

Management Response Mid-Term Review UNDP/GEF ECOVALOR (PIMS 5760)

Project title:

"Incorporating multiple environmental considerations and their economic implications into the management of landscapes, forests and production sectors in Cuba (ECOVALOR)".

Project PIMS #:

UNDP PIMS# 5760

Midterm Review Mission Completion Date:

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Context, background and findings

The project has presented delays in execution due to the incidence of sanitary measures due to the Covid 19 pandemic, which has made it impossible to move to intervention sites and the beginning of TSA studies. Also, It was identified other risk: the recrudescence of the economic, financial and commercial blockade of the US Government, which affects key activities of importing technological equipment needs to the technical activities at the pilot interventions sites.

As per the Final Report of the Mid-Term Review, six (6) recommendations have been formulated, of which four (4) were accepted and eleven (11) management measures were proposed.

Midterm Review recommendation 1.

Strengthen the inter-institutional dimension. UMEP and more broadly the CITMA Directorate General, in coordination with the NSC, should continue to strengthen the inclusion of economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services in the Natural Resources and Environment Macro-Programme and spatial planning. At the same time, they should identify other inter-institutional standards, instances and processes where the vision and results of the project can be incorporated. The National Assembly's Committee on Science and Environmental Affairs could, for example, be an ally.

Management response:

Evaluate the possibilities of including the economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services in the country's Macroprograms with a profile related to this topic. (*Recommendation accepted*).

Key action(s)	Time frame		Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
				Comments	Status
1. Evaluate the ways of including the economic valuation of BSE in the macro-programs of the country.	01/01/2022	30/9/2024	DGMA-UMEP	This process is systematic and permanent to the extent that work is done to implement the approved public policies. These actions are consistent with the Specific Objectives of the Natural Resources and Environment Axis of the PNDES and therefore their execution have play within that format, promoted by the Macro Program.	Under develop. Within the POA of the Project, DGMA will report annually on the progress of the issue.

Midterm Review recommendation 2.

Broaden the sectoral horizon. UMEP in coordination with the NDC should seek to link more sectors, such as housing and equipment construction, water and sanitation, electricity and transport. Although, given the budgetary limitations, since it is not part of the project design and must be followed during implementation, the project cannot implement pilots in these sectors, it can consider them in the revision of the legal framework and invite their representatives to the trainings, at least to build the foundations so that in the future these sectors can join the path taken by the six prioritised sectors in a more determined manner.

Management response:

This recommendation is not accepted. The project defined at the time the key sectors with which it would work, as well as the implementation commitments for each one, as agreed in the National Terms of Reference. However, all the sectors recommended by the evaluators are considered in the results of land use planning, where work has been done on the environmental planning models of the five municipalities involved and on updating

the Provincial Plan for Land and Urban Planning of the Matanzas province. During this process, we have been working with all the sectors and economic activities present in these municipalities, including the private sector, to formulate the proposals to be included in the updating of the Municipal Planning Plans, which will include their legal support once end process. In the case of the update of the Provincial Scheme of Territorial and Urban Planning of the Matanzas province, should be into account that all sectors and activities of this territory are part of this process where they participate in a participatory manner with their proposals.

Key action(s)	Time frame		Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
				Comments	Status

Midterm Review recommendation 3.

Extend the horizon of economic actors. UMEP should analyse how the project can involve the private sector beyond the agricultural and fisheries sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, in order to promote the sustainable use of natural resources. To this end, UMEP, in coordination with UMAP, should examine the challenges that the emergence of this actor implies for the management of natural resources and identify ways in which the project can promote a more sustainable use of natural resources by this actor, defining specific awareness-raising and training strategies, among other activities

Management response:

This recommendation is not accepted. Stakeholder from private sector are already involved in the project activities at the pilot sites experiences level (agricultural: producers who apply Sustainable Land Management principles, fishing: fishermen who apply environmentally sustainable production practices such as sponge and oyster farming). In addition, the project is currently working with the private tourism sector in different locations of the five provinces involved in the project. Also, representatives of the private sector from other sectors have participate in the exercises already carried out as part of the process of updating the Municipal Territorial and Urban Planning Plans of the five municipalities involved in the project. For example: In Viñales and Ciénaga de Zapata municipalities, which are sites of important development of the private sector related to tourism activities (provision of services to the tourism sector and closely related to the nature tourism), the private sector have participated in different phases of the development model definition, the environmental planning, and in a participatory exercise already in the concluding phase of these proposals. For the other three municipalities involved in this project's activity, the process is in its first stage of characterization and the private sector is considered part of the actors in the process.

Key action(s)	Time frame		Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
				Comments	Status

Midterm Review recommendation 4.

Accelerate implementation and monitor progress. In coordination with UNDP and the CRC, UMEP should accelerate the implementation of the TSAs, particularly in the two sectors where progress is most limited. In addition to accelerating implementation, the PMU should closely monitor

progress in all components. Within one year of implementing the recommendations included in this report, the UMP should review whether and for how long an extension should be requested and begin to manage the process, if deemed necessary. This review should consider the capacity to meet the quantitative and qualitative targets, considering also the quality of the outputs.

Management response:

Execute the committed studies of Targeted Scenarios Analysis (TSA) at a rate of three (3) studies per year, beginning with those of the agricultural, conservation and hydrocarbon sectors. *(Recommendation accepted)*

Key action(s)	Time frame		Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
				Comments	Status
1. Agree the schedule for the execution of the TSA Studies between the Project Management Unit and UNDP. This schedule will define the TSA to be implemented immediately in 2022 and until 2024 in a staggered manner.	1/2/2022	31/7/2024	UMEP	This schedule does not only include the technical actions for the execution of each TSA study itself, but also the actions to create national capacities in the use of the tool, as well as communication and dissemination of results and awareness of key actors (as indicated by the UNDP TSA guideline).	Schedule prepared
2. Workshop on lessons learned on TSA studies developed within the framework of the ECOVALOR project	01/07/2024	05/07/2024	UMEP		

Midterm Review recommendation 5.

Strengthen project management. UMEP should i) strengthen the results framework, so that performance on all indicators can be measured and reporting on progress towards results can be strengthened⁴³; ii) update the social and environmental safeguards, including defining more precise risk management strategies, integrating more systematically climate change adaptation and mitigation of other emerging risks; iii) strengthen mainstreaming and mainstreaming of the project's results in the project's management; iv) strengthen the project's management and monitoring of the project's performance; v) strengthen the project's management of the project's results; iii) strengthening gender mainstreaming by strengthening gender analysis and developing a more detailed and specific gender action plan; and iv) documenting lessons learned. For UNDP, it is particularly

important to document lessons learned in relation to the development of TSA studies and the learning that has occurred in this project around the economic valorisation of natural resources in order to strengthen the exchange of these experiences at regional and global levels. Another aspect that should be documented is the definition of technical specifications for equipment based on pilot SLM practices and in the fisheries sector.

Management response:

Project management will be reviewed based on: i) the results framework, ii) social and environmental safeguards, iii) gender equity mainstreaming, and iv) documentation of lessons learned. *(Recommendation accepted)*

Key action(s)	Time frame		Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
				Comments	Status
1. Review and reformulation of the project's indicators	02/02/2022	30/04/2022	UMEP	Work is being done on the definition/selection of the instruments in which environmental considerations must be incorporated	Under develop
2. Review and update the social and environmental safeguards of the project, based on the new UNDP methodology, through a national consultancy	01/04/2022	30/06/2022	UMEP-PNUD-Consultor Nacional	Term of Reference (ToR) for a local consultancy have already been prepared, the National Consultant has been selected and the contract is to be signed by the parties	Under develop
3. Review and adjustment of the Gender Action Plan for the project implementation, guaranteeing gender mainstreaming in the project's activities, through a national consultancy	01/04/2022	30/06/2022	UMEP y Consultor Nacional	Work is being done on the identification of indicators to measure the Gender Action Plan	Under develop
4. Identification and compilation of	01/02/2022	30/06/2024	UMEP	Lessons learned have been compiled	Under develop

Lessons Learned, for publication at the end of the project					
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Midterm Review recommendation 6.

Continue to take advantage of external enabling conditions, and manage inhibiting ones. With regard to the former, UMEP, UMAP and UNDP should continue to create synergies with existing and emerging national and international projects, with a special focus on Biofin Phase II. In addition, the PMU and the NDC should continue to monitor the updating of the country's legal and programmatic framework. For example, among many other aspects, the project should influence the preparation of the hydrocarbon law, and the national oil spill contingency plan decrees. On the other hand, the UMP should carry out a review and update of the project products developed so far, the content of which has been affected by the monetary reordering and devaluation.

Management response:

Establish synergies focused on specific outputs of the Ecovalor project and other initiatives, programs and projects supported by international collaboration under develop in the country (BIOFIN CUBA II initiative, the OP-15 Country Association Program and the InfoGEO project). These alliances will form part of the project's Sustainability Strategy. *(Recommendation accepted)*

Key action(s)	Time frame		Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
				Comments	Status
1. Agree a common work schedule and carry out synergy actions between ECOVALOR and the BIOFIN II Initiative, within the framework of the review and update of the Environment National Fund (FNMA), the future implementation of green banking and the proposed financial scheme of	01/01/ 2022	31/12/2022	UMEP-DGMA	This action will be followed through the Financing Project for the Environment of the Natural Resources and Environment Macro Program, providing information on the progress	Under develop

the National System on Protected Areas (SNAP)					
2. Follow up on the synergy actions identified between ECOVALOR and the OP-15 Country Association Program, within the framework of updating and implementing economic-financial mechanisms and instruments in the agro-forestry sector, as per the agreed schedule	01/05/ 2022	3/9/2024	UMEP		Under develop
3. Follow up on the synergy actions identified between ECOVALOR and the InfoGEO project, within the framework of the platform created for the country's Environmental Information System, according to the agreed schedule	01/04/ 2022	3/9/2024	UMEP	Joint work program between both projects has already started. A collaboration agreement was signed between both projects.	Under develop
4. Evaluate outputs from the ECOVALOR project whose final	01/04/ 2022	3/9/2024	UMEP		Under develop

results could be affected in the framework of project implementation as a consequence of the monetary and exchange ordering process					
5. Develop Project Sustainability Strategy to ensure continuity and appropriation of the project's results after its closure.	01/09/ 2023	31/02/2024	UMEP		