

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

### 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		2896	
GEF Agency project ID		P098732	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF - 4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Sacred Orchids of Chiapas: Cultural and Religious Values in Conservation	
Country/Countries		Mexico	
Region		LAC	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD – 1: Sustainable Financing of PA systems at the national level OP- 3: Forest Ecosystems. OP 4- Mountain Ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		Pronatura, AC Chiapas	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		The Nature Conservancy; Conservation International, Rain Forest Alliance all participated in project design workshops. Pronatura is an NGO. Some NGOs have provided co-financing.	
Private sector involvement		Project audited by private external firms.	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		Nov 7, 2007	
Effectiveness date / project start		Dec 27, 2007	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		Dec 31, 2011	
Actual date of project completion		Dec 31, 2011	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.05	
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		0.838	0.838
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	0.326	
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.848	
	Private sector		
NGOs/CSOs			
Total GEF funding		0.888	0.838
Total Co-financing		1.174	1.545
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		2.062	2.283
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		09/25/2012	
TE submission date		UA	
Author of TE		Ricardo Hernandez Murillo	
TER completion date		January 9, 2015	
TER prepared by		Dania M Trespalacios	
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	S	S	NR	HS
Sustainability of Outcomes	S	L	NR	L
M&E Design	NR	NR	NR	S
M&E Implementation	MS	S	NR	MS
Quality of Implementation	S	S	NR	S
Quality of Execution	S	S	NR	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	-	-	-	S

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective is the sustainable management and protection of ecoregions of global biodiversity importance in Chiapas. (PD pg. 6) The project will develop strategies for managing and conserving the wild populations and habitats of Bromeliads, Palms, Orchids, and Cycads. These species are currently harvested at large and increasing rates for both local consumption and export. The conservation of these habitats will contribute to conserving the globally significant biological diversity found in Chiapas. (PD pg. 5)

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Development Objective of this project is to reduce pressure on endangered forest species used for religious ceremonies, and to improve livelihoods of local communities and partnerships with religious groups. (PD pg. 6)

The project aims to mobilize religious congregations and traditional community organizations in favor of biodiversity conservation to achieve concrete action for the sustainable management of species of global interest. (PD pg. 5)

The Expected Outputs of the project are:

1. Legal national framework and knowledge of improved management practices for the conservation and sustainable use of NTFP of ritual and ceremonial value.
2. Indigenous communities and rural peasants' capacity and organization strengthened for sustainable harvesting of NTFP and conservation of habitats
3. International and national religious groups, communities and other stakeholders' partnerships developed for sustainable consumption of forest species.  
(PD pg. 7-8)

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

There were **no changes** in the Global Environmental or Development Objectives in this project.

#### 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.

4.1 <b>Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project outcomes are consistent with the GEF’s Biodiversity focal area objectives. Chiapas is the second most important state in Mexico for biological diversity, and contains two biosphere reserves: La Sepultura and El Triunfo. (PD pg. 5) The project will develop strategies for managing and conserving the wild populations and habitats of some of Bromeliads, Palms, Orchids, and Cycads. The conservation of these habitats will contribute to conserving the globally significant biological diversity found in Chiapas. (PD pg. 5)

The project supports the GEF’s Strategic Objective 1, “To Catalyze Sustainability of Protected Area Systems”, through demonstration of, capacity building in and implementation of innovative trade agreements that will contribute to catalyzing community and indigenous commitment to Cultural Management Plans, and promote the expanded protection of PA by reducing the pressure exerted by wildlife collectors. The project also supports the GEF’s Strategic Objective 2, “To Mainstream Biodiversity in Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors” by mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and management into forest patches and forested areas in agricultural landscapes. (PD pg. 11) The project will also support Strategic Priority 3 – “Strengthening Terrestrial Networks” by ensuring better terrestrial ecosystem representation in the protected area system. (PD pg. 11) To a lesser degree the project supports mainstreaming biodiversity in non timber forest products extractive reserve landscapes and within religious sectors in Mexico and abroad through global collaboration and trade networks. (Project Agreement Review pg. 3) The project also is inline with the supply chain initiatives supported by the GEF under Strategic Program 5 – “Fostering Markets for Biodiversity Goods and Services.” It will support commercial contracts and agreements with Christian churches (specifically Lutherans) to promote fair and sustainable palm trade. (PD pg. 12)

The project is consistent with Mexico’s country priorities. Mexico has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, and is a signatory to CITES. The project is aligned with Mexico’s National Biodiversity Strategy, which includes: the protection and conservation of biological diversity, the valorization of biodiversity, knowledge and information management on biodiversity resources that will inform decision making, and ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity resources. (PD pg. 10) Mexico’s Strategic Forestry Plan to the year 2025 includes the development of non-timber forest resources. The National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples has established a Program of Productive Agro-ecology, which involves the recovery and conservation of genetic material pertaining to flora and fauna species that are of interest to indigenous communities

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: <b>Highly Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates the overall progress in achieving grant objectives as satisfactory. (TE pg. 2) Because most of the project’s expected outcomes were not only achieved, but far exceeded, the project’s effectiveness is rated highly satisfactory by this TER.

The project’s Global Environmental and Development objective, the corresponding expected outcomes, and the results reported by the TE are summarized below:

**Table 1:** Project Objectives, Indicators and Results (PD Annex 2, TE pg. 2,4)

Objectives	Outcome Indicators	Results
<b>Development Objective:</b> Reduced pressure on endangered forest species used for religious ceremonies and improve livelihoods of local communities and partnerships with religious groups	9,000 ha of natural extraction areas under best practices management for bromeliads, cycads, orchids and palms harvesting.	<b>Achieved and exceeded:</b> 15,426 ha of natural extraction areas under best management practices for bromeliads, palms and cycads
	75% reduction in waste of Chamaedora spp, 50% reduction of orchids flowers and plants loss in project sites.	<b>Achieved and exceeded:</b> 100% reduction of waste in the selection in selected project communities.
	25% increase in family income of participants groups.	<b>Achieved and exceeded:</b> 25%- 100% increased income in involved households.
	80% of sustainable fair trade palm produced for Holy Week in the project communities sold to congregations in Mexico, US and Europe.	<b>Achieved and exceeded:</b> 84.2% of the Palm produced for Holy Week has been sold under fair trade terms to US.
<b>Global Environmental Objective:</b> Areas under sustainable management and protection status increased, in sites of ecoregions of global importance in Chiapas	55, 000 hectares under enhanced protection in Biosphere Reserves (El Triunfo/La Sepultura).	<b>Achieved:</b> 55,000 ha under enhanced protection. Biological corridors through the Sierra Madre de Chiapas as buffer zone for core areas in El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve and La Sepultura Reserves have been consolidated. Increase in conservation easements support protection of 55,000 has.
	3 new extractive conservation reserves for sacred plants (cycads, orchids and bromeliads) established and managed by local communities and municipalities.	<b>Achieved and exceeded:</b> 4 new extractive conservation reseves created: Altamirano (447 ha), Cerro Nambiyuguá, (4,893 ha); El Chivero (200 ha) and Ejido Fray Bartolomé (2,000 ha). Reserves will show improved management effectiveness, as indicated by PA METT.

The TE reports that the project achieved all outcome indicators on biodiversity conservation, and promoted the improvement of the legal framework and policies to support the conservation of bromeliads, palms, orchids and cycads. (TE pg. 2) As outlined in Table 1, all of the expected project objectives were achieved, and most were exceeded.

The project had four main components, each with corresponding activities, expected outcomes and indicators. These are summarized in Table 2, as well as the results reported by the TE.

From Table 2 in this TER’s Annex, it is clear that the project fully met or exceeded 8 out of 10 specific indicators. The TE rates each of the 4 project components individually, assigning a “highly satisfactory” rating to component 1, and a “satisfactory” rating to components 3-4.

The project satisfactorily achieved grant objectives, including:

- Reduced pressure on endangered forest species used for religious ceremonies and improved livelihoods of local communities and partnerships with religious groups
- New areas under sustainable management and protection status increased in sites in ecoregions of global importance in Chiapas.
- National regulatory framework and scientific knowledge applied to sustainable management of NTFP of ritual and ceremonial value improved.
- Indigenous communities and rural peasants’ capacities and organizations strengthened to carry out sustainable harvesting of NTFP while conserving their natural habitats.
- International and national religious groups, communities and other stakeholders’ partnerships developed for sustainable consumption of forest species.

(TE pg. 2)

Results of the project were cited in the national report to the UN Biodiversity Convention by CONABIO as part of the country’s achievements in fulfilling the goal of the global conservation strategy of plants; specifically goals 12 and 13.

It is clear that project outcomes meet and often exceed the expected outcomes as described in the project document. The partial achievement of two of the expected outcomes is due to circumstances outside of the project’s control (lack of baseline information on orchids, and lack of authority on the part of the Mexican Interfaith Council). It is difficult to conceive of a potential improvement on project effectiveness. Therefore, it is rated highly satisfactory.

<b>4.3 Efficiency</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates project efficiency as satisfactory, and states that the level of resources used and the project outcome represent good efficiency despite the complexity of the project. (TE pg. 10) There were no delays in project implementation or in project completion. This TER also assesses a satisfactory rating for project efficiency..

<b>4.4 Sustainability</b>	Rating: <b>Likely</b>
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The TE rates the arrangements for sustainability as satisfactory, and rates sustainability as likely. (TE pg. 8, 9). This TER assess a Likely rating for Sustainability, because the project components have promising financial potential, the project has been well received by participants and stakeholders, and the project has successfully established the institutions and mechanisms that will continue project activities after project end.

Risks to the sustainability of project outcomes are further assessed along the following dimensions:

**Financial Risks – Sustainability Likely**

Communities are now charging a premium for sustainable harvested and produced exports, and markets in the US have been strengthened for these exports.

#### **Socio-political Risks – Sustainability Likely**

There has been successful reception of the project goals among participants. The capacity for sustainable harvesting and organization of indigenous communities and rural peasants has strengthened. International and national religious groups, private retailers, communities and other stakeholders have forged partnerships and developed capacities to support sustainable consumption of NTFP.

#### **Environmental Risks- Sustainability Likely**

Various protected areas and reserves have been established by the project. Local and traditional religious groups have established 2 botanical gardens. More than 55,000 hectares of land are under enhanced protection. Biological corridors have been created through the Sierra Madre de Chiapas as a buffer zone for core areas in El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve and La Sepultura Reserves.

#### **Institutional Risks – Sustainability Likely**

The executing organization has developed mechanisms to continue using project results and expand the impact of the lessons learnt. (TE pg. 2) Components of the project are highly replicable, such as the approach for the chain of value of a non-timber forest product, and the model for involvement of religious groups in agreements for reduction of waste and implementation of local regulations to reduce the impact of gathering. Technical approaches such, as population evaluation and development of technical guidelines are also replicable. (TE pg. 10) The support of WB/GEF has created momentum and capacities in an NGO with a permanent relationship with communities, religious groups and civil society which will in turn will guarantee a continuity rarely accomplished in government programs. (TE pg. 9)

## **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?

Project leveraged a total of MX\$1, 545,369.56, above the proposed \$1,173,746. The project was able to mobilize public funding directly to the communities in the amount of \$634, 632, most of this for infrastructure for production and commercialization of non-timber forest products (especially palm). (TE pg. 8) Co-financing represented almost 68% of the total project cost. It appears than co-financing was very important for the achievement of GEF objectives, however TE does not assess impact of co-financing on outcomes or sustainability.

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?

There were no project extensions or delays. The project was implemented and completed according to schedule.

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 rates government commitment as highly satisfactory. (TE pg. 7) The TE does not provide any explicit evidence of country ownership. Indirect evidence of country ownership may be deduced from the high success of project component achievements, and the incorporation of project elements into regional and national government agency operations.

## 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>Satisfactory</b>
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The Project Document provides a very complete logical framework for the performance, outcome, and output indicators, including the schedule for outputs and impact assessments. (PD Annex 2) Indicators are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely). The project’s fourth component includes activities related to the design and implementation of the project’s monitoring and evaluation plan, which includes establishing a baseline for indicators, establishing responsibility for monitoring and supervisory tasks, development of a monitoring and reporting system, yearly field visits, participant surveys and interviews, quarterly meetings. (PD pg. 49-50) The reporting plan includes a mid-term review, bi-annual technical and financial progress reports, and annual audits. (PD pg. 50)

The M&E plan established by the Project Document at entry was practicable and sufficient, and thus is rated satisfactory.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The TE rates M&E as satisfactory (TE pg. 7) It reports that during project implementation, regular supervision was carried out at least 2 times a year, including 4 visits of WB teams and authorities. (TE pg. 9,11) The TE reports that the project was audited by external private firms on an annual basis, and that throughout the whole life of the project, the implementing entity has prepared and submitted semi-annual Interim unaudited Financial Reports (IFRs), which were also considered acceptable. (TE pg. 7)

The 2011 PIR states that the monitoring system reports relevant information, but rates it as moderately satisfactory due to the failure of the project to conduct a Management Effectiveness

Tracking Tool (METT) for the project’s affected Protected Areas, as called for in the M&E design. (PIR 2011) The mid-term project review does not appear to have been undertaken as called for in the PD. The TE is less than satisfactorily completed. However, the project closely monitored and reported on well-developed and explicit indicators for both project outputs and outcomes.

Due to moderate shortcomings, M&E implementation is rated moderately satisfactory.

## 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>Satisfactory</b>
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The implementing agency for this project is the World Bank. The TE rates the performance of the WB as satisfactory, and the TER reviewer concurs.

The TE reports that the World Bank effectively supported the preparation of this project, even though it was a very small stand-alone operation. During the design phase, the WB assisted Pronatura in improving managerial, procurement and financial systems. The WB incorporated a social development specialist, an environment specialist, a natural resources specialist, and a country economist, all which provided guidance in project design. (TE pg. 9)

During project implementation, regular supervision was carried out at least 2 times a year, including 4 visits of WB teams and authorities. The WB also ensured collaboration with other Bank projects in the area: Natural Protected Areas, Community Forestry and Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (TE pg. 9, 11)

The TE reports that the institutional financial management systems used for budgeting, accounting, internal control, auditing and reporting ensured effective implementation and appropriate use of funds, and provided reasonable assurance that the loan proceeds were being used for the intended purposes. The financial management team provided close follow-up during the life of the project that ensuring that all project funds financed by the Bank were actually incurred and/or delivered to the final beneficiaries. (TE pg. 7)

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The executing agency for this project is Pronatura Chiapas A.C. Pronatura Chiapas is a non-profit civil organization established in 1989 with a mission to conserve priority flora, fauna and ecosystems, and to promote societal development in harmony with nature. Pronatura Chiapas A.C. is part of a national network of Pronatura offices operating in eight Mexican states. (PD Annex 5)



The TE explains that the executing organization developed mechanisms to continue using project results and expand the impact of the lessons learnt. (TE pg. 2) Project management improved gradually during implementation as Pronatura built capacity and satisfactorily incorporated guidance from WB procurement and financial management staff (TE g. 6)

During project preparation, it became apparent that there could be potential conflicts between third parties (mining concessions) and indigenous peoples who own the land and make use of the timber and non-timber products of the forests for their livelihoods and their cultural and religious rituals. These conflicts could reduce the possibility of the establishment of community protected areas. During implementation, none such conflicts emerged, which the TE attributes to the culturally appropriate way in which Pronatura approached the communities, hiring local technical people to translate the project objectives and the community's expectations and building partnerships with the different groups involved: gatherers, landowners, religious groups, government authorities and other civil society organizations working in the areas. (TE pg. 3-4)

The results of the project have been fully mainstreamed in Pronatura's work program. Pronatura is currently seeking the support of other donors for a second phase to develop a strategy to face the challenge of disseminating the experiences to interested parties nationwide. (TE pg. 10)

The TE rates the "rigorous work" conducted by the executing NGO as satisfactory (TE pg. 11), and the TER reviewer agrees.

## 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.

This project resulted in reduced environmental stress and improved environmental status:

- The establishment of managed corridors of pine oak forest and cloud forest in the Sierra Madre (part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor), through the establishment of Wildlife Management Units (UMAS) which in addition are strategically located to support conservation of the Core Zones of the Biosphere Reserve of El Triunfo and the Biosphere Reserve of La Sepultura. (TE pg. 9)
- The establishment of a new protected area for the conservation of endemic and endangered cycad *Dion merolae* (in a site where most of its global population is reported) as well as community extractive reserves for bromeliads in Chiapas highlands. (TE pg. 9)

- 4 new extractive conservation created: Altamirano (447 ha), Cerro Nambiyuguá, (4,893 ha); El Chivero (200 ha) and Ejido Fray Bartolomé (2,000 ha). Reserves will show improved management effectiveness, as indicated by PA METT. (TE pg. 4)
- 55,000 ha under enhanced protection. Biological corridors through the Sierra Madre de Chiapas as buffer zone for core areas in El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve and La Sepultura Reserves have been consolidated. Increase in conservation easements support protection of 55,000 has. (TE pg.4)

**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.

This project resulted in improved human wellbeing. The project supported the reduction of poverty in communities and families involved and contributed with specific technical guidelines for the regulation, issuance of permits and supervision of the sustainable management of these resources. Social capital was strengthened through their organizations and by promoting better communication-collaboration with environmental and rural development authorities. (TE pg. 9)

As a result of this project, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Methodists in USA pay a premium on EcoPalm, which directly benefits Mexican communities. (TE pg. 6)

**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 TE reports the following changes in capacity:

- The establishment of an orchid collection and botanical garden ranked the most important for Chiapas State and one of national value. (TE pg. 9)
- The project contributed effectively in the establishment of new organizations and consolidation of their structures to internalize best practices in production-conservation to ensure sustainability. This is especially true for the palm where an economic incentive was agreed by participant religious groups, which provides an effective premium to the best management practices adopted. CONANP is requesting replication of the experience. (TE pg. 9) The regional organization formally established in 2010 contributes to improved capacity for sustainable harvesting of NTFP, and to conserve natural habitats. (TE pg. 6)
- Palm producers created an autonomous regional organization to improve performance and benefits distribution. (TE pg. 2)
- Improved institutional coordination. (TE pg. 5)
- Knowledge products- both scientific and systematized traditional knowledge- informed regulatory improvement and enforcement, and were incorporated in the National Strategy for Plant Conservation (TE pg. 5)

- Project generated capacity in the executing agency Pronatura, but also in the national institutions responsible for wildlife management. The results of the project have informed the regulatory and monitoring functions of relevant government agencies like CONANP, CONAFOR, SEMARNAT and DGVS. (TE pg. 9)
- b) Governance - The TE reports the following changes in governance:
- The ritual use of non-timber forest products by religious communities and churches has been scarcely explored in Mexico, for this reason the project generated a baggage of new knowledge that is of great importance. As a result of this progress the Mexican government is considering the development of a non-timber forest product national strategy, considering their use for religious purposes. (TE pg. 8)
  - The establishment of managed corridors of pine oak forest and cloud forest in the Sierra Madre (part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor), through the establishment of Wildlife Management Units (UMAS) which in addition are strategically located to support conservation of the Core Zones of the Biosphere Reserve of El Triunfo and the Biosphere Reserve of La Sepultura. (TE pg. 8)
  - The establishment of a new protected area for the conservation of endemic and endangered cycad *Dion merolae* (in a site where most of its global population is reported) as well as community extractive reserves for bromeliads in Chiapas highlands. (TE pg. 8)
  - The extractive conservation reserves for sacred plants established and now managed by local communities and municipalities represent demonstration cases both for communities and conservation agencies and civil society organizations. (TE pg. 3)

**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.

There were no unintended impacts of this project.

**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.

- **Scaling Up- Adopted** The Wildlife Agency of SEMARNAT is using the project results as one of the foundations for the national strategy for the management of non-timber forest products. Technical guidelines produced by the project are being used in the revision of norms and permits. (TE pg. 3)
- **Replication- Established** The project co-hosted with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) an International Seminar on Faith and Conservation in Chiapas, and promoted the involvement of local religious groups and participation of large international associations, such as Lutheran World Relief. Commitments of participating organizations and local religious leaders on the use of project materials in their formal and informal education activities were reached and a model methodology was designed for ARC, who is evaluating the proposal for potential dissemination in Asia and Africa. (TE pg. 3)

- **Market Change** Fair trade of palms expanded and captured a larger market share during Palm Sunday and a premium market price. (TE pg. 2)
- **Replication- Established** The project contributed effectively in the establishment of new organizations and consolidation of their structures to internalize best practices in production-conservation to ensure sustainability. This is especially true for the palm where an economic incentive was agreed by participant religious groups, which provides an effective premium to the best management practices adopted. CONANP is requesting replication of the experience. (TE pg. 9)
- **Mainstreaming- Adopted** Knowledge products- both scientific and systematized traditional knowledge- informed regulatory improvement and enforcement, and were incorporated in the National Strategy for Plant Conservation (TE pg. 5)
- **Mainstreaming- Adopted** Project results are being disseminated and will continue to be disseminated through different media. Specifically CONANP is promoting the adoption of the project best practices and lessons in other communities in Sierra Madre. The projects executed by Rainforest Alliance and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor in the area (Chiapas-Oaxaca) will use project results and information, specifically with regards to the management of palm. The National Commission for Biodiversity has validated the information and incorporated the knowledge reported by the project in the National Plant Conservation Strategy and the national report on case studies. Semarnat's Wildlife Agency is interested in the use of project results and methodologies in the regulation, issuance of permits and supervision of the use of other non-timber forest products in Mexico. (TE pg. 10)
- **Mainstreaming- Established** The coordination achieved between indigenous peoples with lands and natural resources within National Natural Protected Areas or Community Conservation Areas, and the environmental authorities will allow lessons to be internalized in the consolidation of the Natural Protected Areas System. (TE pg. 3)
- **Mainstreaming- Adopted** The results of the project have been fully mainstreamed in Pronatura's work program. Pronatura is currently seeking the support of other donors for a second phase to develop a strategy to face the challenge of disseminating the experiences to interested parties nationwide. (TE pg. 10)

## 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.

The TE lists the following lessons learned (TE pg. 8-9):

- The structures of the religious groups are very complex and vary at from country to country (ie. from Mexico to the United States) and among different faiths, therefore the design of this projects need to allocate enough resources to facilitate better communication and engagement with these institutions.
- There is a gap between the Western World religious groups and the traditional indigenous celebrations, deriving in unique difficulties to integrate the collaborative efforts despite the interest and the great disposition. It is important to recognize such differences and recognize the common grounds between the orthodox based religious tradition and those that result from syncretism.

- Basic environmental education is needed among the religious leaders to promote awareness on environmental problems.
- Economic incentives for the extractive reserves need to be improved and supported by public programs. There is little recognition of the economic value of these plants by the consumers and even by the producers. Although the pressure of collecting them increases every year, making them a scarce good, there is perception of abundance, which hinders the development of a local market.
- There is a potential for expanding the market for non timber forest products, which in turn has the potential to significantly contribute to alleviate poverty, but this requires not only investments in the production as well as in the market development area, but also making the community and institutional arrangement to support biodiversity friendly and fair trade commitments along the value chain, supporting the regulating agencies to develop appropriate standards and promote sustainable practices.
- The need to increase the economic value (and return) of these forests might include other sources, such as public incentives and support for other forest management activities.
- External threats such as roads, agriculture and cattle are affecting the forest where the sacred plants exist.
- Despite the fact that the resources allocated for the mobilization and involvement of religious groups was not enough to generate the level of commitment expected, the innovative approach of the project and the lack of previous experiences in the country generated support and raised expectations that resulted in a multidimensional project which has succeed in its implementation goals.
- The project found several shortcomings in the current programs and institutional arrangements in Mexico which generate difficulties for the conservation and sustainable management of non timber forest products.
- One of the critical areas adequately anticipated was the need to invest time and resources in generating basic information, to allow the design of management methods and standards.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE lists the following recommendations (TE pg. 10):

- Better assessment on key actors such as the religious groups and the indigenous traditional groups as to understand the main role in the project and the capacity of act as an institution for conservation purpose.
- Better distribution of project funding to provide enough finance for communications and development of religious groups involvement and capacity, and funding to increase the market.
- Partnering with research institutions for long term assessment of wild populations.
- Project design with less indicators crossed between objectives and outputs.

## 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	The TE contains a thorough and specific assessment of the relevant outcomes and impacts of the project.	HS

project and the achievement of the objectives?		
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is internally consistent, and the ratings well substantiated. However, more information is needed on the M&E implementation.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE provides sufficient information on project sustainability.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are supported by the evidence and comprehensive.	HS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE reports briefly on co-financing (TE pg. 10), but does not offer enough detail. It reports the grant disbursement in total and throughout the project, but does not report on project costs per activity. More detail is needed.	MU
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE rates the project's M&E systems, but does not contain sufficient information or detail.	MU
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>S</b>

$$0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f) = 0.3(11) + 0.1(17) = 3.3 + 1.7 = 5$$

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

No additional sources of information were used in the preparation of this TER, other than PIRs, TE, PD, and Project Review Sheet.

## 12. Annex

**Table 2:** Project components, expected results, indicators, and results as reported by the TE. (PD pg. 7-9, 27-43, Annex 2, TE pg. 4- 5)

Component	Expected Outcome	Indicators	Results
1. Knowledge management for the conservation of species used in ceremonies.	Legal national framework and knowledge for management improved for the conservation and sustainable use of NTFP of ritual and ceremonial value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable harvesting rates defined for palms in Yr1 and for bromeliads and orchid flowers in Yr2</li> <li>4 technical guidelines for bromeliads, palms, orchids and cycads spp elaborated and presented to environmental authorities</li> <li>Participant communities have legal authorization for species sustainable use</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially achieved.</b> Achieved for bromeliads, palms and cycads, but not for orchids, due to scarce information on wild populations.</p> <p><b>Achieved.</b> Technical guidelines developed, presented to authorities &amp; discussed in workshops. 4 technically robust proposals for adequate regulation achieved.</p> <p><b>Achieved.</b></p>

2. NTFP Cultural Participatory Management Plans	Indigenous communities and rural peasants' capacity and organization strengthened for sustainable harvesting of NTFP and conservation of habitats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 communities are organized for planning, decision making and benefit sharing in non-timber resources management strategies at Yr3</li> <li>• 300 people trained in techniques for non-timber species management</li> <li>• 1 regional organization of palm producers established Yr3</li> <li>• At least 10 Community subprojects (i.e. botanical gardens, fuel saving stoves, programs for productive enrichment, etc.) are financed and assisted by the project.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> Model strategy and knowledge management program in progress to develop Cultural Management Plans for NTFP of Ritual Use in collaboration with religious communities.</p> <p><b>Achieved and exceeded.</b> 302 people trained, including 40 technicians and government staff. 500 additional people participated in training workshops and received educational and informative materials on best practices.</p> <p><b>Achieved.</b></p> <p><b>Achieved and exceeded.</b> 17 subprojects implemented.</p>
3. Partnership building with religious groups for conservation and the promotion of fair markets	International and national religious groups, communities and other stakeholders' partnerships developed for sustainable consumption of forest species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 religious congregations in the US participate in collaborating agreements for b-friendly and fair trade market of NTFP used for ceremonial purposes</li> <li>• Mexican Interfaith Council purchases include at least 2% of the sustainable-fair trade products</li> <li>• Local and traditional religious groups establish 2 botanical gardens of ceremonial plants and promote 3 extractive reserves of sacred plants</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved and exceeded.</b> 3 congregations actively involved. Model partnership of religious congregations working for nature conservation</p> <p><b>Partially achieved.</b> Mexican Interfaith Council actively participated in the International Seminar on Faith and Conservation organized by Pronatura and ARC, and shares and promotes the project objectives, but has no capacity to purchase or promote sales of said products.</p> <p><b>Achieved.</b> Local and traditional religious groups establish 2 botanical gardens of ceremonial plants.</p>
4. Project management,			<b>Achieved.</b> Project management improved gradually during

monitoring and evaluation			implementation as the NGO built capacity and satisfactorily incorporated guidance from WB procurement and financial management staff
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