**Management Response Terminal Evaluation UNDP/GEF project InfoGEO (PIMS 5727)**

**Project Title:** Integrating Rio Convention obligations into national priorities through the strengthening of information and knowledge management for improved planning and decision-making.

**Project PIMS #:** 5727

**Terminal Evaluation Completion Date:**

May 18th., 2022[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Management Response Completion Date:**

October 21th., 2022

**Elaborated by:**

Project Management Unit/ Instituto de Geografía Tropical (IGT) / Agencia de Medio Ambiente (AMA)

**Key actors which have contributed:**

UNDP

**Authorized by:**

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Team Leader

Nature, Climate and Energy / UNDP Cuba

**Background and conclusions:**

The project faced delays in its execution due to structural causes, externals to the implementation process: the extended preparation of the document 'National Terms of Reference' (which determine the start of the implementation of the Project, according to what is defined in national regulations); and the incidence of the sanitary measures adopted in the country due to the Covid 19 pandemic. In addition, the project was affected by delays caused by the intensification of the economic, financial, and commercial blockade of the US Government, which affects key activities of importing technological equipment.

In the Terminal Evaluation Final Report 15 recommendations have been formulated, 9 of which were admitted, and 11 management measures were proposed.

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| **1st Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Given the context in Cuba regarding the import of technological equipment, the operational risk linked to the procurement of such equipment faced by technological innovation and digital inclusion projects must be carefully considered and mitigated from the onset. Following this recommendation is especially important when (i) the equipment is expensive, specific and requires a technically advised procurement process; (ii) the provisioning of the equipment is essential for the success of the project (for example, meteorological and hydrological equipment, or computer servers for the establishment of IT centers). It is also recommended to seek technical consultancy support in complex procurement processes, systematically update bidding plans and constantly monitor them to detect and/or identify possible procurement delays. Given the limitations of goods imports, it is also suggested to consider, for example, the contracting, through UNDP, of international grade specialized consulting services from the private sector that would also include, as part of a package, the import of technological goods. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** Actions are proposed to be implemented by UNDP and by AMA as the Implementing Partner for the design and execution of new international cooperation initiatives. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 1.1-Share with national experts in charge of the formulation of new initiatives that contribute to digital transformation, the convenience of contract the national available specialized services, since the initial phase of project implementation, to advise on the diagnosis and design of technological solutions, as a previous step for the import of technological equipment. This will ensure technological sustainability in the different stages of the project. | Nov. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | AMA and UNDP |  |  |
| 1.2- Share with national experts which support the formulation of new projects the convenience of hiring specialized technical consultancy to support the development of complex procurement processes, with the aim of ensuring the speed of project execution. | Oct. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | AMA and UNDP |  |  |

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| **2nd Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  In order to accelerate innovation through new UNDP GEF projects in Cuba, involve in a much more intense way, Cuban non-state stakeholders, including civil society organizations (NGOs, cooperatives and companies), cooperatives and private sector companies, as well as international stakeholders, reinforcing innovation activities and this kind of recommendations in new environmental projects to follow on from InfoGEO | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** In this regard, it is commented that the Key Stakeholder Engagement Plan, as one of the documents that is part of the application of the Environmental and Social Safeguards tool, will enable compliance with this recommendation. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 2.1- Share with national experts who support the formulation of new projects, to strengthen the inclusion in the Involvement Plan of key actors of Cuban non-state actors -civil society organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, companies, small and medium-sized enterprises (MiPYMES)- as well as international actors. | Oct. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | AMA and UNDP |  |  |

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| **3rd Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Whenever a new project starts, it is very important that the project team conducts from the onset a critical and exhaustive review of the indicators to be worked on, including when the results framework of a project had been translated. The aim is to decide, on the basis of good project management practices, which indicators should be retained and which should be adjusted. This exercise should be carried out again after an MTR, and the changes should be effectively carried over to the next PIR. This lesson is very useful, especially for new projects | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was not accepted.** Although in general it is a totally pertinent recommendation for the implementation of international cooperation projects, in this case this recommendation is not accepted taking into account that:  - In the framework of the Initiation Workshop of the project, the Results Framework was presented, which was confirmed by the participants.  - Following up on the 4th recommendation of the Mid Term Review (4. Review the logical framework and combine in a single goal, the level of maturity that you want to achieve with an AIS designed from multiple perspectives, in a future scenario to meet the goals, considering the theory of change implicit in the objective and goals of the Project), a review and adjustment of indicators for the Project Results Framework was carried out (Modified the third target of indicator 1 and the wording of Indicator 3, both of component 1 of the project). This information was reported as part of Evidence 10 presented in the Project Implementation Report (PIR, 2021). | | | | | |
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| **4th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  When developing the TOC for new projects, consider the relationship between assumptions and project risks. This recommendation is presented mainly in the form of a Lesson Learned. In a well-crafted ToC, each of the project risks would reflect the possibility that a central assumption of the ToC will not be realized. We strongly recommend that new projects should follow the recommendations form the "GEF's 2020 TOC Primer", prepared by the STAP. See: Stafford Smith, M. 2020. Theory of Change Primer, A STAP Advisory Document. Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel to the Global Environment Facility. Washington, D.C. Nota: More recently, the STAP has also published the TOC Supplement with a brief literature review, an annotated bibliography and other useful content. Both the booklet and the supplement can be consulted here: https://www.stapgef.org/resources/advisory-documents/theorychange-primer | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** The updated Guide on Theory of Change will be shared with key stakeholders to ensure ownership for future formulations. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 4.1- Socialize the GEF's 2020 Theory of Change (TOC) Guide prepared by the STAP/GEF with the national teams involved in the formulation of projects, to facilitate their knowledge. | Oct. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | AMA and UNDP |  |  |
| 4.2- Ensure that the Terms of Reference for the hiring of international consultants who support the formulation of GEF projects make express reference to the updated GEF TOC Guide. | Oct. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | UNDP |  |  |

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| **5th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Ensure that environmental projects continue to contribute to collect and manage data, through the InfoGEO platform, articulating and collaborating in training activities for the generation of useful environmental information. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** As part of the Project's Exit Strategy, actions will be defined with the objective of "Directing the support of other international cooperation initiatives that promote the use of information technologies for environmental management, the involvement of communities and the confrontation of climate change, to guarantee their compatibility with the equipment and platform installed through INFOGEO". This will ensure that environmental projects continue to contribute to the collection and management of data through the InfoGEO platform, articulating and collaborating in training activities, for the generation of useful and relevant environmental information for the country. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 5.1-Propose that CITMA updates the Guide for the Development of Projects, for the purpose of including guidance related to the integration of the information generated by the projects to the Environmental Information System (SIA) platform. | Aug. 2022 | Mar. 2023 | AMA-IGT |  |  |

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| **6th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Correct the gender marker that appears in: https://open.undp.org/projects/00094885. The last time it was checked, on 06-Jun-2022, the gender marker of the project appeared as "G0" (G-zero), while in the PRODOC it had been labeled as "G1", which means that "equality of gender is an important and deliberate objective, but not the main reason for undertaking the project / program". | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** The information on the platform will be reviewed and adjusted, as appropriate. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 6.1-Review by the UNDP office and execute the corresponding actions to adjust / correct the gender marker on the platform. | Aug. 2022 | Oct. 2022 | UNDP |  | Implemented |

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| **7th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  For projects oriented towards digital inclusion, such as InfoGEO, it is important to clearly identify from the onset who will be the actual beneficiaries of capacity building activities and innovation, given that the number of beneficiaries can reach to thousands and even millions of people in this type of project. This is especially important in a context where learning, data gathering, and data analysis actions is being rapidly massified by elearning and automated data analysis / power-BI tools. According to Wikipedia, digital inclusion is the democratization of access to information and communication technologies (ICT) to allow the inclusion of everyone in the information society | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** During the formulation phase of new project, as part of the Key Stakeholder Engagement Plan, special emphasis will be placed on the beneficiaries of the projects that deepen the digital transformation, with the aim of ensuring differentiated attention to training needs and opportunities. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 7.1 Share with national experts who support the formulation of projects and the elaboration of the Key Stakeholder Engagement Plan, the importance of paying particular attention to the identification of the beneficiaries of projects that promote digital transformation, so that training opportunities are focused according to existing needs. | Dec. 2022 | Mar. 2023 | AMA and UNDP |  |  |

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| **8th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Consider the introduction of an open data policies in a new phase of development for InfoGEO in the postproject period. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** The idea of open data is since data should be freely available to all users in terms of being able to access, use and republish, without restrictions of copyright, patents or other control or ownership mechanisms. For this purpose, approval would be required by the General Directorate of Organization, Control, Information and Analysis (DGOCIA) of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), in correspondence with the information policy of this Ministry. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 8.1- According to the information policy of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) include within the governing document of the Environmental Information System a point that regulates the implementation of an open data policy in a new phase of InfoGEO development. | Dec. 2022 | Jun. 2023 | DGOCIA |  |  |

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| **9th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Although the implementation modality is Full-NIM, we recommend projects should be able to request support from UNDP to advance with complex procurement services in certain cases. In future projects, this possibility should be considered. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was not accepted.** The scope of implementation support services to be provided by the Country Office has been assessed. Based on the reinforced procedures for project monitoring agreed between GEF and UNDP, during the formulation stage, the appropriateness or not of requesting implementation support services from UNDP, including those related to import processes, is evaluated in each case. This analysis is based on the assessment of national capacities and authorization is granted by GEF specifically for each project, according to the procedures agreed by GEF and UNDP for this purpose. So far, based on the enhanced monitoring procedures, the Government has requested UNDP to provide the implementation support service only in relation to the processing of financial transactions. Only in cases where the provision of implementation support services has been previously approved by GEF, UNDP can proceed to sign with the Government the respective Letter of Agreement for the provision of such services. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| **10th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  We recommend to UNDP and Government, especially CITMA and IGT, to consider offering training in coding (computer programming) to capable and interested young people of both sexes, and not just training in data entry, which the project has mostly offered. Building code is a rare and highly valuable skillset in Cuba, and an essential one for e-inclusion. This would be an excellent use of the newly established Situation Rooms. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** The topics to be included in the training program that corresponds to each Situational Room will be defined, in order to ensure that the personnel have the skills required for their operation. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 10.1 Agreed training program for the staff that operates the Situation Rooms. | Oct 2022 | Dec 2022 | AMA |  |  |

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| **11th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  It is important to frequently update Procurement Plans for projects and to engage a technical consultancy to support complex procurement processes, whether for the purchase of equipment or for the contracting of specialized services in the international market. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was not accepted.** It is included within Recommendation 1, that was admitted and defined the respective action. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| **12th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  In case an operational audit of the project had not been commended already, we recommend UNDP Cuba to consider it while the project is undergoing its closure processes. This is especially important because of the impact that the protracted IT procurement processes have had on project results and efficiency. Such audit exercise will would be able to give UNDP a deeper insight into the efficiency of the equipment procurement processes, in addition to verification on the assets that were acquired, their specifications, their adequacy, current use, status, compliance with paperwork, post-project arrangements, etc. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was accepted.** The implementation of actions that ensure the sustainability of the results is considered essential in the case of this project that concluded the acquisition of the equipment and therefore the installation of the technological solutions is in its final stage of implementation. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 12.1- Agree on a Sustainability Strategy of the results of the project in which the main actions that will be developed by the national counterpart are defined, as well as the reporting procedure to UNDP, given that the project concluded its execution date in July 2022. | Sep. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | AMA |  |  |
| 12.2- Establish binding agreements with providers of information of interest for environmental management, and sustainable environmental development, such as the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH), the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG) and others, to ensure integration between institutional systems and the National Environmental Information System (These agreements are part of the Project's Sustainability Strategy.) | Oct. 2022 | Dec. 2022 | CITMA-ONEI-INRH-MINAG |  |  |

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| **13th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Mainstreaming of gender: Ensure the publication of important documentation on the achievements of the project in terms of gender. For example, the gender analysis and/or action plan that has been mentioned/annexed to the PIR 2019, but not made available through the UNDP open platform (with reference to the file “Gender InfoGeo Prodoc.pdf” mentioned in section H of the PIR 2019). | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was not accepted.** The project has now been completed. However, under recommendation number 14, the actions developed as part of the project closure process are reported, specifically within the framework of the Final Workshop. | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| **14th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Gender mainstreaming: Ensure the publication of important documentation on the project's gender achievements. For example, in InfoGEO finalization activities (workshops), consider reporting and disseminating key gender indicators and gender-disaggregated information, in particular indicators 2, 5b and 12c[[2]](#footnote-2). | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was not accepted.** The project has been completed. However, under recommendation # 14, the actions developed as part of the project closure process are reported, specifically within the framework of the Final Workshop. | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| **15th Terminal Evaluation Recommendation**  Taking into account the time left to InfoGEO, and if the actual balance of the budget allows it, it is suggested, hire international specialized consulting to (1) massivel  y train InfoGEO stakeholders and beneficiaries on issues related to environmental indicators, already with the InfoGEO platform implemented in the situational rooms of the territories; (2) assist the Institute of Tropical Geography (IGT) to pilot open data protocols in Cuba. | | | | | |
| **Management Response**  **Recommendation was not accepted.** The recommendation is not accepted considering that by the date of receipt of the Final Evaluation Report by the Evaluation Team (26 August 2022), the technical activities designed by the UNDP/GEF Infogeo Project, which had a closing date of 24 July 2022, had already been completed. Additionally, the programming of funds conceived for the final stage of project execution did not allow financial availability to carry out the proposed international consultancy. However, considering the relevance of the type of training proposed, note is taken of the recommendation to the effect that it be evaluated as a possible activity to be developed within the framework of the activity plans of other projects in execution through which it is intended to support the scaling up of the Environmental Information System to other territories and sectors of the country. | | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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1. Final version of the Terminal Evaluation Report was submitted by the Evaluation Team on August 26th., 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It refers to the indicators included in Table 10 of the Final Report (2. Technical capacities (competencies) are improved to integrate data, information and knowledge about the environment at a global level; 5(b) At least 500 specific stakeholders have been trained in the use of these manuals and guidelines; 12c) and has analyzed at least 500 actors in baseline and end-of-project evaluations). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)