titles have not been formally issued. |
| Failure of Government to provide adequate resources to ICF, DIGESPESCA and SERNA in the region | The project will support community-based mechanisms to complement formal Government planning and control functions, and mechanisms for inter-institutional coordination in order to maximize the impact of the available staff, funds and equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is of no value if regulations are not enforced by the government, inter-institutional coordination is non-existent. |

90. It is noted that the final PIR took adaptive actions to address some of these risks and the TE provides comments in the column to the right in the table below.

| Critical Risks Type(s) | Critical Risk Management Measures Undertaken in 2015 | TE Comments |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Organizational | Inadequate conditions of governability, including conflicts between parties. The project has worked to strengthen the bases of the indigenous organisations, so that they would have better capacities to claim accountability and to defend their rights, as well as to guarantee transparent, equitable and inclusive decision-making. In addition, the project has supported participatory (territorial) planning to harmonize the interests between different actors. | While planning and Miskito governance structures have been strengthened, <i>no alternative conflict management mechanisms were developed</i> and the situation is more conflictive than before the project started. What was lacking was inter-cultural governance mechanisms... |
| Other | Appearance of new markets and/actors that imply an increasing pressure to exploit the resources. Seeing the increasing pressure from Asia towards the extraction of jellyfish on the coast of Moskitia, the Project has supported the definition of maximum sustainable catch level for this species, as well as the definition of other regulatory means agreed between the fishers and local enterprises. | This has reduced the risk to the project success. |

91. Another externality that affected the project's performance was the 2009 *coup de état*³⁴, which delayed getting the project up and running again. Examples include the time required for UNDP to mediate between the Miskito people and the government and come to an agreement on how to continue, and the time for ICF to take over managing the project once SERNA-DBIO retired. The municipal governments' resistance to the land tiling through the Territorial Councils, and this alienated the local government from the project as also unexpected.
92. There is no doubt that the Miskito shareholders' inconformity with the original ProDoc's focus leading to a more inclusive approach to address the Moskitia's real problems, rather than continuing to fund more consultancies, was the correct choice. However, the weak approach to governance was to become the beginning of a 4-year series of challenges that included weak support from all but a few central and regional governmental officials to enforcing laws, delays and several changes in the project's leadership that were unrelated to governance issues.
93. The first delay was a 3 months lapse between the joint Concept Proposal was submitted and the date of approval of the ProDoc by the GEF Council. From the time it was signed off by the GEF in May 2009, 48 months passed before the project has all of its staff working together. However, this was minor compared to the tense situation that arose when the government changed hands after the 2009 coup d'état and resulted in Miskito leaders' displeasure and inconformity with the

³⁴ There were numerous delays when MASTA's refused to deal directly with the government regarding new conditions for the project's implementation and its insistence that UNDP serve as the direct link for negotiations between the government and the Miskito people, and not the formal government institutions.

proposed government leadership. They refused to allow SERNA to take the lead role in coordinating and executing the project.

94. Later the project director resigned unexpectedly, an interim coordinator was unable to lead the project and UNDP stepped in to lend their support. Consequently, the ET considers that it was remarkable that the project was placed back on track after the *coup* and it recognizes the crucial role that the project technical team and several Country Office staff played in mediating the conflicts and turning the project around to get it on course again. This was mainly because of the high level of confidence that the Miskito representatives had in the team and largely because of UNDP Country Office's role in conveying the logical and well-founded arguments from the Miskito leaders. While this could be considered a type of adaptive strategy to improve the project management, the project's weak assumptions and the absence of a rigorous results-based approach to management (and the absence of a robust M&E system) prevented the project team and the Country Office from undertaking serious efforts to learn from implementation process and systematically capture the lessons learned from that process.
95. However, the attempted assassination of one of Miskito naturalists working for ICF on the project forced many people re-think the limits of their good intentions to conserve biodiversity and landscapes in the pilot areas not only demoralized many of the Miskito shareholders, but struck fear and helplessness to confront further reprisals from the *terceros* without the government's support (4,18, 24,25,27,28,32,33,34,39,44,45).

3.2.7 Efficiency of LFA and Monitoring

96. The project management team reported annual progress by using the LFA format in the annual PIRs and used several UN-prescribed monitoring tools that also included annual reports. While there were some gaps in the information, the overall performance was satisfactory. The PIRs after 2013 generally contained good information, but lacking were lessons learned and the tracking of annual financial expenditures. For some reason, an *ad hoc* PIR format, rather than the standardized Excel-based monitoring tool was employed throughout the reporting period. However, there was no results-based M&E system applied to the project and this prevented many important lessons from being systematically captured, and in doing so, driving adaptive management, as described below.
97. The biggest shortcoming was the absence of a results-based M&E system that is prescribed by the UN system (Brester 2012; UNDG 2012). For some reason such as system was not developed and had it been done, it would have become clear that the indicators for outcomes were not SMART and in fact, most were output indicators. Further weaknesses included superficial assumptions and risks that impeded any development of a Theory of Change Analysis that should have been done from the outset of the project formulation.

3.2.8 The use of Adaptive Management

98. The project did an excellent job of adapting to numerous political challenges (e.g., re-orienting the project and putting it on track after the *coup*, negotiating with the government on behalf of the Miskito leaders) and land conflict crises (particularly the seizure of the *tercero* families in Auka). Normally, adaptive management is most efficient when it responds to changes in indicators imbedded in a monitoring and evaluation system that is capable of flagging problems early on, rapidly correcting them and compiling the lessons learned from the errors in the development

model that includes robust assumptions. However, this project required a high level of hands-on commitment by UNDP which not only included the tenacious involvement of the project staff, but also the active engagement of the UNDP Resident Representative, who visited the region frequently and spent several days at a time. This gave UNDP huge credibility, not just with the Miskito population, but also with the highest levels of the Honduran government. It is indeed a tribute to the dedication of the UNDP team to take such a strong leadership role, and their commitment offers a model for UNDP's engagement in future projects, as will be discussed at the end of this report.

99. The above notwithstanding, the project and the UNDP Country Office applied a monitoring system that was difficult to react to until the end of each year. A real time M&E system could have helped capture lessons learned in a systematic and timely manner, and it could have help the project management and technical teams react more quickly to emerging issues, rather than waiting for them to explode, as happened several times. This led to a reactive approach to adaptive management, rather than a carefully programmed one.

4 RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the project's overall implementation performance, the achievement of outcomes and the overall objective, impacts and overall sustainability. It examines the following question:

EQ4. What contribution did the project make to the achievement of the expected outcomes and the objective, and the reduction of pressures on biological-ecological and sociocultural diversity, and their well-being in the Moskitia? (*Effectiveness and Impact*)

4.1 Level of achievement of the overall objective

100. The log-frame presented in the original ProDoc (ProDoc 2009) identified *ten indicators* for measuring whether the project met the overall objective, namely *to conserve biodiversity in the production landscapes managed by indigenous people in the Moskitia*³⁵. However, after the mid-term evaluation (MTE) several were either eliminated, or substituted with more practical or realistic indicators. Table 6 below summarizes the extent to which each indicator was met by the project. To summarize, the analysis of the indicators measuring the overall objective and other available evidence (4,17,27,29,32) indicates that the project met half of its biodiversity conservation targets. This was achieved for the conservation of the red macaw, through the creation of eco-friendly businesses, but fishery resources in the overfished Karatasca Lagoon appear to be rebounding. Nonetheless, verifying these indicators will require more detailed studies to make a robust judgment, mainly because the baseline and monitoring data are insufficient to make a determination on either of these issues and the evidence the TE uses is anecdotal information given by some of the most respected scientific and naturalist shareholders.

101. Table 6 shows that the project achieved six of the ten indicators, while scarlet macaw populations actually decreased during the monitoring periods. The absence of tapir is probably related to a sampling artefact while the forest cover inventories were ever carried out. The details of each indicator are summarized below.

| No. | OVERALL OBJECTIVE INDICATOR | JUDGMENT |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------|
|-----|-----------------------------|----------|

³⁵ Note that the objective is inaccurately formulated as a result and for that reason it has been re-worded in the form of an overall objective.

| | | |
|------|---|---------------|
| O.1 | <i>A measurable change in knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding conservation of biodiversity and natural resource management expressed through the KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Analysis³⁶).</i> | Achieved (HS) |
| O.2 | <i>The number of hectares under management plans that ensure biodiversity conservation of the production landscapes in indigenous territories.</i> | Achieved (HS) |
| O.3 | <i>Stability or increases in the number of individual scarlet macaws recorded in the pine savanna and broadleaved forests.</i> | Decrease (U) |
| O.4 | <i>Percentage of the forest in the area of biological monitoring that provides the necessary conditions of optimum habitat (comprising of sufficient sources of food, trees for nesting and for shelter) for the scarlet macaw.</i> | Decrease (U) |
| O.5 | <i>Documentation of Baird's tapir in broadleaf forests</i> | None reported |
| O.6 | <i>Number of species within the Psittacid parrot family in the pilot areas.</i> | Achieved (HS) |
| O.7 | <i>Change in the number of hectares in the pine and broadleaf forests of the pilot areas.</i> | No Data (U) |
| O.8 | <i>Abundance of jaguar (<i>Panthera onca</i>) as evidenced through biological monitoring,</i> | One reported |
| O.9 | <i>Stability or decrease in time required by hunters to find prey (white-tailed deer and peccary) in terrestrial environments</i> | Achieved (HS) |
| O.10 | <i>Fish catch levels per unit effort in the Karatasca lagoon</i> | Achieved (HS) |

Table 6: Summary of the effectiveness in meeting Outcome #1 indicators.

102. **Indicator #1:** The first and only KAP baseline analysis was carried out in 2013. Although some communities were not only positive toward conservation and sustainable resource management, and they used traditional practices to carry them out to some extent. However, while most of the other communities had a positive attitude towards conservation, the level of biodiversity conservation was low in the pilot communities and that the people interviewed lacked the knowledge and capacity to manage their resources sustainably. Furthermore, they lacked knowledge about the country's legislative and regulatory framework; that local governance structures were weak; and that government institutions were poorly represented in terms of them being able to carry out their mandates.
103. The project responded to this weakness by exploring ways to engage these communities in conserving biodiversity, focusing on developing actions leading to more inclusive involvement and greater benefits to the pilot communities. The former group of actions were essential for avoiding internal conflicts and divisions, and instead work to promote greater harmony within the communities. One key tool was to assist shareholders to carry out participatory community development plans, and this resulted in the empowerment of most shareholders by helping them visualize their future and then giving them a clearer picture of what actions were necessary to make that vision a reality. This turned out to be crucial for laying the groundwork for the behavioral changes required for managing their communal resources.
104. In the absence of the expected KAP follow-up to measure changes in attitudes, the ET team relied on interviews as a substitute. The results clearly indicated that the project had indeed raised local awareness about using new management tools, the importance of mapping and protecting

³⁶A Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey is a quantitative method (predefined questions formatted in standardized questionnaires) that provides access to quantitative and qualitative information. KAP surveys reveal misconceptions or misunderstandings that may represent obstacles to the activities that we would like to implement and potential barriers to behavior change. Note that a KAP survey essentially records an "opinion" and is based on the "declarative" (i.e., statements). In other words, the KAP survey reveals what was said, but there may be considerable gaps between what is said and what is done.

Miskito lands and other communal resources. This new knowledge was especially important for shareholders living around the Karatasca Lagoon because they learned that they could successfully apply the tools in ways that began to reverse the critical fishery-collapse. The tools included evidence-based scientific data, rather than on politically or bureaucratically convenient solutions that the local DIGEPESCA office proposed, and this new awareness clearly empowered the resource users and it further contributed to the high level of participation in developing and implementing the management plan. For example, artisanal and commercial fishermen worked together to formulate a realistic management plan and this process led to an understanding about the importance of protecting the life cycles of those species that are most important to the survival of Miskito communities. This was a major achievement of the project and for that reason, the TE team rates the achievement as being *highly satisfactory*.

105. Indicator #2: Although the second indicator was revised after mid-term, it was still worded as an output, not an outcome, but the results are impressive. At the start of the project there were 146,000 ha of forests had management plans (there are no data on the effectiveness of these plans) while no aquatic areas were under management and in 2012 the shareholders had achieved 92% of the target of having 246, 873 hectares under management for the following communities: Laya Mokorón Sixta 16,631 ha., Auka 126,242 ha and the Karatasca Lagoon system with 104,000 ha.. By 2013 the project passed its target, doubling the area under management for biodiversity conservation, adding management plans for 22,830 ha in Rundín and then Auratá (5,000 ha) Suji (23,753 ha) and Pranza with 42,422 ha (PNUD 2013a: 6,7). While there are no data available about how effective the implementation of the plans are today, these management plans may simply remain as pieces of paper with little impact, unless the government takes actions to enforce them
106. Indicators #3 and #4 address the state and pressure on scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*). Monitoring was delayed for over 2 years, until 2014 when para-biologists estimated that the permanent population around Mábita was approximately 14-16 couples (28-32 individuals), which coincided with the 2012 baseline data. However, a total of 180 scarlet macaws were recorded in the pine savannah (83) and broadleaf forest (97). Altogether 30 nests were identified in May 2014, indicating that the area of Mábita is an important nesting site also for macaws coming from other areas, since the permanent population around Mábita was estimated to be only 14-16 pairs. Old, large pine trees have been destroyed by forest clearance and logging in the area surrounding Suji-Pranza and it is likely that macaws from the area of have now begun nesting around Mabita. Compared with the previous monitoring results, para-biologists that the number of inactive nests around Mabita in 2014 had quadrupled (an increase from three of the twelve pine tree nests) and that the number of active nests in 27 trees had decreased, suggesting that poachers are very active (PIR 2015; *para-biologist interviews*)³⁷. It has been estimated that 30% of Honduras' red macaws live in the 194,000 ha surrounding Mábita and that 5000 ha are under control, with between 30-40 active nests (4,17).
107. It is interesting that when para-biologists from Mábita captured nest robbers from other communities, they took them back to their community of origin where they were punished in public, as is the Miskito custom. This appears to have reduced the nest predation by the Miskitos, but it has been imposible to control the terceros and Nicaraguans (4). This notwithstanding, the high levels of poverty have forced some members of the very pilot communities to work with

³⁷ Between March and June, 2016, a team of US researchers and university students in Mábita collected data on the macaw population and their state of health.

the terceros just to earn money. Therefore, it is reiterated that while the Miskito ethic for protecting biodiversity is inherent in the culture, the high levels of poverty have forced them into a survival mode where they must do whatever it takes for surviving in the absence of a serious government programs to assist them and improve their lives.

108. The ET could not find any information on the results of the multi-temporal deforestation analysis on forest cover and quality, so it is difficult to assess at this time. However, an important milestone was that the PATH project helped secure the first inter-communal land titles to the local indigenous federations of Katinasta, Ahuyayari, Wamaklisinasta and FINZMOS and the project helped them define and agreeing upon how natural resources would be managed in these demarcated territories. However, until the government intervenes and removes the terceros who have seized parts of these communal lands, the landscapes and biodiversity will continue to disappear.
109. Illegal logging and hunting pressures from terceros has increased since biological monitoring began in 2012 and the government has taken no action to stop this landscape-clearing and associated biodiversity losses. They have now encroached on the land surrounding Mábita, Mokerón and Auka, and these communities are no match for the armed terceros. Further, they lack the resources to carry out surveillance and monitoring, and with the exception of central ICF's Wildlife Director, neither the central or regional ICF authorities have taken action to enforce the laws.

---- this instrument (territorial land titles granted to the Territorial Councils after more than 30 years of fighting for them) is a key for being able to strengthen our claims to indigenous lands that have been seized by the terceros and we think that sanitizing those land (i.e., removing the invaders) is just what we have been requesting because it will help reduce conflicts with the terceros – nonetheless there is no political will on the part of the state to resolve this serious problem even though we have documented the problem and denounced it in front of ICF and DIGEPESCA who have not taken any action – apparently they are afraid' Meeting with FINZMOS, the Council of Elders , the Territorial Council and Community leaders Mokerón, February 2016.



110. Indicator #5 was not met, as no Baird's Tapir were reported from monitoring in broadleaved forests, according to the monitoring work by INCEBIO and this was confirmed by Portillo in February 2016.
111. Indicator #6 was achieved, as five different neo-tropical parrot species were recorded. These important seed eaters and dispersers were identified in May 2015. However, Bustillo Pons (2002) identified 22 parrot species for Honduras and it is likely that this small number of parrots was under-represents the total number of species out there, given that only two monitoring events were carried out during the entire project. Portillo (person communication) estimates that there are 13 species living in the Moskitia.
112. Indicator #7 examined the change in the number of hectares in the pine and broadleaf forests of the pilot areas. Baseline data indicated that deforestation resulted in losses of between 3 to 5 % annually between 2003 and 2008, but to date, no date could be found and none of the programmed monitoring took place.
113. Indicators #8 and #9 showed mixed results. It is important to note that the baseline and 2012

follow-up monitoring data are far from being robust, they may give a very crude indication of how the latter two species changed and provides a proxy measure of the indicators *stability or decrease in time required by hunters to find prey (white-tailed deer and peccary) in terrestrial environments*. As shown in the adjacent figure. Peccary (*Dicotyles pecari*) tended to either stay the same between sampling periods or actually appear more frequently in 2015, whereas it took slightly longer to see a white tail deer in Mokorón, Auratá and Mábita- Rus Rus, but stayed the

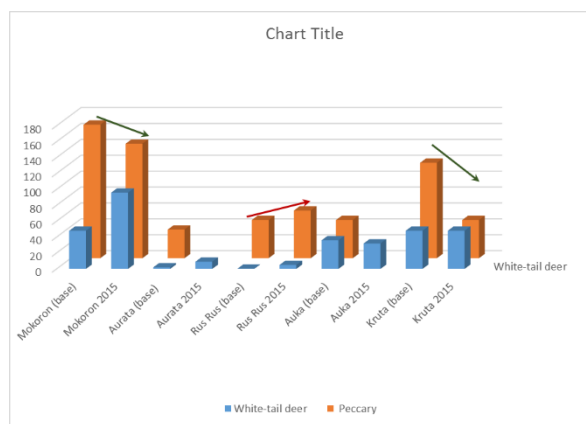


Figure 2: Comparison of 2009 baselines & 2015 target species data.

same in Auka and Kruta. Interviews confirmed that many years ago hunting took place near the communities, but with the arrival of the colonists, people have to walk large distances to find the animals and that that peccaries have moved far away from the hunting grounds since the arrival of the colonists (4,18, 22,24,28; PIR 2015).

114. It is worth noting that with regard to indicators #5 and #9, camera traps registered only one jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and no tapirs (*Tapirus bairdii*) near Auka and neither mammal was photographed in Mabita. However, the monitoring effort (time dedicated and the number of cameras installed) was inadequate - most of the sensor cameras were damaged by heavy rains, and also because no sampling occurred in 2013 or 2014. It is surprising that a project with such a large amount of money and so dependent on BD indicators could neither replace the cameras, ensure that they are maintained in operational mode at all times, nor allocate the kind of funding to mobilize students and researchers to this area of such high importance. Considering that in Mabita, Auka and Mokorón jaguar-prey populations appeared to still be healthy, it is likely that jaguars are still in these three areas and perhaps could have been recorded with a greater monitoring effort (more cameras and more time).
115. Indicator #10 is based on standards established by FAO, although there are other more robust indicators that could have yielded better information and a better understanding of the population dynamics (Froese 2006, Ryan 2009). Trial sampling events captured an average of 10 Róbalo (*Centropomus spp*) in May 2015, which is in line with the indicator for a healthy population. However, there are no data on which species was collected, the size of these fish, nor the stage of gonad maturity of each fish (see Froese 2006).
116. In sum, the project team did a remarkable job of responding to so many challenges and being continually forced to adapt to ever-changing situations that would be obstacles to some of the best projects. This ability to adapt and create synergies with the previously mentioned partners, as well as GOAL, and the World Bank-funded PATH project were crucial and UNDP played a key role in materializing them. PATH was especially important in laying the groundwork for the government to recognize legal land rights of the Miskito communities and the first two titles of inter community lands were granted to the local Miskito federations of Katainasta and Ahuya Yari in 2013 (PIR 2013; 2015) and this injected considerable energy into most of beneficiaries and encouraged them to continue supporting the project (1,24,27,28,32,34).

³⁸ There are no data available in 2015 for Peccary in Auka or Auratá in the figure above.

4.2 Analysis of progress towards achievement of outcomes

117. On the basis of the information presented in the tables in Appendices 3 and 4, this section gives an analysis of the progress made towards outcome achievement and ratings for this progress. Critical factors such as the continuous destruction of landscapes and biodiversity, narcotrafficking and the previously mentioned lack of political will to beef up human and financial resources of ICF and DIGEPESCA offices in the Moskitia are the primary reasons for the lack of advances in conserving key biodiversity targets, as well as the extreme remoteness of the area and difficulties associated with transportation. The weak and naïve project design also contributed to these other challenges.

4.2.1 Outcome 1 – Local people have the capacities to apply modified and alternative production systems that conserve BD

118. The evidence strongly indicates that local shareholders in Mábita and Karatasca have improved their capacity to manage wildlife in coordination with Superior Education Centers. Territorial and Elder Councils have become engaged and given their full support to the process and the PATH initiative have helped them further advance in reclaiming their territorial rights.
119. Fishermen were trained to improve their focus on alternative and sustainable fishing techniques thanks to the USAID-MAREA program, using "suriperas nets" as a biodiversity-friendly way to catch shrimp by significantly reducing the waste generated from by catch and these training events has led to more sustained use of suriperas to generate income for their families and simultaneously reduce fishing pressure in the lagoon and nearshore waters. (PIR 2013; 32,34,43).
120. Based on the achievement of its outcomes, the ET rates Outcome #1 as being *Moderately Satisfactory*. Table 7 summarizes the degree to which the indicators were achieved, but it is important to explain that the ProDoc's model for *strengthening forestry cooperatives* was widely rejected by the communities and a tactical failure for several reasons described by MASTA's leadership. First, it benefits relatively few community families when compared with the *Community Forestry Development* model proposed by MASTA. Second, is that ICF gives permission to exploit the forests but it rarely follows up on the management plans to ensure that the benefits of this exploitation are equitably distributed to ensure that the wider community benefits from forestry exploitation. The third reason is that the fee ICF charges per cut tree was the same as paid in Olancho, which has a nearby market, unlike the remote Moskitia, and thus the cooperatives' prices were not competitive. However, together with MASTA, the project managed to reduce this fee by a factor of 10 in the Moskitia and this new achievement is reflected in the land titles given to the territorial governments. Finally, according to the forestry law, 50% of the money paid for timber taxes has to be returned to the community for social projects. MASTA and FINZMOS determined that ICF should return around \$40,000 to the communities and has repeatedly demanded this payment by the Director of ICF who has not responded. Consequently, the cooperatives were operating at a loss and they slowly had to quit working because they were operating at a loss.
121. The Forestry Department of ICF created barriers to community forestry and invested in vehicles and hiring technical people for the office in Puerto Lempira to manage Miskito forest resources, whereas MASTA considers community forestry should support and strengthen the community

³⁹ ICF charges 200.00 Lempira per cubic meter throughout the national territory and this fee is lower when it comes from private lands.

initiatives so that they can manage their forests in a way that has the full support of their communities.

| NO. | OUTCOME #1 INDICATOR | JUDGMENT |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.1 | <i>Change in the amount of cash derived from timber tax that is being reinvested in sustainable forest management.</i> | None reported, Unsatisfactory (U) |
| 1.2 | <i>Change in the area of forest burnt by uncontrolled forest fires</i> | Achieved (S) |
| 1.3 | <i>Number of productive units (cooperatives, producer associations, agro-forestry groups) that are implementing management plans that promote the conservation of biodiversity</i> | Achieved (only for fisheries) (MS) |
| 1.4 | <i>Change in the variety of timber species that are being used in a biodiversity-friendly manner and commercialized in the Moskitia</i> | Not Achieved (U) |
| 1.5 | <i>Number of biodiversity-friendly businesses (e.g. ecotourism, fishing) that promote the conservation of BD</i> | None reported |

Table 7: Summary of the proposed indicators for measuring the effectiveness of Outcome #1.

122. Indicator 1.1 aimed to save the cooperatives up to \$3,000 in tax payment savings by the end of the project, and this money would be invested in sustainable forest management activities. In 2013 the project team worked closely with the central government, regional ICF, the cooperatives and donors and succeeded in formulating a special reduced tax rate⁴⁰ for timber harvests in the Moskitia, thereby rescinding the higher tax rate that ICF had decreed the previous year. This offered the cooperatives greater profits and the savings were to be invested in biodiversity conservation and forest protection activities.
123. The issuance of land titles to the Territorial Councils has converted the Miskito communities and cooperatives into owners of the forests and this will more than double the economic benefits derived from the lowered tax rate. However, there is no evidence that this taxing scheme has changed at the time of the TE, but the land titling process facilitated by PATH turned all territorial lands over to the Territorial Councils and now the cooperatives are leaning toward declaring their forest management areas as private lands, which will result in an even lower tax rate, but MASTA argues that it is a non-sustainable and inequitable approach and that Community Forestry Development is the best way forward. If this arrangement goes forward, then both parties will be fully responsible for managing and protecting the forests, thereby by freeing the state from any legal obligations to support the cooperatives in the managing their forests. Although *there is no evidence that the target indicator of \$3,000 was reached or if any money was reinvested in sustainable forestry and conservation management* and MASTA claims that ICF has not returned \$40,000 in taxes that by law should have been returned to the communities for investing in social projects.
124. Indicator 1.2 never established the targets to be achieved by the end-of-project, but the available baselines estimated that around 14,824 ha were burnt by wildfires in 2012⁴¹ (PIR 2015). In 2014, a total of 56 wildfires were recorded in the Moskitia in 2014, destroying a huge area of 64,945.08 hectares, or an increase in wildfires by a factor of five. The project hired a consultant to develop

⁴⁰ The new rate tax rate was set at 100 Lempira per m³ for trunks with diameters greater than 30cm, 50 Lempira for trunks with diameter of 22-29.9 cm; 20 Lempira for trunks with diameter 18-21.9 cm, and no tax on trunks with diameter less than 18 cm.

⁴¹ ICF does not have sufficient human or financial resources to fight forest fires and the Army, who does have resources, has done little to efficiently fight wildfires (PIR 2013).

local capacities in integrated fire management. After health–related issues delayed the consultancy and the delivery of equipment until the middle of the dry season in 2013, training was postponed until August, so this delay might have contributed to the inability to control the fires in the subsequent year. But is also worth noting that the lack of interest from the part of the government to effectively assign resources to address the problem and this is a significant barrier to the project’s efforts to reduce wildfires in the Moskitia. ICF no longer has a role in fighting wildfires because the government assigned the budget for forest protection to the military, and there is little evidence that they are playing a proactive role, as recently witnessed in the devastating wildfires in the Jeanette Kawas National Park in April 2016.

125. Nonetheless, each year ICF makes an effort to coordinate the campaign for forest protection, yet the lack of interest from the part of other government institutions undermines any efforts in this respect. In 2014, the project carried out a radio campaign in order to support wildfire prevention and annual losses caused by fires set by humans have dropped, at least in pine forest areas around the pilot sites after continuous vigilance was carried out and elevated observations were made from a tower built with funds from the CLIFOR project. Mábita shareholders involved with the red macaw and fire prevention activities stressed the importance of the tower and how they have been able to spot fires early in their development. However, a considerable amount of work is still needed to change attitudes in the Moskitia regarding the controlled uses of fire, and it is likely to be a lengthy process before lasting changes are the rule, rather than the exception. For example, the available evidence suggests



Figure 3: Fire observation tower built with CLIFOR funds near Mabita.

that the community of Rumdín will not protect their forests unless they are paid, even though the wildfires destroy that community’s valuable natural resources.

126. Indicator 1.3 Training and logistical support from GOAL, USAID and PRONEGOCIOS helped turn around six failing forestry productive units and incorporate biodiversity conservation into their management plans, as well as five other units that included the fishery sector. More than fifty people were trained from these and other cooperatives, whose capacity was developed to make business plans, carry out financial management and business administration to over fifty people, as well provide them with funding for alternative income earning activities in the forestry and fisheries sectors. In order to overcome the serious limitations caused by a lack of energy in rural areas, the project helped secure a donation of solar panels for producing renewable energy for new businesses that included adding value to the production *batana*, cacao and initiatives in the fisheries sector that effectively increased fisherfolk incomes and resulted in more conservation friendly fishing gear in response to the Karataska Management Plan. It also resulted in establishing a solid waste management facility. The 11 groups received generous funding from Pronegocios (after the strict financial qualification conditions were eased by the IADB). Today, Mábita is successfully implementing its sustainable/scientific tourism project and managing the community visitors' center and dormitories, while Auratá is implementing a GEF-PPD-funded tourism initiative partially funded by the project.

127. Based on interviews (44,45), cooperatives have a history of failure in the Moskitia and it is surprising that the project promoted them as an organization for implementing activities associated with this indicator. Although the forestry cooperatives received training, they were unable to implement their management plans effectively for the reasons described earlier in this section. To date, the cooperatives have extracted small volumes of timber for commercial purposes, largely due to the high cost of operations and the low prices paid for the product, but also because they do not have the financial resources available to invest value added activities. Therefore, they could not carry out the ProDoc's vision of sustainable forest conservation and protection (for example through combatting wildfires or monitoring for illegal logging).
128. **Indicator 1.4:** While there is no evidence showing that any cooperatives are extracting and commercializing alternative timber species into higher value products, the municipal government donated land where a storage facility was built outside of Puerto Lempira. This was expected to store wood products such as pine, would be created as part of the business plans financed by Pronegocios. The center expected to collect and sell pine, *cedro macho*, *nispero* and other valuable wood to Chinese and Guatemalan buyers, but this had not happened at the time of this report and the expected outcome was never achieved.
129. **Indicator 1.5** – By the end of the project, Pronegocios was funding eleven biodiversity-friendly businesses (fisheries sector, cocoa production, batana and the management of solid wastes), more than doubling the target outcome) and benefitting more than 1000 people with technically backstopping from GOAL (PIR 2015). Add to this the ecotourism initiatives that generated incomes in Mábita and Auratá and the project exceeded its expectations⁴². However, the two latter businesses still require better marketing for attracting eco-tour groups and the others still face difficulties in managing their businesses. In Auka, the Project funded a food security project that consisted of sustainable production of corn, rice, beans, bananas and yucca using environmentally friendly cultivation techniques, storage of seeds for future and capacity building to teach agricultural practitioners how to carry out the new techniques (36).

4.2.2 Outcome 2 – Legal and political environment created for allowing development activities that are compatible with BD conservation.

130. This component focused on improving governance, although at the regional, territorial and community levels, given the aforementioned difficulties the project faced with getting the national government to meet its commitments. Although this aspect for strengthening local governance mechanisms is not reflected in any of the indicators, it is worth highlighting some notable achievements that would not have happened without support from the project, given that they proved to establish some crucial enabling conditions for establishing a solid governance framework within the Miskito context. The project fully supported the following:
- MASTA being able to finalize the legal constitution of the 12 Territorial Councils of the Moskitia and issued inter-communal land rights titles to each Council. The entire process (initial dialogues with the national government, field mobilization, legal advice and financing required to legalize all pertinent documents – including the land rights titles issued to FINZMOS and Wamakklisinasta) was fully supported the Project.

⁴² Students and researchers from a US university spent 2 weeks in Mábita in Abril and the chief researchers will remain for 3 months.

- MASTA to translate Agreement 169 of the ILO to Miskito, thereby making it more accessible to Miskito leaders and also helping strengthen their capacity to negotiate issues related to indigenous rights to their territories.
 - FINZMOS to strengthen its governance structures and the Community and Elder Councils and the base organizations for 22 communities. IT also strengthened communication and transparency within all of these base organizations all the way to the Directive of the Territorial Council, and this positive experience was for the remaining 11 Territorial councils.
 - The 22 communicates and governing structure of CT FINZMOS in regulating and managing their natural resources.
131. Overall, Outcome #2 is rates as being *moderately satisfactory* manner, largely because of the weak support from the government. Table 8 summarizes the degree to which the indicators for Outcome #2 were achieved, and those findings are described in the paragraphs that follow. There is no doubt that knowledge on biodiversity-friendly conservation tools was improved, thanks to training and capacity building activities, but the ingovernability and threats to human safety prevented these achievements from having much of an impact.

| NO. | OUTCOME #2 INDICATOR | JUDGMENT |
|-----|--|------------------------------|
| 2.1 | Number of institutions, programs or projects that support biodiversity-friendly investments in the Moskitia. | Moderately Satisfactory (MS) |
| 2.2 | Increase in the number of permanent technical staff in local offices of forestry, fisheries and environment authorities | Nothing Achieved (HU) |
| 2.3 | Increase in the area of land covered by usufruct contracts between ICF and local communities, cooperatives or federations (that are not taken as undermining Miskito claims to land title) | Highly Satisfactory (HS) |
| 2.4 | Number of officials and technicians of public institutions in the forestry, fisheries and environmental sectors that have increased their knowledge and understanding on the cultural, socio-economic and environmental context of the Moskitia. | Moderately Satisfactory (S) |

Table 8: Summary of the proposed indicators for measuring the effectiveness of Outcome #2.

132. After considerable frustration (see box with quote two months before the President arrived), President Juan Orlando Hernandez arrived in Puerto Lempira in April 2016 to sign the agreement for the government not only to participate, actively in the new *Alliance for the Moskitia*, but also to provide financial support that was approved for the national budget. This initiative could not have happened without UNDP's endless commitment to the Moskitia and with this concrete government's support, it promises to provide people in the region with badly needed political, governance and financial support that could help strengthen the initial work that was started by the GEF-funded Moskitia project. The UNCO took a decision to open a permanent office for the UN in the Moskitia (PIR June 2015) and this became a reality in April 2016, when the new office was also inaugurated by the President of Honduras,



Figure 5: President Juan Orlando Hernandez inaugurating the UNCT office and launching the *Alianza para la Moskitia* initiative in Puerto Lempira, April 2013.

signifying a major change in the government's attitude and demonstrating a genuine interest in supporting this new initiative designed to alleviate poverty and improved governance in the Moskitia (44,45). Thus, the excellent work by the Country Office Resident Representative to help pave the way for the Alliance for Development of the Moskitia was essentially the project's exit strategy, and all indications is that it is highly likely to continue the process started by the GEF's seed funding. The President of MASTA recently expressed the organization's gratitude to the GoH for its work on helping make the ALLIANCE a reality, because they feel that security in the region has started to improve.

133. Indicator 2.1 – The project collaborated successfully with donors and local organizations to mobilize funding for over 30 alternative productive activities that favored local communities, with Pronegocios funding 11 biodiversity-friendly productive projects while other donor projects supported additional initiatives⁴³. This exceeded the target of 3 businesses to be established by the end of the project. However, none of these involved working with the Moskitia's complicated forestry sector. The project received PPD grants for community projects in Kruta (in environmental education and mangrove conservation) and for Mábita (ecotourism).
134. As mentioned above, the project and the high level of commitment by the UNDP staff attracted the attention and the confidence of the Swiss cooperation agency (COSUDE), who has now agreed to initiate a 10-year, US \$30 million strategy to support governance and productive activities in a project spearheaded by UNDP and supported by the GoH and the German cooperation. One aspect will involve targeting coastal communities and the fishery sector and the coastal communities in the Moskitia. Although the government's performance in keeping its agreements was inadequate during the present GEF-funded project, there is considerable optimism that the government will now fully support his initiative and it has earmarked funds from the national budget (1,27,34,39,48), and *this is likely the greatest achievement of the project, as it represents a major advance for ensuring financial, environmental and social sustainability of Project Moskitia*.
135. Indicator 2.2 – Neither DIGEPESCA nor ICF fulfilled their agreements with UNDP and the GEF to increase their regional staff in the Moskitia. However, steadily cut budgets for the duration of the project created impossible working conditions that were only salvaged due to the commitment from UNDP, MASTA and the Territorial Councils. Although DIGEPESCA responded to complaints from fishermen by replacing its inspector, the lack of staff still limits and lack of interest from the central level limit the kind of impact the agency can have in the region. Fortunately, fisherfolk have taken it upon themselves to play a greater role in managing and enforcing their new regulations. With the exception of the Director of Wildlife, central ICF, took little action to the environmental legislation it is charged with enforcing. Therefore, this lack of political will and questionable commitment from the central government to allocate resources to regional offices in the Moskitia made it nearly impossible to fulfil their mandates and assigned responsibilities. Furthermore, the general lack of coherence in government policies and decision-making was an unforeseen risk to the overall sustainability the achievements to date (PIR 2013, 2015).
136. This lack of attention by the central government has created optimal conditions for the government about the continued seizing, clearing and burning of biodiversity-rich forests, the

⁴³ USAID.MAREA, GOAL (an NGO channeling funds from Pronegocios), UNEP Mangroves project and the GEF-PPD project, among others

- situation has accelerated and worsened, lives have been lost and threatened, while serious social confrontations like the one in Auka have come close to further bloodshed for both the illegal colonists and the Miskito communities. The Director of ICF and his representative in Puerto Lempira have taken no action to address the problem. Given this backdrop, it is indeed remarkable that UNDP, MASTA and FINZMOS were able to maintain the momentum and achieve as much as they did.
137. The Project has identified the composition of the diverse group classified as illegal *terceros* – they include wealthy land owners living in the interior part of Honduras, narco-traffickers and small scale invaders. A high level commission was formed to address the problem, being integrated by the Secretariat of the Interior and Population, the Property Institute, CONADEH, AMHON, Human Rights, the District Attorney (Fiscalía) for Ethnic Groups and the National Agrarian Institute. A technical committee was formed to identify the universe of *terceros* in each parcel of land, which would be geo-referenced, investigated and a solution for resolving the conflict would be developed. PATH would carry out the training. The status of this group is unclear at this time but it appears that after the President’s visit, the Commission has the highest level of backing and recent interviews indicated that the *terceros* are preoccupied and know that it is just a matter of time that they will have to leave.
 138. Indicator 2.3 deals with increasing the amount of land protected by land-use contracts between ICF and local communities, cooperatives or federations (that are not taken as undermining Miskito claims to land title). While the end-of-project goal of establishing 68,000ha under land use contracts favoring indigenous organizations, the project more than tripled this figure when MASTA signed a contract for nearly 200,000 hectares (including 126,239 ha in Auka). However, this process was halted in 2013 when it was discovered that management plans promoting conservation tools are ineffective unless they are accompanied by sufficient capacities and resources of the cooperatives to engage in forest conservation and protection.
 139. FINZMOS, the largest of all territorial councils used a genuinely participatory process to help communities develop a plan for administering these newly titled lands, something that they had been waiting for more than 30 years (Mokorón assembly interviews). This resulted in the formulation of community-based norms and regulations to which all communities agreed to promote the sustainable management of their resources. The norm became official when it was approved by the FINZMOS assembly in May 2015, thereby marking an important step for protecting over 300 000 hectares of land that have been titled to FINZMOS (PIR June 2015).
 140. In 2012, the project played a key role in providing financial and human resources that led to the formulation and adoption of Agreement #169 to the ILO Convention, and MASTA widely acknowledged that the entire process helped inform and empower the Miskito community about their land rights and that any titles that the government gave to *Terceros* were invalid. As a result, this agreement became a tool that empowered the Miskito community to be duly informed about any concessions affecting their territory and especially, to have the right to defend their natural resources (UNDP 2012; 2015). This notwithstanding, the Government of Honduras is currently violating five of the six key jurisprudence issues listed in the Agreement that it signed with the ILO.
 141. The Project engaged the local, territorial councils throughout the implementation process and this create an excellent platform for dialogue with the government so that they could better understand the ways that biodiversity could be conserved with the involvement of local

shareholders, and this helped fuel the drive to carry out land titling, which is an important step for reclaiming territorial rights.

142. The municipal governments have been strongly against the land titling that favored the Territorial Councils, alleging that it violated the Municipal Law and their autonomy to govern. This contrasts markedly with the level of acceptance by other government institutions and there is especially a high level of support from the communities who have benefitted.
143. Indicator 2.4 was met by training 20 government officials and technicians would improve their knowledge through training aimed at understanding the cultural, socio-economic and environmental context of the Moskitia. This resulted in greater interest from the new director of DIGEPESCA in supporting the official approval of the context-specific Karataska Lagoon management plan that includes indigenous norms for artisanal fishing. Additionally, it led to ICF acknowledging the importance cultural context implementation modalities for the Moskitia, and the institution has ensured that new future projects (e.g., CLIFOR) will take this new knowledge into account during the implementation of new projects in the region. However, during the field visit, it was noted that the CLIFOR-funded fire prevention observation tower near Mábita was made with such low grade iron that it has rusted and presents a safety risk to people who use it. Unfortunately, the investment will not last.



Figure 4: Platform and stairway at the highest level of a CLIFOR-funded fire observation tower showing high levels of rust and unsafe conditions.

144. Furthermore, the National Autonomous University (UNAH), sent two graduate students to carry out their internships in the Moskitia in the fields of fishery biology (focusing on jellyfish population dynamics) and renewable energy, and most importantly, it set up scholarships for Misktio students who are currently completing their university degrees. This was especially successful as it is one of the few examples of university collaboration with the Moskitia – there does appear to be a reluctance of university researchers and teachers to work in the Moskitia (18, 34), and there are ongoing discussions about establishing a Regional University under the new *Alianza para la Moskitia* (1,27,34).

4.2.3 Outcome 3 – BD-friendly forms of management in forestry and fisheries sectors are subject to effective planning, monitoring, regulation and enforcement in accordance with local norms and national legislation

145. Outcome #3 was the most successful in meeting the expected outcome indicators, and the project supported the development of forest and fishery management plans based on cultural norms, as well as the indigenous people's regulations for the new Fishery Law are also major contributions that resulted from the project, although it remains to be seen when the government will institutionalize them. Although it successfully achieved the ProDoc's indicators in a *highly satisfactory* manner, as shown in Table 9, all of these indicators are outputs – with just a little effort, they could have easily been formulated as SMART indicators by the original project designers.

| NO. | OUTCOME #3 INDICATOR | JUDGMENT |
|-----|---|--------------------------|
| 3.1 | Increase in the area covered by management plans that meet ICF and DIGEPESCA requirements and at the same time correspond to the resource management principles of indigenous communities | Satisfactory (S) |
| 3.2 | Increase in the area of land designated as set-aside zones, with the agreement of local people (including women) | Satisfactory (S) |
| 3.3 | Increase in the area of marine, coastal, riverine and lagoon ecosystems designated by local people (including women) as set-asides | Highly Satisfactory (HS) |
| 3.4 | Number of local forest users trained in techniques and procedures of forest management that promote conservation of biodiversity | Highly Satisfactory (HS) |
| 3.5 | Number of fishers trained in practices that promote the sustainable use of the resource; 2013 | Highly Satisfactory (HS) |
| 3.6 | Number of laws, regulatory instruments, official procedures and mechanisms relevant to the management of natural resources that take into account the indigenous/Miskito perspective. | Highly Satisfactory (HS) |

Table 9: Summary of the proposed indicators for measuring the effectiveness of Outcome #3.

Details about each indicator are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

146. The Karatasca Lagoon system covers more than 110,000 Km² and it provides food, shelter and habitat for a variety of species, including economically important Róbaló (*Centropomus spp*) endangered manatee (*Trichechus manatus*), sawfish (*Pristis spp*) and important predators at the top of the lagoon's food web like sharks (*Carcharbinus spp.* and *Shpyrna spp*). Studies were carried out on Róbaló and also on the population dynamics of jellyfish which are abundant and an alternative resource that can be fished to take the fishing pressure off other species during their reproductive cycles. The studies guided by UUNAH, led to a number of recommended management practices like mesh size limits, put reproductive areas off limits, no gill nets and a ban on fishing Róbaló for three months of the year.
147. Results from these studies became part of the management plan, which was genuinely participatory and based on local norms, regulations and alternatives to unsustainable fishing practices in the Karatasca Lagoon and it established quotas for several species including Róbaló and medusa. It also developed a zoning approach that corresponds to the function (nursery, reproductive areas and migratory routes) of the ecosystem and set aside 29 no-take areas. More importantly, the plan was implementation by the resource users who developed it. Today the capture and sale of jellyfish generates about \$1.5 million during the 4 month fishing season. It also led to a greater focus on protecting mangroves in the lagoon, including education about their important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation (sequestering CO₂). More details can be found in a systematic study of the project by Lara (2015).
148. Although the progress in the forestry sector lagged behind, it is still too early to measure the effectiveness of the management plans developed for the community biological reserves (Portillo 2012). One reason for the less-than satisfactory results in the forestry sector is related to the high level of threats and insecurity associated with land grabbing, drug-trafficking, as well as different government and private sector interests to extract natural resources illegally in the Moskitia (PIR 2015). This is further complicated by the limited employment opportunities in the region. Therefore, the fact that Outcome 3 met so many of its indicators is remarkable and had the

government intervened to reduce the insecure situation, the project might have gone well beyond its original expectations.

149. Indicator 3.1 - The project was successful in increasing the total area covered by integrated resource management plans that involved local communities in the formulation and evaluation process. For example, the work in Auka more than doubled (136%) the target indicator (126,239 ha), and this carried over to Mokorón, where a new approach was used to develop a community development plan (Plan de Vida) in which local shareholders defined their vision of the community's future, although the communities had little involvement with the cooperatives by the end of the project. By 2012 Mokoron-Layasizza were granted 40 year Management Plans totaling nearly 20,000 ha with the approval of Ministerial Decree 030-2011 (PIR 2012). The Decree allows for better long-term planning that aims to reduce silviculture costs significantly, thereby improving economic benefits to forest workers and offering a potential mechanism for managing forest resources sustainably (PIR 2012).
150. Other community plans were less successful, as was the case for Auratá and Rumdín-Ahuasbila. For example, threats from terceros created such high levels of insecurity in Ahuasbila that the project staff could not go in, and this situation became so severe that the health center and educational facilities had to be closed (PIR 2012). For that reason, an alternative option led to them joining the initiative by the Rumdín community, where a 16,000 ha forest management plan was approved by ICF. Nonetheless, until the terceros are controlled, the ineffective governance and impunity will continue to drive social insecurity and biodiversity loss.

In relation to the environmental damage caused by the terceros in the Moskitia, there have been many denunciations to the ICF Department of Wildlife and to the head of the regional ICF office in Puerto Lempira. But the perception clear – they do not take any action and it is because they do not want to affect the status quo of the rich and powerful groups or they are afraid. The absence of any reaction to our desperate pleas affects governability of the entire region and as a result, it also results in a loss of biodiversity that we are experiencing. ...Interview 02/2016.

151. Moving toward the coastal areas, it is noteworthy that Kruta had no ICF-approved management plans prior to the project started. By 2012 the fishing community had placed 105 ha under developed a management plan developed for the entire lagoon system - with the participation of 20 other coastal communities consisting of commercial and subsistence fishers. The Plan currently promoted sustainable management of coastal forests and fisheries using ancestral and indigenous traditional practices that are harmonized with technical guidelines under the principles of Responsible Fisheries (PIR 2012). By 2013, the area under management skyrocketed to over 115,000ha. The Plan also created synergies with the UNEP-Mangrove project in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, the USAID-MAREA project and the GEF-UNDP small grants fund (PPD), with the aim of mangrove conservation around Kruta through seven productive projects aimed at protecting mangrove ecosystems, promoting sustainable fisheries and conservation. The latter initiative was expanded to build seven environmental education centers in and around the community.
152. Although there is a clause granting exclusivity for artisanal fishermen to fish within 3 miles of the coast, as well as pursue traditional fishery management practices under the guidelines of

⁴⁴ The process for the elaboration of the community development plans has been important for community empowerment, as it can be seen that these two communities have in a way "woken up" to realize that they themselves have an extremely important role in guaranteeing the sustainable management of their resources and the livelihoods for the future generations. (PIR 2015)

- "responsible fisheries". Unfortunately, DIGEPESCA has not enforced this exclusive fishing area set aside for artisanal fishers and this is curious, given that it easily identify the exact location of industrial shrimp trawlers anywhere within Honduran territorial waters commercial fishermen with its sophisticated satellite and GPS monitoring system. Therefore, it could track their exact location and movements in and around the exclusive 3-mile artisanal fishing grounds, but has repeatedly failed to do so (21,31,32,24,50).
153. Indicator 3.2 - At the start of the project only 5.6% (6,187ha) of the Moskitia was protected by ICF-approved forest management plans that allowed from timber extraction. After considerable difficulties due to delays from ICF, the total area of the Rus Rus and Mábita reserve management (97,400 ha) was finalized. The proposal, which is based on a petition from the local communities that makes it clear that they will accept the plan as long as it will not restrict their rights to traditional resource harvesting, is still awaiting ICF's approval. The total area proposed for protection is *three times* greater than the target indicator established in the Logical-framework analysis (UNDP 2009). Mábita proposed (to the ICF) that the area surrounding the community should be declared a protected area proposal, and this has full support from MASTA and FINZMOS, given that terceros have colonized large areas around Mábita-Rus Rus, destroying the landscapes and now, threatening the scientific tourism initiative.
154. Indicator 3.3 – The Karatasca Management Plan began establishing and demarcating no fishing areas with signs, buoys and guidelines in 2012 in seven of the ten targeted critical habitats⁴⁵, which were designated by local people (including women). By the end of the project the communities had set aside *twenty-nine no take areas*, nearly tripling the original target. It was learned that it was futile and expensive to install signs and buoys in these new areas, given that most people knew and respected the areas, and that radio spots, education and awareness efforts were more cost-effective (PIR 2015).
155. Indicator 3.4 The project trained more than twice (69) the targeted number of shareholders and half of these were women in activities such as beekeeping (funded by Pronegocios), operation of a portable sawmill for the Kiuhsi Pusalka and Rumdín cooperative, environmental education and 12 people who were trained as ecotourism guides.
156. Indicator 3.5 Over 700 fisherfolk and grade school students (men and women) were trained in or made aware sustainable fishing practices by the end of the project (PIR 2015), over 20 times more than was planned. This included community shareholders trained to be para-technicians and record biometric data for scale-fish and jellyfish, fishermen trained to use *supiera nets* and in the principles of responsible fishing, while one student was given a scholarship to the UNAH and part the practical work involved conducting environmental education with around 200 school children, focusing on the importance and sustainable management of the lagoon system, mangroves and the fishery resources. The project also organized and funded three large inter-community assemblies to inform fishers the maximum sustainable catch limits the jellyfish capture fishery (21).
157. It is expected that training will eventually produce a change in behavior and the work done of the medusa fishery in Káukira offers a good example of a solid outcome that was not foreseen. After two years of studies of population dynamics and other technical aspects supported by the UNAH,

⁴⁵These off limit areas included the channel between the lagoon with Laguna Siksa Auratá, the Lagoon Bar between Aurata and Karataska Lagoon, the Warunta river mouth at Laguna Auratá, the junction of Karataska Bar and the Caribbean Sea, the entrance Channel Sitawala Lagoon (next to Karatasca Bar), Prumnitara Bay and the area facing Prumnitara community.

⁴⁶This includes distributing a map showing the no fishing zones

the fishery generates over 46 million lempiras and over 6000 direct employees over a six month period.

158. **Indicator 3.6** Before the project began, there were no laws, regulatory instruments or official procedures for natural resource management that integrated the indigenous/Miskito perspective, even though Honduras has ratified the Conventions on Biological Diversity and ILO#169, respectively. By 2013 the new fishery law was being debated by the National Congress, but none of the indigenous norms were ever institutionalized by the government by end of the project. If approved, the communities could not only monitor the effectiveness of implementing their plan and to report any infractions of the nationally approved regulations.
159. The project worked closely with local shareholders, MASTA and FINZMOS to develop indigenous norms harvesting forest resources, but this has not been approved, thereby highlighting the importance of developing solid outcome indicators, rather than leaving the unfinished products at the output level.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

160. This section examines the degree to which the executing agency formulated an exit strategy and the likelihood that the project will continue to deliver benefits now that funding has ended. This includes whether national budgetary funds have been allocated to continue the project, the capacity of local and government shareholders

EQ 5. Has the project developed a coherent exit strategy and what is the likelihood that the project will continue delivering environmental, social and economic benefits without new GEF support?

161. Although the ProDoc did not contain an exit strategy, UNDP tirelessly extended its impressive work to create funding synergies with multiple donors with a vision of creating the *Alliance for the Moskitia* that would continue to build on the Moskitia Biodiversity project's achievements. On April 11, 2016 the United Nations Office for the Honduran Moskitia was inaugurated in Puerto Lempira, where they officially signed a public document that launched the Alliance for the Development of the Moskitia, within a framework agreement which was signed by the President of Honduras, the Representative of the UN, and Representatives of the Swiss and German Development Cooperation. It is noteworthy that in addition to lay the foundation for a model for biodiversity conservation in the region, Project Moskitia has also laid the groundwork for a continuous process directed toward improving the well-being of the local population, as well as led to important spinoffs that have not only positioned the Moskitia within the purview of UNDP, but also bi-lateral development agencies from Switzerland and Germany, who work closely with the Government of Honduras. Although the challenges are formidable, the signed agreement is significant and point to a genuine commitment to continue the work started by Project Moskitia.
162. The agreement is the culmination of a long process initiated by UNDP and has far exceeded the GEF project's expected achievements by going far beyond a GEF project by continuing the work of improving the population's well-being and in doing so, substantially reduce the pressures that threatened the region's biodiversity. The Alliance is heavily focused on creating viable governance mechanisms, became a reality in April 2016, when President Hernandez added the

⁴⁷ One exception is that Article 45 of the Forestry Law makes a passing mention of the need to include traditional forms of management.

- government's signature and commitment to the initiative. Although details are not fully available, the government stated that it had allocated funds from the national budget to support the Strategy which is heavily funded by COSUDE and the German government. While the government's performance throughout the BD project was weak, MASTA leaders have gone on record that they are optimistic about the initiative and that the government will finally take action to remove the terceros from their territorial lands. The President also stated that he had consulted with his top advisors and instructed them to offer only what they could deliver and to avoid rhetoric.
163. With the presence of the new UNDP regional office for the Moskitia, the region can enjoy full support to ensure that the office will function with sufficient human and financial resources for several years. Thus, it is envisioned that the new office will continue to work closely with MASTA; FINZMOS and the municipal government and further strengthen the GEF approach to Biodiversity Conservation in the Moskitia.
164. While considerable strategy has been developed for many local shareholders, particularly in the Karatasca Lagoon, Mábita-Rus-Rus and Auka, there is still a need to improve the effectiveness of forestry management. Local leaders and resource users have benefitted significantly from applying new knowledge (e.g., the medusa, the alternative fishing gear, protecting macaw) and this is likely to be strengthened when the Inter-Governmental Commission begins to take steps to remove threats to the security of the population and biodiversity.
165. Although the ProDoc lacked an exit strategy, UNDP committed itself not only to ensure that new funding sources would support badly needed governance mechanisms, but also to engage the government in the new Alliance for the Moskitia, in which the President's office committed its full financial and political support to the initiative. This initiative will receive substantial financial support for a decade and it will allow the benefits achieved by the UNDP-GEF project to continue expanding and help protect the rich bio- and cultural diverse Moskitia.
166. In sum, the overall likelihood of financial and socio-economic sustainability is Likely (L), whereas questions remain about the institutional framework and governance, environmental sustainability, all of which are rated Moderately Likely (ML).

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

EQ 6. To what degree did the project create strategic financial and social partnership synergies to strengthen, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation?

167. As mentioned earlier, the UNDP team was effective in building synergies with various donors and to facilitate funding from Pronegocios. USAID-MAREA, UNEP.-Mangroves, GOAL provided important funding of projects and for building capacity for local shareholders to manage their resources in ways that were complimentary to Project Moskitia. . The close interaction between the project and the WB-funded PATH program, especially in Katainasta where 'local geographers' were trained in participatory mapping in collaboration with Francisco Morazán Pedagogical University (UPNFM) UNAH and the University of Kansas (see <http://www.prmapping.res.ku.edu/honduras.html>). Together with PATH, the project has also created a table of donors and organizations working in the Moskitia with the aim of improving inter-agency collaboration (UNDP 2015). Without these synergies, the project would have likely fallen far short of its objective and outcomes.
168. The project heavily involved women and youth throughout the planning and implementation process and many received valuable training that improved their capacity to earn income and to protect their territorial resources. The project received support from UNDP's Gender Division

- (*Área Práctica de Género*) for training of local shareholders and the project's technical team on gender-related issues and according to numerous interviews, this was a key ingredient that further strengthened the trust the Miskito leaders had with UNDP and it also built a new bridge for engaging important actors whose future is now in their hands. It could have focused more on involving disabled lobster divers who have been paralyzed from unsustainable fishing techniques.
169. The Monitoring of the project included: 1) Inception Workshop and its report; 2) Table of Risks; 3) Quaterly Reports; 4) Annual Operational Plans; 5) site visits; 6) Project Steering Committee Meetings; 7) the mid-term evaluation; 8) Annual Audits; and 9) the Terminal Evaluation. Although this followed the GEF Excel template in 2012, an ad hoc information sheet was used for the remainder of the reporting periods. It appears that although they provided excellent information, there were numerous gaps. Based on interviews, the use of PIRs for M&E only involved a few people and the fact that they were in English further limited access to many people.
170. The use of these monitoring tools notwithstanding, the TE finds it surprising that there was no results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system incorporated into the project. The failure to incorporate more robust and SMART indicators, as well as the weak assumptions and risk analysis made it difficult to apply a systematic adaptive management approach that is based on learning from successes and mistakes and correcting to improve the pilot approaches that were used (see Billé 2010 for an overview of developing pilot projects without measuring change. This was a major shortcoming and it prevented the project from systematically capturing lessons learned and correcting the project's course at the end of each reporting period in a timely and proactive manner.

7. IMPACTS

171. The ET has examined the direct and indirect primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the project and its different experimental interventions an intervention, and whether they were intended or not (OECD/DAC 2002), as well as the social, environmental and economic changes that can be attributed to the project. In terms of the primary environmental goal of the GEF, the results were variable, with the 5,000 hectares of pine forest under management and red macaw populations steady in and around Mábita, while the Karatasca Lagoon has a management plan and the management interventions are leading to direct impacts. Both projects have reduced pressures on biodiversity and other ecosystem services, improved planning, management and led to better protection. The challenge ahead lies in the degree to which the new producers will expand the social benefits they are generating and carrying on their businesses without external support (PIR 2013). This notwithstanding, it is important to underscore the failure of the ProDoc's forestry management initiative using cooperatives, rather than the community forestry development model. This failure was not related to a lack of execution, but the fact that it was based on a flawed model (most cooperatives in the Moskitia have failed) that faced insurmountable obstacles that also include weaknesses in government institutions responsible for forestry and fisheries.
172. Although Mábita currently protects less than 1% of its total area, the model is replicable and it has gained much interest as an economic incentive for shareholders in Mokorón and Auka. However, the Karatasca Lagoon Management plan and its incipient implementation has protected one of Central America's largest coastal lagoons and the associated biodiversity. The less than positive impacts in the cooperatives and remaining terrestrial communities are largely due to the lack of support from the government in creating security for its citizens and enforcing

- laws that the Miskitos are unable to because of the heavily armed *terceros* showing that they will not let local communities stand in their way. This is clearly out of the project's control and should the government keep its promise to secure the territory from invaders, there is a high likelihood that the best practices developed by the project could be replicated and that new ones could take shape in those communities.
173. GEF funding has also influenced social-economic conditions of the Miskito communities by introducing biodiversity-friendly income generating activities such as scientific tourism, alternative fisheries (e.g., the medusa) to take pressure off stressed fish species and created more than 6000 jobs during a six month period each year. These local changes of human behavior toward their environment are indeed contributing to global biodiversity impacts and the conditions are ripe for testing, replicating and scaling up these good practices in other areas of the Moskitia, including Nicaragua, where similar BD losses are taking place rapidly with little government intervention.
174. The project also contributed toward setting the Moskita on a path for meeting three Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely Goal 1, but reducing poverty by creating alternative sources of income in Mábita, Kruta, the batana production, and by building the resilience for food security in the Karatasca Lagoon and Auka, Goal 2, promoting gender equality by building the capacity for women to strengthen their role in the fishery sector and play a key role in the financial and administrative issues related to the Mábita scientific tourism project. And the project appears to be on its way to meet Goal 7, by ensuring environmental sustainability for the fisheries and red macaw populations in the pine forests. Given that there are many unknowns about the future direction of the new project at this time, the project's contribution to MDG is rated as being satisfactory (S).
175. However, the two greatest achievements of the project are related to its support in helping the Miskito Territorial Councils obtain clear land titles that can be used to legally defend their territories and the recent institutionalization of the Alliance for the Development of the Moskitia, which will not only continue to improve biodiversity conservation with guaranteed funding of the next decade, but it will strengthen the most important ingredients for making the project's achievements sustainable through improved governance and citizen security, improved job and alternative economic opportunities, a new vision of indigenous people in Honduras after decades of marginalization and improved health and sanitation. These conditions are essential for ensuring lasting biodiversity conservation in what will become genuinely productive landscapes in the Moskitia.

7. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

176. Conserving biodiversity within the isolated Moskitia's productive landscapes is a long-term process that requires considerably more time than the 4 year GEF funding period and GEF funding mechanisms, especially the Small Grants Program (SGP), which created some basic conditions and a solid platform upon which to build Project Moskitia. The project was instrumental in helping Miskito shareholders overcome formidable challenges, which included: a) a change in government after the *coup de état* of 2009; b) high levels of social insecurity created by illegally occupying *terceros* grabbing and clearing land; and c) limited engagement in the project by the government institutions who gave little support to deal with key issues for which they have the mandate to confront. Despite these obstacles, the project was able to contribute to creating greater land tenure security by facilitating the acquisition of communal land titles,

strengthening stronger territorial governance and women groups, good practices on conserving biodiversity and managing natural resources sustainably. These and other enabling conditions are highly likely to result in positive, long-term social, economic and environmental changes that could not have happened without GEF support and the Resident Representative of the UNDP Country Office in Honduras. These conditions were fundamental for securing ample, medium-term funding for the ALLIANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOSKITIA, supported by the Swiss and German governments, UNDP and a new level of commitment from the highest level of the Honduran government who has allocated significant funds from the national budget. Based on these achievements, the ET rates the project *Highly Satisfactory*.

177. The project was *Highly Relevant* to the needs of the Miskito people and for protecting the region's rich, but threatened biodiversity. It was consistent with Government Plans and Strategies, particularly the Plan Nación and the Strategy for Conserving Biodiversity, it fit well with UNDP's Strategy and Vision for Honduras and GEF-4's Strategic Program (SP4 and SP5), which addresses Strengthening Policy and Regulatory Frameworks for Mainstreaming Biodiversity and fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services, respectively. However, addressing these issues alone would not have led to meet the project's objectives and outcomes without improving governance and confronting barriers to effective implementation.
178. The ProDoc was developed with excellent background information and good baselines for several species. However, the logical framework was weak and after reconstructing the Theory of Change (ToC) framework, the Evaluation Team (ET) noted that the ProDoc's intervention logic did not take the project on the most efficient path toward meeting its objective. In fact, those outcomes were actually formulated as outputs. It also identified that the assumptions and risks were superficial and that the measures used for mitigating those risks were inadequate. Especially noteworthy was the failure to note that the model for basing alternative income-generating activities on the forestry cooperative model has repeatedly failed for many reasons, including that it benefits relatively few families compared with the more appropriate Community Forestry Development model, the high transaction costs and the poor oversight and enforcement of regulations by ICF.
179. Although these weaknesses, and the lack of a dynamic monitoring and evaluation system made it difficult to capture lessons learned and carry out adaptive management in a systematic manner, the UNDP did an extraordinary job of pulling actors together after the coup and both were especially instrumental in creating synergies that helped move the project beyond the impasse of the conflict between Miskito leaders, the government and in avoiding bloodshed related to the conflict between the residents of Auka and the terceros. From interviews it became clear that not only does a large number of UNDP staff have up to date knowledge about the project, but they are highly committed to taking the experiences from the project to new levels. This is especially the case of the technical and overall project coordinators, who have an unusually strong command of the problems and a forward-looking vision on how to build on the work that the project started.
180. One of the driving forces behind this refreshing energetic approach is the high level of commitment from the UNDP Resident Representative, who has visited the project several times and spent time the pilot communities. UNDP also added value to the implementation of this project and the ability to link this project to other initiatives, including support from different donors and key shareholders. It effectively led the project after having to assume the direct implementation modality after the *coup de et at*. The evaluation team therefore rates UNDP's

- performance as *Highly Satisfactory* (HS) and there are many elements from this project that set the highest standard for future UNDP-GEF partnerships.
181. Despite repeated calls for government assistance to reduce pressures on biodiversity, the government provided little support and it failed to take action until the end of the project. For example, ICF has ignored repeated calls to follow the proposer legal channels to remove illegal colonists and prevent further bloodshed, while DIGEPESCA offered little assistance to help fishermen develop the tools for confronting the collapse of the Karatasca Lagoon fishery. These are major reasons that the project was unable to achieve all of its outcomes and the lack of government intervention to confront these problems created an unlevel playing field from the start and the ET rates the government ownership in the project as being *Unsatisfactory* (U).
 182. Fortunately, UNDP, FINZMOS, MOPAWI and several communities worked tirelessly to continue moving forward despite the odds against them. However, the GoH has now realized that it has to be actively involved if the Alliance for the Moskitia is going to avoid repeating the errors and building on the successes attained by Project Moskitia, and MASTA and UNDP are encouraged by the renewed commitment by the GoH. One of the most successful interventions was the development of the Karatasca Lagoon Management plan that integrates both, traditional forms of fishery resource management and government regulations. After being on the verge of collapse, the fishery now appears to be recovering thanks to many of the management strategies that were developed by the project.
 183. The project management team also did an exemplary job of overcoming many of the financial disbursement and logistical challenges that are inherent with working in such a remote region that is badly lacking in infrastructure. Although fund disbursements were low (66%) early in the project cycle, UNDP managed to have a highly satisfactory disbursement rate of 95% at the end of the project. However, the project design failed to formulate a robust set of project risks and this was one reason that the overall implementation efficiency was only rated as being satisfactory. Although the project did a remarkable job of adapting to continuous challenges and setbacks, the response time could have been enhanced by having a hands-on monitoring and evaluation system that could also help generate lessons learned based on the successes and failures of different project intervention strategies.
 184. Two important Outcome #1 indicators suggest that i) the Karatasca Lagoon management plan is contributing to a recovery in it depleted artisanal fishery; and ii) forest fires were reduced around Mábita, but not in other areas. For some reason, none of the \$40,000 in tax savings were re-invested into protecting biodiversity despite demands by MASTA to the Director of ICF, no biodiversity-friendly business were started in the forestry sector, nor was there a diversification in the timber species extracted and commercialized from the forests. The model using cooperatives was not functional and is not widely accepted by Miskito people and the majority of them have failed in the Moskitia.

7.1 Lessons learned

185. Lesson Learned #1: Conserving biodiversity conservation through alleviating poverty (and vice-versa) in remote areas like the Moskitia is filled with many uncertainties and challenges that must be understood and addressed. This not only requires the creation of biodiversity-friendly jobs and a coherent policy framework for biodiversity conservation, but also an environment that is regulated by credible and accountable institutions that enforce the laws. Effective governance structures and mechanisms are crucial. Social, economic and environmental sustainability are

- unlikely without these elements in place and the best procedures and planning for biodiversity protection are of little value unless environmental and human rights are effectively enforced. This lesson can be applied to many GEF projects working in similar remote areas with weak traditions of governance. runs a high risk of failure unless greater attention is placed on reducing inequality resulting from traditionally weak governance lacking accountability, leadership and balanced enforcement of the rule of law.
186. Lesson Learned #2: Although direct implementation models can be effective in the absence of government ownership, they should always be a last resort option. However, UNDP has clearly demonstrated that with a strong commitment from the Resident Representative and its staff, it is possible to create a model for filling gaps in government leadership, strategically and relentlessly forging a strong, three-way partnership process for engaging the government, a responsive and engaged executing agency and integrating shareholders and beneficiaries in that process. Without such a partnership, GEF projects are likely to fall far short of their objectives and the investments will probably be poorly spent.
187. Lesson Learned #3: A systematic approach to adaptive management can help reduce the reaction time to correct errors in intervention models, as well as replicate successful actions. Such an approach, linked to a responsive M&E system could have helped systematically collected lessons learned from the overall implementation process and these could have aided in increasing the project's overall efficiency.
188. Lesson Learned #4: Building productive, alternative income-earning projects that involve cooperatives in the Moskitia are likely to fall short of expectations due to the historical failures of forestry cooperatives. Instead, family units are the most acceptable form of collaboration, as was shown for the eco-tourism project with red macaws in Mábita and the jellyfish project in Kauma. Until the government resolves the final taxing scheme for Miskito territories (private versus territorial land classifications), it will impossible to develop a model for reinvesting the savings into biodiversity conservation.
189. Lesson Learned #5: Effective legal and political conditions require a government that is accountable for its decisions and creating the right set of enabling conditions to ensure that these conditions are solidly entrenched. Such enabling conditions can take many forms and may require context-specific implementation modalities that may take much longer than the GEF-allocated funding period to blossom fully, especially in remote project areas that face formidable financial and logistical limitations in delivering results. In the absence of a government that is fully engaged and supportive, giving the executing agency the lead to employ the implementation modality may provide unexpected benefits that may have heretofore not been considered by the GEF and its executing partners. Without the active, hands-on and persistent involvement by the country UNDP office, the project would have likely failed.
190. Lesson Learned #6: Effective, fluid and transparent communication is fundamental for building confidence between a project and its beneficiaries by building on cultural governance networks, bolstering their knowledge about the overall vision of the project. Getting communities to express a vision of the kind of future can play an important role in communication how the project can link to that vision and the Plan de Vida was an important tool for achieving that goal.
191. Lesson Learned #7: Although it is not a new concept, the project provides an excellent example of how shareholders can be empowered through blending their culture-specific knowledge with new knowledge, and engaging them in constructing plans to manage their future, which relies heavily on protecting biodiversity and other ecosystem services. However, without a champion

with close connections to both the local level and the highest levels of government in order to move the entire process forward patiently and tirelessly, future GEF projects are likely to fall short of their goals. The direct implementation modality is an effective mechanism for achieving this only when there is a high level of commitment from the executing agency's leader.

192. Lesson Learned #8: In the absence of an exit strategy, strong synergies with an eye toward securing continued support to build upon a project's achievements is essential. The successful formulation and subsequent signing of the Alliance for the Moskitia was effectively the exit strategy that now guarantees the project another 10 years of financial and technical support. Also, the effective performance of an executing agency can be instrumental - not only for attracting funds to continue a solid and meaningful initiative, but also to engage the highest levels of government in supporting the effective implementation of biodiversity conservation projects. However, lengthy delays in approving payments and contracting staff in remote areas can have a significant negative impact on project effectiveness, as was demonstrated during the last year when there was little reacting to a serious disbursement bottleneck by the country office.
193. Lesson Learned #9 Although not a new concept, a holistic project that integrates women and other marginalized members of society is a key ingredient for connecting many of the missing links that are essential for delivering long-term benefits to society and the environment.
194. Lesson Learned #10 Unless a robust M&E system is developed from the outset of the project, it becomes difficult to correct actions and capture lessons learned that led to those revised actions in a timely and proactive manner.

7.2 Recommendations

195. Recommendation #1: Future interventions to conserve biodiversity and alleviate poverty in the Moskitia must prioritize the insertion of multiple levels of Governance (e.g., transparency and inclusive participation in decision-and policy-making, leadership accountability) into the project design. This governance must be strengthened at the national, regional and local levels, and it should especially focus on reducing inequities in resource allocation and other root causes of biodiversity loss in the region. New projects also require a robust ToC framework that includes well-formulated outcomes, well defined risks and assumptions and mitigation measures to confront them.
196. Recommendation #2: Future donor-funded projects should develop both incentives and penalties for engaging partner countries to assume greater ownership and they must insist that projects are designed in a way that will help overturn the general lack of political will that is common in these kinds of projects. Governance is a key ingredient, but it must focus heavily on fostering greater accountability on the part of government shareholders.
197. Recommendation #3: Future GEF projects should develop a responsive, results-based M&E system that is capable of detecting failures early on in the social-cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of the project and correcting them on a timely basis, rather than waiting for a mid-term or terminal evaluation. It would be invaluable for the executing agencies to have such an integrated, results-based M&E system built into the project design and using it from the time of startup in order to be in a good position to correct any issues identified by the project's required mid-term evaluation, rather than having a time lag that complicates corrections during the final months of a project.
198. Recommendation #4: Future alternative income-generating projects in the Moskitia should focus on working at the family or kinship level using the Community Forestry Development model, rather than the failed forestry cooperative modality. New projects should also work to develop

- sustainable financing models that can re-invest tax savings into biodiversity conservation activities and the mechanism for collecting and reallocating those tax savings must be transparent and accountable to all shareholders.
199. Recommendation #5: The project offers a model for future GEF projects facing logistical challenges for achieving results in remote areas. Engaging the executing agency in the direct implementation model should be explored carefully under such conditions when government support is weak or non-existent.
 200. Recommendation #6: Future projects designed for the Moskitia must be built on transparent governance mechanisms that promote accountability and strengthen local leadership, build effective transversal mechanisms that clearly communicate how the project contributes toward strengthening the local visions for the future. Only when these basic building blocks are in place, can local shareholders develop the kind of trust and vision for actively engaging them in planning and managing their ecosystems.
 201. Recommendation #7: Future GEF projects located in remote parts of the world where human security, long distances to intervention areas, low levels of education, language and cultural considerations areas must be flexible in allocating additional financial and human resources to deal with these conditions. Such complex projects are also likely to require longer than the relatively the typical 4 year funding period tied to donor allocation cycles, and therefore a longer-term commitment should be strongly considered. It is recommend that the direct implementation modality be carefully considered in these types of projects, but only when the executing agency is ready to give its complete commitment to seeing the process to its completion, as the UNDP office in Honduras has done
 202. Recommendation #8: Future projects should build an exit strategy into their design. However, giving that the circumstances at the time of exit may change, it is crucial for the executing agency to build synergies with other donors and the host government from the outset of project implementation in order to prepare for contingencies should the planned exit strategy fail.
 203. Recommendation #9: Future projects in the Moskitia should further strengthen opportunities for women to play an even greater role in building resilient ecosystems. They should also integrate other marginalized members of Miskito society, particularly handicapped divers who have few opportunities for employment. The local resource mapping data developed by the University of Kansas, MASTA and the Pedagogical University could be invaluable for a more integrated M&E system that uses baselines that are collected by resource users and involving them in tracking changes using local knowledge.
- Recommendation #10: The UNDP Country Office must improve their project administration capabilities, particularly when it comes to streamlining financial disbursements and ensuring that there is a permanent regional administrator in place at all times. This was a serious impediment to the performance of the technical team and it reduced their effectiveness in an already complex working situation. The recommendation specifically applies to the UNDP country office and any future work to be done outside of Tegucigalpa.

The table below summarizes the overall rating performance of the project:

| Project Performance Rating | | |
|--|---------------|---|
| Criteria | Rating | Comments |
| Monitoring & Evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall quality of M&E | S | M&E documents were in place, although the reporting on PIRs was sporadic. However, the absence of a results-based approach is a major limitation for being able to collect lessons and adapt in a systematic manner. |
| M&E design at project startup | S | The log frame was in place, although few of the indicators were SMART and assumptions were superficial, thereby making it difficult to conduct a results-based M&E. |
| M&E plan implementation | MS | M&E documents were in place, although the reporting on PIRs was sporadic, but there was no results-based M&E as generally practiced by other UN agencies |
| IA & EA: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall Quality of Project Implementation/Execution | S | The project technical team and the UNDP Country Office Res. Rep. were the major reasons that the project is rated as satisfactory. The conditions for implementation were extremely challenging and it is a tribute to these actors, MASTA and FINZMOS that the project was able to achieve as much as it did, although it did not reach its full potential for reasons below. |
| Implementation Agency Execution | MS | Neither ICF nor DIGEPSCA provided the necessary and agreed upon support to the project. This created major challenges that would have otherwise ensured failure were it not for the actions by the UN country office during the last year, |
| Executing Agency Execution | S | The lengthy delay (approx. one year) in approving a project administrator for the regional office in Puerto Lempira led to inefficient financial disbursement and this affected the effectiveness of the project's technical team already working under very difficult and dangerous conditions in the field. However, the strong leadership of the Resident Rep of the UNDP country office was a major factor in turning the project around during the final year and creating conditions that make financial sustainability likely. |

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|---|----|---|
| Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall quality of project outcomes | S | The project achieved many of its outcomes |
| Relevance: Relevant (R) or not relevant (NR) | R | The project was highly relevant to the Miskito Region and to conservation efforts to protect this Central American biodiversity hotspot. |
| Effectiveness | S | Given the challenging conditions in the region, it is remarkable that the project team was able to help the project effectively meet many of its expected results. However, this effectiveness was reduced by the weak government support and the inefficient financial disbursement by the executing agency. |
| Efficiency | MU | Overall the efficiency was good and disbursements were timely until just after mid-term when the regional project administrator resigned. It took the country office one year to hire someone to fill the position and during that time, excessive bureaucratic procedures seriously reduced the overall effectiveness of the |

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|---|----|---|
| | | project and severely disrupted morale of the stakeholders who were unable to receive crucial funds in a timely manner. |
| Sustainability: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Unlikely (U) | | |
| Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability | L | The recently approved Alliance for Development of the Moskitia with support from at least two key donors will substantially reduce risks to sustainability because in addition to providing alternative livelihoods and incomes, it will have a strong focus on governance. The fact that the national government has agreed to commit funds for the project is an important indicator that the level of risks will be greatly reduced. However, caution should be advised, as there was a commitment (albeit a small financial one) for Project Moskitia bring considerable funding for the next decade and allows the project to continue developing and strengthening many good practices and to test new interventions. |
| Financial resources | L | The Alliance for Development of the Moskitia will bring considerable funding for the next decade and allows the project to continue developing and strengthening many good practices and to test new interventions. |
| Socio-economic | L | The creation of new income and livelihood opportunities, as well as improved governance makes this likely. |
| Institutional framework and governance | ML | This could go either way and it remains to be seen at this time. And if there is a new government, questions remain about whether they will continue on the same path as set forth by the Alliance for the Moskitia. |
| Environmental | ML | The same argument used above applies here. |
| Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N) | | |
| Environmental status improvement | S | The protection of the macaw population and their habitat, as well as the approach for creating more sustainable fishing in the immense Karatasca Lagoon were major achievements |
| Environmental stress reduction | MS | The level of environmental stress is still high, mainly due to the presence of terceros, the lack of jobs, poor education and health services. Until these are addressed, the problem will continue to be volatile. |
| Progress toward stress/status change | S | The project made some major contribution to move forward, although effectiveness was greatly compromised by the weak government support and inefficiency in financial disbursement during the final year of implementation. |
| Overall Project Results | S | It is remarkable that the project achieved a satisfactory status, given the numerous barriers described above. It is a tribute to the technical team and the UNCO Resident Rep and her staff during the final months of the project, and the fact that the project has now contributed some key enabling conditions and good lessons that will be built upon and move the original objectives forward in the next decade through the new Alliance for the Moskitia. |

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