Annex 5.14. Management Response Template

Management response to the Terminal Evaluation of (ENHANCING NATIONAL CAPACITIES TO MANAGE INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS) BY IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON IAS-Terminal Evaluation Review)[67]

Project Title: Enhancing national capacities to manage invasive alien species (IAS) by implementing the National strategy on IAS.
Project PIMS #: *4714*
GEF Project ID (PMIS) #: *00089333*
Terminal Review Mission Completion Date:
26.09.2019
Date of Issue of Management Response: 04.10.2019

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Context, background and findings

The "Enhancing national capacities to manage invasive alien species (IAS) by implementing the National Strategy on IAS" project supports the implementation of the National Invasive Alien Species Strategy (NSIAS) and its objectives and aimed to establish effective and coordinated management for IAS at the national level. The project was designed to strengthen institutional capacity and build capacity for IAS management at different levels. The project also invested in information resources for IAS, developing tools and defining priorities for decision-making, and involved critical stakeholders (especially in productive sectors) in IAS prevention and control. Complementarily, the project was designed to contribute to policies and regulations, and develop tools to reduce or eliminate damaging practices in key productive sectors (aquaculture, ornamental fish trade, forest and wildlife products, and cattle and goat ranching), considered the main pathways of introduction of IAS to Mexico and of spread to priority protected areas.

Activities in pilot sites (priority conservation areas that support relevant ecosystems at the global level) focused on avoiding the introduction and spread of IAS by establishing prevention and early detection - rapid response measures in order to avert impacts and costly eradication or control. Planning and coordination measures were developed for nine continental Protected Areas (PA) and six insular areas for which biosecurity protocols were developed and implemented. Local communities and producers in key areas were involved in several practical activities.

Several government agencies and civil society organizations (CSO) participated: CONABIO, CONANP, SEMARNAT, CONAFOR, PROFEPA, IMTA, INAPESCA, CONAPESCA, SENASICA, CESAEM, GECI A.C., FCEA A.C., UNAM, UAM and UANL, as well as other CSO and people who worked on practical activities in 15 protected areas; and the UNDP Country Office, with a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) established to coordinate and execute the planned activities.

The project was rated **Satisfactory** (S) because the results contribute significantly to the **overall objective of safeguarding biodiversity of global importance in vulnerable ecosystems** by building capacity to prevent, detect, eradicate and control IAS in Mexico. The project succeeded in **mainstreaming IAS into the agenda of the main government institutions** in charge of environmental management and sustainable use of natural resources, which includes government agencies that work with productive sectors. It also succeeded in **strengthening national capacity for IAS management** at the national level, including intervention sites (PA). Most people involved **changed their perception** about the relevance of managing invasive alien species. Additionally, concrete benefits to global biodiversity were registered before project closure.

Outcome 1 focused on developing a national framework for IAS and was subdivided in three objectives. Activities in **Output 1.1 were almost fully completed**, contributing to improve decision-making based on available information and solid references. The **second Output was also very well developed** and focused on strengthening the capacity of institutions in charge of biosecurity inspections, such as PROFEPA and CONAFOR, and on establishing collaboration with key productive sectors for implementing biosecurity measures. **The third Output was more complex and less developed**, as it focused on changes in national legislation and interinstitutional coordination.

The change in government from elections in 2018 **led to losses of former interinstitutional coordination arrangements**, which stresses the relevance of establishing institutional leadership to continue mainstreaming IAS management in coming years.

Outcome 2 was aimed at establishing an integral management framework for IAS in order to protect vulnerable ecosystems of global importance, with two Outputs. The first one produced very good results in general, although the **implementation of biosecurity protocols is still underway**, as it required engaging several stakeholders, government agencies and visitors to oceanic islands. Important results were also produced in the second Output, especially in the last year of project implementation**, except for the application of EDRR protocols**, which also requires involving multiple stakeholders, and will demand continuous efforts on the part of CONANP in order to succeed.

The above-mentioned recommendation are pertinent and therefore will tried to be achieved (for details see below). It is very likely that the corresponding institutions will be able to implement the recommendations 1-4, 6, 8-12. However, recommendation 5 and 7 depend very much of the political will of the government.

Recommendations and management response

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 1. Share the information, data and products generated in the scope of the project for use in planning management actions for IAS and developing regulations on species and productive sectors using IAS. This role of CONABIO must be strengthened to ensure that the information reaches relevant government institutions and productive sectors, which requires other alternatives than sharing products on the project web page. Products, plans and models should be organized by topic, while information must be shared in effective ways so it can reach various types of public.

Management response:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking[68]	
			Comments	Status[69]
Conabio´s invasive species website is currently being remade with the aim of making the information more easily available to the different users. It will have sections by topic on outreach materials, management tools and strategies, species, pathways and impacts. The new design accounts for a specific section related to the GEF funded project and the information produced during its timeframe. There will be a mirror on a new URL invasoras.mx to increase traffic towards the page.	December 2019	CONABIO		Started
The work that will be finished in the 2019-2020 period includes an overhauling of the Information System and a new data visualization tool (with two profiles: a restricted one for decision makers and early warning and one for the public). This will increase the speed at which the information from NISIS can reach the different authorities involved in safeguarding the borders and natural resources. It will also provide a more accurate vision of what is happening with AIS within the country.	November 2020	CONABIO	Agreement underway	Started

The Ministry of Agriculture, though SENASICA, has invited CONABIO to participate in the activities of the "2020, Year of Plant Health" Program, with the aim of strengthening both institutions with the sharing of information and platforms currently available, including citizen science. This is a very important step towards the collaboration with the productive sectors.	All 2020	CONABIO and SENASICA		Started

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 2. Support the Invasive Alien Species Coordination for results at the national level to be registered and available, replicate methods and practices developed, promote the exchange of experiences and measure positive impacts on biodiversity. These issues should be discussed with the Regional Operations General Directorate, the Species and Conservation Priorities Directorate, and other related Directorates to establish cooperation.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
Set up of actions regarding IAS management, control and good practices in federal NPA using government subsidy funds to guarantee success.	Latest part of 2020	CONANP Central Office	Due to the fact that subsidy programs have a one year period of action, the plan can not be effectively started until 2020.	Pending

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 3. Establish a common registry focused on IAS management actions with support from the Evaluation and Monitoring Directorate, including prevention, EDRR, eradication, control and monitoring in protected areas. The records must include successful control actions as well as those that did not produce good results. Registry forms should be standardized for all PA as well as for subsidy programs to facilitate online registry. This system may start out simple, using an Excel spreadsheet, and evolve over time into a more elaborate database. It must be focused on providing data on management in protected areas in order to facilitate replication, therefore including methodological details, monitoring results and final results in terms of efficiency, as well as cost estimates, prevention measures, early detection alerts and applied rapid response measures, and the results of such interventions. The system must also include methods that did not work well for their use to be avoided. These records may be linked to the PREVIENE system in order to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the National IAS Strategy, as well as to connect them to other databases owned by CONABIO.			
Management response:			
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**

			Comments	Status
Strengthening and consolidation of structured and homogenized information regarding actions on IAS (through subsidiary programs) in NPA so that a systematized database is available for the development of new strategies at the national level.	Mid of 2020	CONANP Central Office	Due to the time required to organize the information, a particular date for the final result can not be established right away.	Pending
Organize a meeting with the Evaluation and Monitoring Directorate personnel to generate a particular set of tools, which allows visualizing indicators in the Natural Protected Areas. This information could be eventually downloaded so that the user can recognize the actions taken within each NPA.	End of 2020	CONANP Central Office	Due to the time required to include the information into the indicators map, the time elapsed between the meeting and the final result can not be determined right now.	Pending

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 4. Provide more support to management actions by expediting authorizations for IAS control and eradication actions, which will save time and resources as well as increase benefits to biodiversity. Establish an agreement between CONANP and the DGVS to exempt the need for permits in case of rapid response to early detection of invasive alien species.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
An agreement will be established between CONANP and SEMARNAT-DGVS, which determines that in case of a DTRR or control/ eradication request from CONANP a permit will be issued the very same day.	**first half of 2020.**	SEMARNAT DGVS/CONANP	DGVS cannot exempt CONANP from the need for a permit as a technical justification is needed, but a permit can be issued the same day.	Started

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 5. Establish a focal point for IAS in order to pursue the interinstitutional coordination required for ongoing IAS management in Mexico, and establish a Sectorial Committee represented by SEMARNAT, CONABIO, CONANP, CONAFOR, PROFEPA, CONAGUA, IMTA and INECC, as well as institutions in complementary areas such as SENASICA, CONAPESCA, INAPESCA, SEMAR, SS and others.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
To establish the focal point for the attention of invasive alien species, a consensus has to be achieved between the different govern-mental entities regarding the objective of the same; the head of the entities have to be involved in that process.	End of 2020	SEMARNAT	We need to evaluate within the environmental sector who should act as the head of the focal point, it is necessary to talk with each area involved. We don´t know yet how the Ministry will be working, we should wait for the publication of the new Internal Regulation.	Pending

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 6. Include the objectives and goals of the National Strategy on Invasive Alien Species in the National Biodiversity Strategy 2030 in order to ensure that they will be implemented, or develop a new workplan in the scope of the NSIAS or a new National Strategy on Invasive Alien Species.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
CONABIO has already made an analysis of the objectives and goals of the NBS vs. the IAS Strategy, identifying gaps and overlaps, in order to ensure that there is continuity between the documents and that the work will keep going. This will be discussed with SEMARNAT and further steps will be taken to decide the best course of action (ie new IAS strategy or NBS).	December 2020	SEMARNAT AND CONABIO	SEMARNAT proposed to start by February 2020, due to the workload and due to the still pending new Internal Regulation.	Pending

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

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 7. Environmental Regulations and Incentives Subsecretary: Develop regulations for the National Invasive Alien Species List and improve the compatibility of legal regulations related to IAS in collaboration with other agencies and support from CONABIO.

Management response:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	**Status**
The list of IAS, will be continuously updated, national guidelines are being developed for the management of invasive alien species, to be able to carry out management plans on a case-by-case basis.	End of 2020	SEMARNAT	The SFNA requested to the Legal Affairs Coordinating Unit (UCAJ) to evaluate the possibility of including fish and trees EEI, to the list, in accordance with the new forestry law, and the "national guidelines project".	Pending

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 8. Replicate methods, protocols, materials and knowledge to other protected areas in order to continue IAS management actions in areas of relevance to the conservation of biodiversity. It would be beneficial to develop a list of priority protected areas and begin replication using funds from the subsidy programs.

Management response:

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	**Status**
Replicate strategies regarding management, control and good practices with IAS at all federal NPA interested in developing IAS programs using the different financing tools (federal subsidies or private investment) available for CONANP.	The first half of 2020	CONANP	Due to the fact that the subsidy programs have a one year period of action, the plan can not be effectively started until 2020.	Pending

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 9. Hold meetings with high-rank officials in charge of biosecurity issues in the respective institutions, with support from insular protected areas and GECI, to develop workplans derived from the biosecurity protocols in which specific goals, outputs, deadlines and responsibilities are clearly defined.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
Strengthening of NPA Directorate to assume responsibility for implementing biosafety protocols.	At least the first half of 2020	CONANP Central Office, DGOR, DEPC, SEMARNAT	CONANP Central Office will accompany and support the NPA Directorate in the ways required.	Pending
Definition of the course of action and the procedures required to apply biosecurity protocols in insular NPA. Organize meetings with key stakeholders (representatives of public institutions, civil organizations and service providers) and technical personnel of SEMARNAT and CONANP.	At least the first half of 2020	CONANP Central Office, DGOR, DEPC, SEMARNAT	CONANP Central Office will take the lead in organizing the meeting and defining the goals.	Pending

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 10. Provide capacity building opportunities to recently arrived personnel in order to share knowledge, techniques and practices developed during the project, including procedures applied to border control and monitoring of forest pests. The objective is to ensure that information and capacity are not lost and that these agencies continue increasing their effectiveness in inspection and control in priority entry points.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**

Strengthen PROFEPA´s capacity through: • At least 1 training for staff on forest pests, terrestrial and aquatic invasive species associated to international trade and Christmas Trees Inspection. • At least 1 document released to staff on best practices on border monitoring and control at priority entry points.	Yearly during 2020-2024 period	PROFEPA-DGPAP AND CONAFOR		Pending
Implement the training of new staff in the topic of Invasive Exotic Species, with support of the materials obtained in the courses implemented during the development of the project, in order to replicate the knowledge acquired and strengthen the technical capabilities of the inspection staff.	Implementation in 2019.	PROFEPA- DGIVF AND CONAFOR		Preparation of the training scheme
• CONAFOR will schedule a training course on native and exotic forest pest monitoring aimed at staff that recently joined state management and will invite staff from federal PROFEPA delegations.	End of 2020	PROFEPA- DGIVF AND CONAFOR		Pending
• CONAFOR will generate and disseminate a manual to carry out adequate monitoring and surveillance of native and exotic pests in forest ecosystems in Mexico.	End of 2020	PROFEPA- DGIVF AND CONAFOR		Pending

Project management and M&E

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 11. Seek funds from the GEF or other sources to initiate a new project to further develop and consolidate IAS management and apply, in practice, all the knowledge generated through this project. Baselines, plans, techniques, models and practices are to be implemented as well as replicated to other protected areas, sites and productive sectors. With a new project it would be feasible to reestablish coordination and commitments with current leaders of institutions in charge of IAS, the environment and related areas, instated after the last change in government, as well as further consolidate IAS management in work routines.
Management response: Extension requested by PMU.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
With the change of administration of the Mexican government, the new authorities do not welcome (understand) projects sponsored by international agencies, they consider that these are carried out according to international policies and not to the reality of the country. Each decentralized agencies could look also for funding.	Pending	==SEMARNAT== and/or decentralized agencies	The new admini-stration is going to restructure SEMARNAT and the new Internal Regulation needs to be published to start the response.	January 2020

Terminal Evaluation recommendation 12. The remaining financial resources applied through the project's Exit Strategy should be specifically used in the development of activities that ensure the continuity of IAS management in Mexico and strengthen the lines of action defined within the scope of the project.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
CONABIO will oversee the activities and results of these projects	All 2020	CONABIO		

Recommendation for the terminal evaluation – Regulatory Framework