

## Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2014

### 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		2120	
GEF Agency project ID		2734	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF - 3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Biodiversity Conservation in the Productive Landscape of the Venezuelan Andes	
Country/Countries		Venezuela	
Region		LAC	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		Operational Program 4 – Mountain Ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		CIARA – Capacity-building and Innovation Foundation to support the Agrarian Revolution	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Beneficiaries: Community councils, cooperatives and grassroots organizations.	
Private sector involvement		None identified.	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		August 25, 2006	
Effectiveness date / project start		December 12, 2006	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 31, 2013	
Actual date of project completion		December 31, 2013	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		\$7.352	\$3.172
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	\$29.545	\$6.577
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
NGOs/CSOs			
Total GEF funding		\$7.352	\$3.172
Total Co-financing		\$29.545	\$6.577
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		\$36.897	\$9.749
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		July 1, 2014	
TE submission date		NA	
Author of TE		Rafael Monterde-Díaz and Freddy Matos	
TER completion date		February 2015	
TER prepared by		Erika Hernandez	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Joshua Schneck	

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	MU*	S	NA	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	NA**	ML	NA	ML
M&E Design	NA	UA	NA	MU
M&E Implementation	NA	UA	NA	MS
Quality of Implementation	MU	NA**	NA	UA
Quality of Execution	NA	MS***	NA	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	NA	NA	NA	MS

\* It is the overall DO rating.

\*\* PIR gives rates Risk as High.

\*\*\* The TE rates the UNDP's performance as *moderately satisfactory* and implementation focus as *satisfactory*.

\*\*\*\* The TE rates Type of Execution (Executive Body) as *moderately satisfactory*.

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's Global Environmental Objective is "to maintain the value for biodiversity of the mosaic of land uses in the productive landscape of the Merida Cordillera" [p. 22, TE]. Merida Cordillera includes a wide range of ecosystems and houses "globally important species" such as the Andean spectacled bear, the endangered red siskin and the critically endangered La Carbonera stubfoot toad. Nearly 23% of La Cordillera belong to National Parks, which are often used for coffee and livestock production. La Cordillera faces numerous challenges to its broad biodiversity. The main problem is that shade coffee stands and primary forests are being cleared to establish cattle pastures, sun coffee and market vegetables. These activities threaten the biodiversity conservation of this area and further risk endangered species. Cattle ranching appears unsustainable due to overgrazing, and these processes are leading to a gradual erosion of the traditional social and productive culture of the area.

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

As per the TE, the project's development objective is to ensure that Farmers' systems in the Coffee/Livestock Region of the Cordillera de Merida continue to be biodiversity-friendly. The project will do so through harmonizing biodiversity conservation and productive sector activity by ensuring that proposed measures actually enhance and diversify livelihood improvements and secure overall project sustainability [p. 22, TE].

The following are the expected outcomes for this project [p. 22 -26, PD]:

#### **Outcome 1. Producers in pilot municipalities have the necessary capacities to carry out biodiversity-friendly productive systems.**

The project will support pilot activities in a selected 480,190 ha pilot area within the coffee/cattle rearing zone in 7 pilot municipalities. Pilot activities will demonstrate that productive practices can be viable and competitive, in economic, social and cultural terms. Its outputs are: having producers' organizations consolidated and fully functional in order to have access to premium prices for biodiversity-friendly products; the development of a Capacity Building Program for the application of biodiversity friendly

productive practices including certification standards, marketing know-how and environmental service payment schemes; development and delivery to pilot municipalities of an awareness raising program on the contribution of BD to livelihood improvement; and, the creation of an information management system to strengthen links between producers in pilot municipalities and consumers.

**Outcome 2. Enabling policy, planning, and regulatory frameworks support biodiversity-friendly productive systems in pilot municipalities.**

The project will ensure that the planning frameworks effectively incorporate conservation objectives (such as the recognition of rare or vulnerable species and habitats and the promotion of connectivity) thereby minimizing the risk of negative impacts and maximizing existing opportunities for sustainable use. Financial sustainability will be ensured through support to the development of alternative finance mechanisms. Its outputs are: establishing local planning framework mechanisms for participatory decision-making (public sector, civil society and local communities) in land use planning, zoning and management in accordance with biodiversity conservation principles; the development of a capacity building program for Municipal Offices; generation of technical guidelines to guide the incorporation of biodiversity principles into planning tools and land management systems; and, the development of economic incentives that allow producers in pilot municipalities to apply biodiversity-friendly productive practices.

**Outcome 3. Pilot municipalities operate as platforms for the interchange of experiences on best practices and lessons learned.**

Project activities undertaken in the pilot area of the Coffee/Cattle Rearing Zone (CCRZ) (Outcome 1) will lead to these functioning demonstrations as models capable of being replicated in the remainder of the CCRZ. Project activities in the 7 municipalities of Outcome 2 will be replicated in 13 other municipalities at the Merida Cordillera. Although PD does not state the specific date of completion for replication projects, it expects: production of materials to support replication to be produced by Years 4 and 5 (2010 and 2011, respectively); and, visits to pilot municipalities in replication target areas to be carried out during Years 5 and 6 (2011 and 2012, respectively) [p. 52, PD]. Some of its outputs are: experiences and methodologies are documented on mainstreaming BD principles into productive systems; a Knowledge Dissemination Strategy is developed and tailored to different groups (like producers, local authorities, ministries and civil society) from pilot areas; and, a consolidated network of public, civil society and community-level entities, coordinating and harmonizing the development and replication of pilot level experiences in the long-term.

**Outcome 4. Adaptive management principles supported by monitoring and evaluation tools guide project implementation and management functions.**

Its outputs are: a monitoring and evaluation strategy and financing plan developed and applied facilitating effective adaptive project management; methodologies are developed and applied for documentation of lessons learnt, enabling effective feedback into GEF programming; and, the development of a project management structure.

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

No, the Global Environmental and Development Objectives did not change.

#### 4. GEF EO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>4.1 Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
<p>The TE does not give a rating for this section. This TER rates relevance as <i>satisfactory</i> because it is relevant to both the GEF and to the Government of Venezuela. The project is relevant for the Government of Venezuela in that it is consistent with national policies and frameworks, particularly its National and Regional Development Plans and the Vuelvan Caras Mission. Through these frameworks, the Government places a strong emphasis on the support of endogenous production and resource management systems. The project will stem from these national initiatives and will take advantage of the potential for compatibility between biodiversity conservation in the productive landscape and the promotion of enhanced and sustainable livelihoods for rural families [p. 21, PD]. The GEF observes that there is a strong potential in reducing the clearance of forests and shade coffee as well as land degradation. The project is in line with the priorities of the GEF’s Biodiversity focal area. It contributes to Operation Program 4 on Protection of Mountain Ecosystems.</p>	

<b>4.2 Effectiveness</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
<p>The TE rates effectiveness as <i>satisfactory</i>. This TER gives the rating of <i>moderately satisfactory</i> because the project faced minor shortcomings. The project successfully improved the capacity of producers in pilot areas and enabled policy, planning and regulatory frameworks through procurement of GIS equipment and know-how. Although it is not clear whether the project completed all of the necessary work to replicate its results in the 13 municipalities, the TE states that the project supplemented this objective with other activities. For instance, the project implemented experience exchange (Output 3.2) by creating 35 experimental units to provide “farmer to farmer” training. The original logical framework matrix was not modified. The monitoring (Output 4) appears to have taken place as seen in the completion of the mid-term evaluation review, but the TE reports its lack of monitoring reports before this review.</p>	

Progress towards achievements of project objectives is detailed further below along each of the expected outcomes:

- 1) **Outcome 1. Producers in the pilot area have the necessary capacity to develop biodiversity-friendly production systems. (TER rating: Moderately Satisfactory<sup>1</sup>).** The project worked with a total of 2,912 production units in the 7 pilot municipalities. The producers that were targeted by the project developed the “necessary capacity for the use of biodiversity-friendly practices” that are gradually changing farmers’ production methods [p. 33, TE]. Support for capacity building and transition to environmental friendly practices is reported as effective. Environmental education activities further increased awareness of the environment among the producers. This can be seen in producers now relating agro-ecological practices in their own farm or municipality to global environmental benefits. One effective strategy described by the TE, is the joint program with schools and educational units. Although not all training had the desired effect in building up capacities like the very specialized technical training, the “farmer to farmer” training. With regards to the creation of the 35 experimental units, producers say that they have been able to learn from them in order to employ eco-friendly practices [p. 37, TE]. The PD expected to have producer organizations consolidated that would allow them having access to premium prices for biodiversity-friendly products, which was one of the most important outcomes that was expected. However, the TE was not able to document this strategy’s success. The TE does not provide information on the amount of workshops or training provided. Training of product certification is not known, nor is it known whether design and monitoring of coordination mechanisms took place.
- 2) **Outcome 2. Enabling policy, planning, and regulatory frameworks support biodiversity-friendly productive systems in pilot municipalities. (TER rating: Moderately Satisfactory<sup>2</sup>).**

The TE states that this component had the lowest progress. While assessing the component, this TER found that this tier demonstrated more progress than what the TE identified. Despite the fact that the project tried to strengthen the work of municipalities through training and awareness-raising activities, there was a lack of follow-up as expected in activity 2.2.2. There were also communication problems between national and local institutions. Given the low levels of capacity building, the TE notes that the impact of these training activities seems to have been relatively low because the approach focused on technical and specialized training, particularly related to the usage and equipment delivery of the GIS system. This system is operating but that there is no evidence that the system is being used for scaling up or replicating the project. This TER found that because the replication goal (Outcome 3) was modified during the project implementation, Output 2.2 was generally met. In fact, the issue rested at the PD design level: its expected outputs were not modified while carrying out training for municipalities. Some pilot experiences were successful such as Las Gualabas (Sucre Municipality) and the Andres Bello Municipality; the latter envisioned an inter-agency space team.

Output 2.4 was met in that it created financial mechanisms that facilitated the environmentally friendly practices. It successfully mobilized external resources for producers (from FONDAS and the Women’s Bank) and helped producers launch their own fund based on micro-finance. The expected Grant scheme (activity 2.4.1) was not finalized due to lack of agreement on the final format or its management mechanisms. The TE identifies dissatisfaction by producers with

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<sup>1</sup> The TE notes that this component was one of the “most satisfactory” level of results that were achieved but does not rate it.

<sup>2</sup> The TE does not rate this component but states that it had “the lowest level of progress and (had) the fewest results” [p. 34, TE].

formulating small-grants proposals as their “expectations were not satisfied” but does not provide a reason for this. Because this Output did not originally state whether training by technicians was to be receive feedback from producers, it was generally met except for its activity 2.4.1.

**3) Outcome 3. Pilot municipalities operate as platforms for the interchange of experience, dissemination and replication of experiences based on best practices and lessons learned. (TER rating: Moderately Satisfactory<sup>3</sup>).**

While replication was expected in 13 municipalities after the project was completed, the project instead focused on consolidating the experience of the 7 pilot municipalities. o achieve its Output 3.2, the project created 35 experimental units in order to consolidate networks for experience interchange through implementing “farmer to farmer” training [p. 35, PD]. This activity appears to have had a great contribution in that it has encouraged producers to adopt environmentally-friendly practices. However, this change should have been documented during the Mid-Term Review. TE reported materials and methodologies as this output originally envisioned. The TE observed that while producers were positioning themselves individually, they had not yet arrived to do so through a collective approach [p. 37, TE].

**4) Outcome 4. Adaptive management principles supported by monitoring and evaluation tools guide project implementation and management functions. (TER rating: Moderately Satisfactory<sup>4</sup>).**

The TE did not rate this section because of the impossibility to access diagnostic information. On one hand, the TE considers that the project hardly used the framework of original indicators and that there is lack of monitoring and evaluation protocols. This TER considers that adaptive management appears not to have been used efficiently given that two of the previous components were modified. However, the TE does not state whether project implementers went back to change the original logical framework matrix. On the other hand, the TE identified the use of annual reports and PIRs as a form of monitoring but states that there is no evidence that this information was used to adopt changes in project implementation. It should be noted that the original logframe matrix does not include this Outcome, which is a failure in design but this mistake could have also influenced the disregard for this section. Despite the lack of clear M&E tools, the TE shows that the project established a comprehensive project management structure through an organigram provided in section 3.1.8 [p. 26, TE]. Finally, the TE reports that project coordinators did not modify the project’s strategy or the results framework in its first year of execution so adaptive management was “virtually non-existent.” However, the mid-term review changed this by introducing measures such as the “Strategic Committee” and the proposal for reformulating the project [p. 29, TE].

<b>4.3 Efficiency</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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<sup>3</sup> The TE does not rate this section. The TE states that the component had significant results at the producer level, although “the strategy was not implemented as intended” [p. 34, TE].

<sup>4</sup> The TE does not rate this section.

The TE rates effectiveness as *highly satisfactory*. This TER gives the rating of *moderately satisfactory* because the project experience several delays and its cost-effectiveness was low. The project used the austerity and transparency criteria while employing project resources, so no corruption was involved. The TE suggests that cost-efficiency could have been improved by indicating that improvement in the productivity of one quintal per year on farms would have been of “greater benefit than the cost incurred by the project” [p. 42, TE]. Hence, the project’s cost-effectiveness was low. The project experienced delays. Poor performance was attributed to delays in approving the actual transfer of funds for project execution for all years except for 2008 [p. 7 & 30, TE]. The development of PIRs, Terms of Reference for recruitment and annual reports were considered as a source of conflict that caused delays and deteriorated professional relationships [p. 32, TE].

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: <b>Moderately Likely</b>
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The TE rates sustainability as *moderately likely*. This TER rates sustainability as *moderately likely*. The national government demonstrated financial commitment in the project’s continuation. Social support appears to be high as demonstrated already in producers’ behavioral change towards biodiversity-friendly approaches. CIARA expressed commitment for continuing to implement the project’s second phase by including the replication sites. However, no other possible financial sources or different institutions other than CIARA were found to support the project’s continuity.

Risks to the sustainability of project outcomes is further assessed along the following 4 dimensions [p. 4-5, TE]:

- **Financial Sustainability. (Moderately Likely)** The TE identifies commitment by the government to continue implementing the program with its own resources [p. 43, TE]. No other sources of revenue supporting the project were found.
- **Sociopolitical Sustainability. (Likely)** Behavioral change towards a more agro-ecological approach in producers was registered throughout the project [p. 43-44, TE]. Their new technical skills that support this approach may support a positive long-term impact. Further buttressing this type of sustainability, production of shade-grown coffee has a great sustainability potential is that it is in line with farmers’ cultural element. The project is largely supported by local beneficiaries that could be used as leverage for future endeavors.
- **Institutional Sustainability. (Moderately Likely)** MPPAT (People’s Ministry for Agriculture and Land) and CIARA’s Board signaled commitment to continue the program into a second phase, which would bring together current beneficiaries such as those in Terrandina with future beneficiaries in the original “replication” component (13 municipalities) [p. 42, TE]. However, involvement by other local offices and ministries was limited [p. 26, TE]. This lack of inter-institutional support could work against the project’s sustainability.
- **Environmental Sustainability. (Unable to Assess)** Possible environmental risks are related to the coffee borer pest and blight that can serve as a possible backlash to non-environmental friendly practices. However, because probability of this happening is not provided.

## 5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Co-financing was supplied by the national government and was expected to be provided in a ratio of one to four (80% by the Government; 20% by the GEF). However, it substantially decreased when the project was implemented. The expected co-financing was \$29.545 while the actual co-financing was only \$6.577 [p. 29, TE]. The TE explains that one of the reasons is that these figures only display the National Government's disbursements to CIARA, that it does not reflect all the contributions by the National Coffee Plan and from other public programs like FONDAS loans, Women's Bank, among others. In addition, the TE explains that when it compared figures of the original PD with those of Table 1 of the Executive Project report, they did not match [p. 29-30, TE]. According to the PD, some of the contributions were supposed to be made "in kind" but the report indicates that all of them were to be "in cash." Undocumented "in kind" contributions might be another reason for the co-financing difference. TE reports that the project received greater public resources from other programs but it does not provide evidence for this [p. 42, TE].

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Yes, the project experienced delays. Poor performance was attributed to delays in approving the actual transfer of funds for project execution for all years except for 2008 [p. 7 & 30, TE]. The development of PIRs, Terms of Reference for recruitment and annual reports were considered as a source of conflict that caused delays and deteriorated professional relationships [p. 32, TE].

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The TE states that the national government took "full ownership of the project" given that the agencies involved, especially CIARA, demonstrated a high level of interest [p. 42, TE]. It also states that the government obtained greater public resources from co-financing and from other programs, but this contradicts the reported actual co-financing that decreased nearly 80%. The report should provide evidence when mentioning that the government dedicated and increased its public resources. CIARA is seen as having provided a dedicated staff with minimal turnover. Other government branches like MPPAT and the CIARA Board indicated their intention to continue supporting the project's second phase that would comprise extending the project to the 13 original municipalities from the replication component [p. 42, TE]. Other government agencies like the People's Ministry of Planning (MPPP), People's Ministry for the Environment (MPPA) and People's Ministry for Agriculture and Land (MPPAT) also participated through the Strategic Committee.



## 6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>6.1 M&amp;E Design at entry</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE rates M&E design as *unable to assess*. This TER rates the section as *moderately unsatisfactory*. The PD included complete M&E design but since its indicators were poorly developed, they had a problem serving as a point of reference in assessing project’s progress. Some of its strengths are the establishment of indicators per outcome [p. 27, PD] that are measurable and each has a baseline description. The M&E design contains outputs and activities but does not have indicators per activity, which are detailed in its logical Framework Analysis [p. 50-52, PD]. The design provides a time table for the expected rate of completion (in years) per activity. The PD further offers budgetary allocations from the GEF and co-financing sources per outcome, as well as for monitoring and evaluation (Outcome 4). Using the GEF SMART acronym (*specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely*) as a guide for best practices, the indicators (or success criteria) in the TE were mostly *specific, measurable* and *achievable* but not always *realistic* or *timely*. Indicators were not necessarily *timely* because these indicators were not given a deadline for being achieved, neither were they *realistic* as indicator for Outcome 3 assumed that the replication of pilot municipalities would be developed. The TE states that indicators in the Project Planning Matrix (PPM) were not necessarily useful for M&E because the baseline information and the goals were not available during the project execution [p. 31, TE]. That is, measurements provided were not clear.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates M&E implementation<sup>5</sup> as *unable to assess*. This TER rates the section as *moderately satisfactory*. Although the first phase of M&E implementation did not hold strong monitoring mechanisms, the project was monitored throughout its duration. Monitoring can be traced in the form of six PIRs, a Mid-Term Evaluation that was carried out in 2010, and through progressively integrating the GIS system [p. 31, TE]. As mentioned above, the TE found that baseline information in the PD was insufficient to assess objective advancement. As a result, two initiatives were carried out to assess missing information: a study on forest cover and a study on forest structural diversity in the pilot municipalities [p. 31, TE]. The second management phase implemented a different information collection system that focused on coffee producers in line with CIARA planning levels.

For the TE, M&E played an “information role” rather than an adaptive one in that it collected facts about the project progress for external reporting but it has not been used for internal functions that would have

<sup>5</sup> TE calls this section “M&E execution.”

enabled the M&E design to be improved. However, adaptive management did take place once the results from the Mid-Term Evaluation were presented and was seen as a “second execution phase.” Some of the recommendations were taken into account by managers and the project envisioned some “positive changes” at the end [p. 31, TE]. This TER concurs with this assessment in that the original outcomes should have been modified to better reflect progress as well as to avoid having obtain inferior effectiveness scores. M&E training was also scheduled through the project inception workshop to finalize the “Annual Work Plan” on the basis of reviewing the logframe matrix (indicators, means of verification and assumptions) [p. 38, TE]. However, the TE does not mention whether training took place.

## 7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Unable to Assess</b>
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The TE rates the UNDP’s performance as *moderately satisfactory* and implementation focus as *satisfactory*. This TER rates this section as *unable to assess* as limited information is provided on UNDP’s project supervision. The project underwent an important job rotation by the project implementer in that it went through 5 different stages of coordination [p. 32, TE]. Coordination at the operational level was given greater emphasis than that at the strategic level. TE also could not find evidence of high-level institutional interaction between UNDP Resident Representative and the Ministers involved. UNDP appears to have maintained a fluid relationship of communication and collaboration with the project promoters such as the NGOs involved and MARN managers [p. 24, TE]. However, not such communication with project executors was documented by the TE.

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates Type of Execution (Executive Body) as *moderately satisfactory*. This TER rates this section as *satisfactory* because CIARA faced several challenges as a project executor and, nevertheless, had an excellent performance. The TE states that CIARA demonstrated a high level of interest in both the environmental issue and the program. CIARA’s role at the beginning of the project’s execution was not so relevant but its relevance increased towards the end of the project [p. 23, TE]. Despite ending up leading a project that it had not designed, CIARA offered a working team that had its own staff fully dedicated to the project, with a “minimal turnover” and a significant degree of autonomy in management and decision making. Moreover, CIARA showed interest in providing support for the project during a possible second phase [p. 42, TE]. However, the TE does not provide more evidence on CIARA’s commitment to the project’s execution.

## 8. Assessment of Project Impacts

**Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.**

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

No environmental impacts were identified.

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

No socioeconomic impacts were reported.

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

### a) Capacities

The project enhanced farmers' capacities to the extent that it: (i) helped to diversify diet of families; (ii) gave families greater autonomy so that they become autonomous from the agro-food market; and (iii) that the potential long-term impact for families is food security [p. 44, TE]. Women's capacities were also strengthened. Women receive training in the development of production initiatives such as ornamental flowers, having a long-term potential. The TE has seen the progressive incorporation of women into community participation spaces like assemblies, producer associations and community council. It is considered that these initiatives could have a "significant impact" in empowering women at the local level [p. 44, TE]. Although not all training had the desired effect in building up capacities like the very specialized technical training, the "farmer to farmer" training. With regards to the creation of the 35 experimental units,

producers say that they have been able to learn from them in order to employ eco-friendly practices [p. 37, TE]. The project managed to establish a GIS system that allows planning by municipal and local committees.

## b) Governance

An effective system of governance is still in the workings as the project showed miscommunication between national and local institutions. As a platform for governance, the project established pilot municipalities and created 35 experimental units where eco-friendly practices can be shared by producers. The project did not create any regulatory or legal instruments.

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

No unintended impacts were identified.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

The project was set to replicate its initial activities in 7 pilot areas on a second phase in 13 different municipalities. However, this replication did not take place as project managers decided to focus in the initial 7 activities. Instead, during the second phase, 35 experimental units were created to support producers in developing eco-friendly practices. This second phase is seen as highly successful.

## 9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

### Key Lessons Learned

- Regarding the project **design**, it is necessary to firmly secure the participation of all stakeholders potentially affected by the project, and to articulate it as clearly as possible what the subsequent involvement of these stakeholders will be.
- In the transition between the design and execution phases, it is critical that the main promoters of the project play a key role in both.
- The project should have been clearer about the expected outreach. Sometimes the design appears to be extremely ambitious in terms of its ability to achieve a wide coverage in its direct effects.

- The confusion created was most likely due to the method of establishing goals attributable to the project. It is vital to later establish a system of indicators, linked to the project's capacity for action.
- While this is a conservative approach, from the project management point of view, it reduces the pressure to obtain results, which has been one of the phenomena clearly observed in this case, resulting in considerable stress for the project team.
- To complete the proposals about the design, we must note the importance of taking the project context into consideration, and assessing its possible impact on performance more realistically.
- Regarding **execution**, the fundamental key to improvement lies in inter-agency communications. More agile and more efficient mechanisms for dialogue between the IAs and the EAs should be established, both for everyday management and particularly for strategic decision-making.
- On the EA side, it must be ensured at the outset that the project team correctly handles the administrative protocols for GEF projects and arranges the necessary training. There should also be an analysis, prior execution, of whether these protocols represent any legal incompatibility.
- The agencies should work together to improve their project monitoring mechanisms for greater responsiveness.
- Taking this principle and applying it to the **evaluation** processes, it is very important to develop a detailed plan for collecting information for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation, particularly for projects taking place over a long time period, as is the case here.

#### Actions to follow up or strengthen the project

- The most successful component is the production training to support the development of biodiversity-friendly practices. Hence, the first step required is to ensure the successful completion of the process of systematic data collection.
- The practices directly related to agricultural production (particularly the improvement of shade-grown coffee) have achieved the highest levels of adoption. To ensure consolidation of the model, further work is needed on **farm diversification**. There should be further reforestation activities.
- It is important to have **financial support mechanisms** to facilitate the transition, particularly with regard to the implementation of new initiatives for the producer and/or the community. It is important to ensure continuity for the joint strategies.
- We must urgently implement the **Grants Fund** mechanism proposed in the project framework under the topic "*loan funds*." While the original design aimed to create credit-based mechanisms, practice has shown that the initial stages of these processes are not viable when viewed solely in terms of profitability. Finalising the process of Fund creation has become a matter of urgency, due to the expectations created in communities at local level.
- The SGP scheme would remain a format suitable for managing the cycle of micro-projects, although some adjustments would be required, with nominal ownership by CIARA.
- This initiative may also contribute to the **strengthening of community-based organisations** in their transition towards local development.
- While steps have been taken within the project framework, it is important to map the stage of development of community organisations in order to offer them support and guidance.

- Another strategy is the completed development of the **Geographical Information System**. The lack of geo-referenced information on various key aspects regarding the project beneficiaries is an important limitation for the consolidation of the project strategy. Participation in the construction and use of the GIS should involve municipal teams and even producers.
- There should be an appropriate time in the project to address an **expansion of scope**, both in terms of producers in the areas already supported and in particular, its extension to other municipalities.
- To facilitate appropriate coordination with the municipalities, it is very important for CIARA to establish suitable **protocols for high-level coordination with MPPA**. These arrangements can have significant impact by facilitating synergies between local public programs & national policy.

### Best practices

- The **experimental units based on producer farms** are one of the most promising experiences. This model has a greater ability to motivate producers in the area, mainly due to the imitation factor: an initiative led by someone of equal social standing is a very effective way in communicating the feasibility of implementing agro-ecological production systems.
- The "farmer to farmer" model contributes to local capacity building and consolidation of the social fabric. It emphasises the capacity for innovation in these spaces, in a participative way.
- Within this model of experimental units, it is worth noting the model **experimental farms**. It was created in the context of a local **educational unit**. The case of the Bolivarian School of Potrerito (Morán municipality) could be an interesting example to record and replicate.
- A second successful practice which should be consolidated are the **spaces for inter-institutional coordination at local level** created by the CIARA municipal teams as part of the programme. These spaces have enabled the generation of synergies between different public programmes.
- The experience of the **Strategic Committee** is an interesting example of inter-agency coordination, this time at national level. This example of the environment constitutes a clear case of a comprehensive approach, due to the multiple dimensions involved, by its very nature.
- Through this initiative, the Committee met on a regular basis, the committee members paid particular attention to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation mentioned above, to ensure its implementation, and to address any difficulties in carrying out the planned actions.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

### Recommendations

- There are four possible working approaches:
  - First, it would be very interesting to resume and enhance the proposal for **participative certification** of coffee, and other agro-ecological products which could potentially be offered by farms and also extended to the tourism sector. This strategy is necessary in the case of coffee. At the same time it provides an opportunity to make possible the certification process viable by avoiding the high costs of international certification, and to create synergies with other producers. To develop this, we would suggest a parallel

strategy: firstly supporting the work in the community to encourage ownership of the process, and secondly, analysing the experiences of other countries with similar processes.

- Second, we suggest resuming working initiatives on **participative environmental planning** at local level. While there have been no significant achievements, the project itself has generated some successful experiences with communities, and can help it to generate its own working model. We suggest the parallel development of systematic data collection processes in the windows of opportunity that may arise from legal changes, so that CIARA can become another channel for communication that meets the demands of public accountability.
- Third, the possibility of generating a **monitoring and evaluation system linked to the GIS**, converging the GIS programme into a more comprehensive information system. A system of this type could contribute very significantly to the institution's capacity for management and organisational learning, allowing short and long-term. The experience of using such a system, as a pilot project, could be useful for CIARA in reaching the next level for establishing a unified framework.
- Fourth, we suggest developing a strategy for greater **articulation of the programme with the academic and research sector**. Starting with INIA itself, as part of the structure of MPPAT to which CIARA also belongs, and moving on to the various academic institutions in the area. Universities committed to local development processes can bring together research capacities to collectively address technical problems.

## 10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF EO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	<i>The report contains a very general assessment on the achievement of outcomes. It would have done better if it included a logframe matrix describing the activities that were met. It only contains information about governance and capacity changes, as well as on replication.</i>	<b>MS</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	<i>The report is generally consistent. However, some information concerning country ownership was not fully found in that section. Some ratings are well substantiated; some others lack evidence such as its Efficiency rating (it didn't have enough financial information but it still gave it a Highly Satisfactory rating).</i>	<b>MS</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	<i>Project briefly assesses most sustainability sections except environmental sustainability. No exit strategy was reported.</i>	<b>MS</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	<i>Lessons are well supported by evidence in the TE.</i>	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	<i>Project includes project disbursements per year and co-financing but does not include an adequate breakdown of co-financing (TE states that it did not find further information).</i>	<b>S</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	<i>TE states that it did not find a good quality of monitoring. However, this TER found that monitoring was carried out through 6 PIRs and a Mid-Term Evaluation. Environmental monitoring was being carried out through the GIS system although evidence from this was not found. Adaptive management took place and stemmed from the Mid-Term Evaluation.</i>	<b>MS</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MS</b>

Overall TE rating:  $(0.3*(4+4)) + (0.1 * (4+5+5+4)) = 2.4 + 1.8 = 4.2 = MS$

## 11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).

*This TER used the TE and PD.*