Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2015

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3578	
GEF Agency project ID		PIMS 3806	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Capacity Building for Planning, Decision Making and Regulatory Systems & Awareness Building / Sustainable Land Management in Severely Degraded Ecosystems	
Country/Countries		Cuba	
Region		Latin America and Caribbean	
Focal area		Land Degradation	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP 15 Sustainable Land Management	
Executing agencies involved		Agencia de Medio Ambiente (AMA); Ministerio de Ciencias, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente (CITMA)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Through consultations (e.g. National Association of Small Farmers)	
Private sector involvement		No Involvement	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		06/05/2008	
Effectiveness date / project start		11/17/2008	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		11/30/2013	
Actual date of project completion		11/30/2014	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US $M) (TE, p.4)	**At Completion (US $M) (TE, p.4)**
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		3.50	3.50
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	25.19	37.70
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.63	
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		3.50	3.50
Total Co-financing		25.82	37.70
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		29.32	41.20
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		06/2015 (TE, p.1)	
Author of TE		Dr. Wilfried Leupolz	
TER completion date		03/15/2016	
TER prepared by		Chenhao Liu	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Molly Watts	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	HS	HS	NR	S
Sustainability of Outcomes		L	NR	L
M&E Design		HS	NR	S
M&E Implementation		S	NR	S
Quality of Implementation		HS	NR	S
Quality of Execution		HS	NR	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		-	-	MS

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's Global Environmental Objective (GEO) is that "Cuba has the capacities and conditions for sustainably managing land in a manner that contributes to maintaining ecosystem productivity and functions". (PD, p.21)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is "to create capacities and awareness for planning, decision making and regulation, necessary for the application of SLM (Sustainable Land Management) in Cuba." (PD, p.21) The PDO was supported by five expected results: (PD, p.21-27)

"Outcome 1: Systems for planning, regulation, decision-making and coordination are functioning effectively in support of SLM at national, provincial and local levels.

Outcome 2: Key actors at all levels reflect increased awareness of SLM issues in programs, projects and activities.

Outcome 3: An integrated SLM model, for application at small scale in areas with highly degraded ecosystems and extreme climatic conditions and potential for replication throughout Cuba, has been tested and applied at field level.

Outcome 4: A system for monitoring extreme climatic events and the degradation of water and soil resources, with potential for replication throughout Cuba is applied at field level

Outcome 5: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback & evaluation increased"

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

There were no changes in GEOs and PDOs during the project implementation. The MTR in 2012 recommended that the project "implement the monitoring of some complementary biophysical indicators" (TE, p.26), which led to some adjustments of project indicators, such as the adding of "Number of SLM and development programs which base design and ongoing management decisions on up to date and accurate information on biophysical and socioeconomic conditions" under the project development

objective. In addition, due to the difficulty in importing necessary equipment for use of the project at the project's inception, the project was granted a one-year extension to November 2014.

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 **Relevance**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

In a 6-point scale, The TE rated the project's relevance as "Highly Satisfactory". In a binary scale (Unsatisfactory/Satisfactory), this TER will rate the project's outcome relevance as "Satisfactory". The project is consistent with relevant strategic priorities for development at the national and international level.

The project belongs to GEF's Land Degradation focal area, and it contributes directly to Strategic Objective 1 of the GEF Focal Area Strategy for Land Degradation, namely to foster system-wide change through the removal of policy, institutional, technical, capacity and financial barriers to SLM focusing at the country level. The project will also contribute to Strategic Objective 2 of the GEF Focal Area Strategy for Land Degradation, namely demonstration and up-scaling of successful SLM practices for the control and prevention of desertification and deforestation.

The project is consistent with the development priority at the country level as well. It addresses four of the five environmental problems identified in the National Environmental Strategy *2011-2015* of Cuba (soil degradation, deforestation, pollution of land and biological diversity), and it is also a part of the country's actions toward honoring its responsibilities under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD), which Cuba signed in 1995 and ratified in March 1997. (TE, p.7)

4.2 **Effectiveness**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

The TE rated the project's outcome effectiveness as "Highly Satisfactory". In the same rating scale, this TER will rate the project's outcome as "Satisfactory". Based on the evidence presented by the PIR 2015, a significant portion of project targets were overachieved or fully achieved, with the rest on the track for full achievement or partly achieved. A comparison of the project's achievements against the targets of its indicators is presented below: (PIR 2015, p.4-26)

The project development objective was to create capacities and awareness for planning, decision making and regulation, necessary for the application of SLM (Sustainable Land Management) in Cuba. The first target, that "all of 8 designated national development program will include SLM approach and will also involve participation of more than one sector by the EOP" was almost fully achieved. By the project end it was confirmed that at least 6 of 8 national development programs (2013 data) had included SLM approach with many of them involving participation of stakeholders from multiple sectors. The second target, that "16 SLM and development projects in all 8 national development programs by the EOP will base their design and ongoing management decisions on up to date and accurate information on other initiatives" was fully achieved. By mid-2014 72 projects in all 8 national programs had met the target. The third target, that "all 8 national development programs by the EOP will base their design and ongoing management decisions on up to date and accurate information on biophysical and socioeconomic conditions" was also fully fulfilled as all 8 national development programs by the end of the project were able to do that in line with the target.

Outcome 1 was that systems for planning, regulation, decision-making and coordination are functioning effectively in support of SLM at national, provincial and local levels. The first target, that "For institute of soils, technical regulations of decree 179 were updated (to incorporate SLM) and well-functioning by Year 3; For MINAZ (Ministry of Sugar) and MINAG (Ministry of Agriculture), 16 technical standards criteria were updated (to incorporate SLM) and functioning by the EOP; 10 updated hydraulic sector norms are established" was fully achieved. By the end of the project, information from the PIR 2015 clearly confirms that decree 179 is updated an functioning, and 101 technical standards related to soil, water and forest were updated (85 more than originally planned), of which, 7 correspond to water management in agriculture and 10 procedures for evaluating irrigation machines. The second target, that "The updated New National Environment Strategy (which incorporates SLM) was in place and well-functioning" was also achieved. By the end of the project, the updated strategy was well-functioning with the support of the implementation of the Decree-Law 300.

Outcome 2 was that key actors at all levels reflect increased awareness of SLM issues in programs, projects and activities. Target 1, a 20% increase in the percentage of staffs related to SLM within 4 key line ministries nationwide was achieved and surpassed in some cases. The ministries and their increase in staff were as follows: MINAG- 22.5%; MINAZ- 20%; INRH (National Institute of Hydraulic Resources) (20%);- 20% IPF (National Institute of Physical Planning)- 20%. Target 2 was also achieved, as 291 non-state farms (compared to a target of 236), 302 individual producers (compared to a target, 256) in CCS (Credit and Service Cooperative), and 22 state enterprises (target 20) will have received support from line ministry extension staff to implement SLM practices. The third target was that the project would publish information on policy, legal and regulatory changes related to SLM in the fields of soil, forest and water management in accessible language. This target was partly achieved. By mid-2014, 20 educational texts, more than 10 informative and promotional materials, and state environmental inspection guidelines under this project have been produced/published covering relevant topics. Target 4 was that 70% of local populations throughout Cuba are aware of regulatory and planning processes based on SLM by the end of the project. This target was almost achieved. By mid-2014, 70% of total declared project areas have reached this goal via a number of advocacy activities, with significant spillover into other areas.

Outcome 3 was that an integrated SLM model, for application at small scale in areas with highly degraded ecosystems and extreme climatic conditions and for replication throughout Cuba, has been tested and applied at field level. Target 1 was exceeded, as in the Pinar del Rio (intervention) region, 3 demonstration sites (target 3) and 4 productive entities (target 3), and in the Guantanamo (intervention) region 2 demonstration sites (target 2) and 5 production entities (target 2) have received technical assistance on practices for SLM. Target 2 was exceeded, as in the Pinar del Rio region, 1 provincial level land use plans (target 1), 11 municipal level land use plans (target 3), and 6 land use plans for community-based organizations (target 6) based on SLM principles have been developed; in the Guantanamo region, 1 provincial level land use plan (target 1), 7 municipal level land use plans (target 4), and 2 land use plans (target 2) for demonstration sites based on SLM principles have been developed. Target 3 was significantly exceeded, as in the Pinar del Rio region 659 ha agricultural land (target 600 ha), 65.3 ha of grazing lands (target 26.8 ha), 29.8 ha of forest lands (target 5 ha) have been under sustainable management; in the Guantanamo region, 62 ha of agricultural lands (target 8 ha), 17 ha of grazing lands (target 14 ha), 3 ha of forest lands (target 2 ha) have been under sustainable management. Target 4 was also exceeded, as in the Pinar del Rio region, 119 Individual Farmers (target 85), 9 Cooperatives (target 4), 2 State Companies (target 2) have applied the SLM practices; In the Guantanamo region, 20 individual farmers (target 8), 2 cooperatives (target 2), 4 state companies (target 4) have applied the SLM practices. Target 5 was also significantly exceeded, as for the soil-eroded area there has been a 13.9% reduction in Guantanamo region (target 5%) and 37.5 % reduction in Pinar del Rio region (target 10%). Target 6 was also exceeded, as the volume of irrigation water used per ton of agricultural crops produced deceased to 520 (target 750). Target 7 was also exceeded, as the productivity of root crops, tobacco and grains in the Pinar del Rio region has reached average 3.4 tons/ha/year (target 3.0), and that of plantain and root crops in the Guantanamo region has reached average 7 tons/ha/year (target 5.0).

Outcome 4 was that a system for monitoring extreme climatic events and the degradation of water and soil resources is established, with potential for replication throughout Cuba is applied at field level. Target 1 was that a M&E and early warning system for extreme climatic events and degradation of water and soil resources is established and functioning in an integrated manner in the Pinar del Rio region, and it was achieved as such system was established and functioning well. Target 2 was that a communication network for sharing information on existing conditions, threats/barriers, and management systems for land resources is established and functioning between all key participating entities in the Pinar del Rio region, and it was 85% completed by mid-2014. Target 3 was that a local database on conditions of soil and water resources and climate is established and provides information to 100% of local production entities in the Pinar del Rio region, and the database was established meeting the original expectations. Target 4 was that information tools and systems are in place for dissemination of lessons learned and best practices from Pinar del Rio region. This target has been met. The SLM theme was incorporated into the objectives of the Provincial Environmental Education Strategy and the Diplomate of Corporate Environmental Management, and workshops, conference development trainings on SLMs have been held national wide with the aim of knowledge sharing.

Outcome 5 was the establishment an effective system for monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback & evaluation. Target 1 was the production of 5 annual work plans and budgets and 5 PIRs which adequately

take into account the results of monitoring and evaluation. This target was partly achieved, as 5 PIRs and 1 annual work plan were produced. Target 2 was the production of 2 documents by the end of year 3 on lessons learnt produced and disseminated within the GEF system. The EOP statistics confirm the production of at least 1 of such documents.

Overall, based on the comparison above it would be reasonable to reach the conclusion that achievement of expected project results was at a "satisfactory" level.

4.3 **Efficiency**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

The TE rated the project's outcome efficiency as "Highly Satisfactory". This TER will rate the project's outcome efficiency as "Moderately Satisfactory". Evidence presented by relevant project documents confirmed the project's cost-effectiveness at a satisfied level.

The TE presented the following positive conclusions on the project's outcome efficiency: The use of resources was efficient in the sense of achieving the expected results and objectives. The extent to which progress has been made in achieving these results was high and the project's investments have been effectively converted into high economic results. (TE, p.36-37) UNDP supervises the financial planning efficiently. (TE, p.26) The TE shows clear evidence (but with no clear statement) that the satisfactory project outcomes were significantly supported by the co-financing from the Cuban government (materialization rate 141%) (TE, p.27-28).

the project has undergone some delays at its beginning due to the "insufficient coordination between authorities to import materials from abroad and has made necessary the time extension to guarantee the expected results." The early delay necessities a one-year extension, but this extension involves "no GEF investment funds".(TE, p.19) And, relevant project document didn't report any impact of this delay on project outcome.

Overall, combining the overall evidence on the project's outcome efficiency, a rating of "Moderately Satisfactory" in this area is justified.

4.4 **Sustainability**	**Rating: Likely**

The TE rated the project's overall sustainability as "Likely" based on its assessment of four sub-categories of sustainability in a 4-point scale: Financial resource sustainability (Likely); Socio-political sustainability (Likely); Institutional sustainability (Likely); Environmental sustainability (Likely). This TER will rate the project's sustainability as "Likely" after assessing the four sub-categories of sustainability below. Based on the evidence presented by the TE, the project has led to desired institutional change and garnered sufficient political support, all of which will contribute to its sustainability, but it lacks immediate financial support for scale-up and there were environmental risks to its impact. However, due to the project's status as the sibling project of a larger project whose global environmental objective are the same as this

project and it is expected the project's sister projects will start soon after this project, the project's impacts are likely to be sustainable.

Financial Resource Sustainability- Moderately Likely

The TE rated the project's financial sustainability as "Likely". This TER will rate the project's financial sustainability as "Moderately Likely". Relevant project documents did not identify any immediate project scale-up or replication, or proven financial commitment from any sources with the aim of sustaining the project impact. But the project (P1) is a direct component of a larger program "Country Program Partnership (CPP)" which was designed to directly implement the programmatic orientation of the National Program to Combat Desertification and Drought in Cuba. Thus, it is expected that P2-P4 with the similar project objectives to be implemented, which will entail more financial resources invested in achieving similar objectives as that of P1 and therefore indirectly contributes to the financial sustainability of P1.

Socio-political Sustainability- Likely

The TE rated the project's socio-political sustainability as "Likely", and this TER will adopt the same rating. The TE provided strong evidence for the project's social and political sustainability: "In Cuba there are no social or political risks that could threaten the sustainability of project results P1. The various stakeholders in Cuba noted with interest that the program's benefits continue to flow, especially with its positive socio-economic impact at the level of the producers. The project has specific outcomes with sufficient awareness / knowledge of its stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of long-term objectives of P1" (TE, p.37)

Also, as the first part of the larger program "Country Program Partnership" (CPP), the political support received during this project will continue supporting this project's sister project under the CPP, through which the project's own results will be sustained.

Institutional Sustainability- Likely

The TE rated the project's institutional sustainability as "Likely", and this TER will rate the project's institutional sustainability as "Likely". The project made significant achievements in upgrading the country's institutions, in the form of decrees, technical regulations, land use plans and national development programs to incorporate the SLM practice. As the project also fits the country's prior need for development, these changes are unlikely to be reversible. As the TE mentioned "linking the SLM with the guidelines" will "make it very unlikely that the sustainability of the benefits will be jeopardized through the political authorities of Cuba". (TE, p.37)

Also, the TE mentioned that a monitoring system to track the CPP's programs in advancing the SLM practice nationwide has been built up as a result of this project (P1), which will serve as an institutional basis for P1's sister projects and also for tracking the long-term impact of P1. (TE, p.30)

Environmental Sustainability- Moderately Likely

The TE rated the project's environmental sustainability as "Likely". This TER will rate it as "Moderately Likely". The project's status as the sibling project of CPP, and project's high likelihood of social and institutional sustainability in both the short-run and long-run can predict a high probability of the project's environmental sustainability. However, although it didn't specify in detail, the TE mentioned that "there are ongoing activities that pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of the project results" (TE, p.37). The Final PIR in 2015 also clearly pointed out that the current high incidence of hurricanes and the current drought event increases the probability of land degradation and poses threats to the project outcomes, which can be mitigated via the early warning system built up through the project. (PIR 2015, p.35)

Overall, this TER's rating of "Likely" for the project's sustainability is justified.

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?

The project's initial planned level of co-financing was USD 25,821,531, and the actual level of co-financing was USD 37,699,281, indicating a materialization rate of 141%. The Cuban government is the only source for co-financing. The higher-than-expected co-financing is mainly due to the underspending at the project start due to the project's delay at its inception. Execution rate for co-financing was high (TE, p.27-28). Relevant project documents didn't specify the linkage between project outcome/sustainability and co-financing.

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?

Due to institutional complexity which led to the difficulty in the timely import of certain materials for use of the project, the project was delayed at its inception, and was therefore extended for one year (TE, p.19). The extension had no real impact on project outcome and sustainability according to information currently available from relevant project documents.

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 link

The project's country-ownership was at a high-level. The project's remarkable success in its outcome should be credited with the substantial support from its executing agencies, who are directly branches of Cuba's national government and therefore are able to take the advantage of their status via effectively coordinating and organizing the project's execution. The project also involved significant participation of relevant stakeholders, such as individual farmers, members of cooperatives, peasant leaders, and also stakeholders from other sectors such as NGOs, from where the project garnered strong technical expertise and political support which are crucial for the project's success in its outcome. The multi-

stakeholder participation and multi-sector cooperation, which are also a part of the expected project outcomes and through which a high-level national drivenness was fostered, have significantly contributed to the project outcome and became part of the factors contributing to the projects' social and political sustainability.

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.

6.1 **M&E Design at entry**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

The TE rated the M&E design at entry as "Highly Satisfactory". This TER will rate this area as "Satisfactory". Relevant Information from the project document indicates a sound and comprehensive M&E design at entry.

The project's logical framework rolled out in the project document (including the project development objective and the five project outcome components) was used constantly throughout the project process for project monitoring. Each outcome was measured by a number of indicators consistent with the SMART principle. For example, "Number of production entities in Pinar del Río and Guantánamo intervention areas receiving technical assistance on practices for SLM" was identified as indicators for the outcome 3 "An integrated SLM model, for application at small scale in areas with highly degraded ecosystems and extreme climatic conditions and potential for replication throughout Cuba, has been tested and applied at field level". For these indicators, their targets by the end of project and by certain project year, baseline value, and source of verification were all specified. The project documents also provided a detailed arrangement for the project's M&E activities/events, responsible parties, quarterly/annual reporting, Mid-Term/Terminal Evaluation. Finally, an USD 109,000 was planned as the M&E budget.

Overall, considering both the soundness of the project's M&E design at entry, a rating of "Satisfactory" is justified.

6.2 **M&E Implementation**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

The TE rated the M&E implementation as "Satisfactory". This TER will adopt the same rating. Evidence presented by relevant project documents confirms a successful M&E implementation.

A highly remarkable success of M&E implementation is the consistency of project logic framework in measuring the project progress toward achieving its expected outputs as compared to other similar GEF projects. All project PIRs since the project start have reported against the same project logic framework in tracking the project's process toward its targets by comparing the current status of each indicator against the its status in previous years, baseline level and the target level. The indicators under each outcome component have been also in general consistent over the project years, with a few adjustments after the MTR. The PIRs were issued on time, and have also followed standard UNDP/GEF formats by including periodic assessment of the project's outcome achievement, project implementation, the project finance, risks, and knowledge management/partnership.

The MTR was conducted in 2012, and its recommendations such as "Promptly implementing more effective irrigation systems in demonstration sites and implementing the monitoring of some complementary biophysical indicators" were all adopted in the project implementation afterwards. (TE, p.26) The Terminal Evaluation is comprehensive, evidence convincing with the majority of its ratings well-substantiated.

Overall, a rating of "Satisfactory" for the project M&E implementation is justified.

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.

7.1 **Quality of Project Implementation**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

The project's implementing agency is UNDP. The TE rated the "Quality of UNDP Implementation" as "Highly Satisfactory". This TER rates quality of UNDP implementation as "Satisfactory". Based on the evidence presented by the TE, UNDP has successfully fulfilled its role as the project's implementing agency.

UNDP was involved in the project design (TE, p.11), and was the one of the members of the National Steering Committee. (TE, p.22) UNDP is responsible for monitoring the project and for the allocation of funds, based on the planning of the AOP (Annual Operational Plans). The monitoring of activities has been satisfactory as confirmed by both the ratings from the TE and this TER (TE, p.26), and "a very effective instrument" for the monitoring of this project is the PIR, which UNDP has done every year and all of which are consistent with UNDP/GEF standard reporting formats (TE, p.26). The TE also confirmed that UNDP has supervised the financial planning efficiently. (TE, p.26)

Overall, the “Satisfactory” rating of quality of project implementation was justified.

7.2 **Quality of Project Execution**	**Rating: Satisfactory**

The project’s executing agency is the Environment Agency (AMA, or Agencia de Medio Ambiente in Spanish) under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA). The AMA was also fully responsible for the execution of the project’s umbrella project: Country Program Partnership (CPP) "Support for the implementation of the national action program to combat desertification and drought in Cuba”. The TE rated the quality of project execution as “Highly Satisfactory”. Considering the evidence presented by the TE regarding the project’s overall execution process, this TER will rate the project’s overall quality of execution as “Satisfactory”. The project’s overall execution has been successful based on existing evidence presented by relevant project documents.

The relationship between UNDP (the project implementing agency) and the AMA was regulated by the planning and execution of the Annual Operation Plan (AOP). The AMA was responsible for incorporating in the economic plan the acquisitions of the project planned in the AOP for approval of the higher authorities. (TE, p.20) The AMA chaired the project management unit (TE, p.22), and it was also responsible for the management of the CPP program and ensuring its sibling projects could meet the objectives and projected results, using effective and efficient the resources allocated and ensuring an effective coordination for the implementation of the national project for combating desertification and drought. (TE, p.21) For this project, the use of resources was efficient in the sense of achieving the expected results and objectives. The extent to which progress has been made in achieving these results was high and the project’s investments have been effectively converted into high economic results. (TE, p.36-37) In addition, the TE evaluator observed “very good coordination between actors from different institutions.” (TE, p.20) This was the first CPP project implemented and managed by UNDP and led by the AMA. Although the structure of the project management appears vertical, it works well and has a flow of governance from the bottom up and top down. (TE, p.38)

The project had delays at its inception, but it was due to the legal constraints of the country to the import of necessary materials for the project’s operation, which was “outside the scope of the executing agency” (TE, p.21)

Overall, considering the demonstrated success of project execution, a rating of “Satisfactory” in this area is justified.

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.

The TE reported following environment change led by the project:

The project will directly result in the reduction of land degradation in an area of 721 ha of farmland, 80 ha of grassland and 33 ha of forest land in five demonstration areas and replication sites where it will be applied. It is expected that the rate of land erosion currently estimated between 10 and 40 t/ha/year will be reduced by between 10 and 70%. (TE, p.44)

Globally, the project and the CPP project in large will bring as a result an increase in ecosystem functions in 1104.439 ha of farmland, grassland and forest land, as estimated in the CPP program. In addition to the benefits related to the reduction of land degradation, the project generates significant overall benefits in other areas of interest. Reducing the rate of land erosion will benefit international waters. In the area of biodiversity, the project will reduce the pressures on important global ecosystem called: Cuban Pine Forest, Cuban Dry Forest and Cuban Humid Forest. (TE, p.44)

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.

The TE clearly pointed out the project has achieved to change the consciousness of the producers in favor of a more sustainable production that allows higher incomes than before. (TE, p.6) Also, production with environment-friendly technology has increased the performance of the production and income of rural families, so in some of the demonstration sites and areas of replication the salary of producers has increased in recent years in relation to the baseline. (TE, p.39) In addition, the project generated the process of social inclusion in Cuba with the effective participation of major groups and stakeholders (TE, p.44)

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 reported the following change in capacities: (PIR 2015, p4-26)

For the 8 designated national development programs (the National Soil Improvement and Conservation Programme, the National Hydraulic Programme, the National Watershed Programme, the National Forestry Programme, the Science and Technological Innovation Programme, the National Programme for the Reconversion of the Sugar Industry, the National Programme for Land Use Planning , Plan Turquino), at least 6 of these 8 national development programs have included SLM (Sustainable Land Management) approach with many of them involving participation of stakeholders from multiple sectors. 72 SLM and development projects in all 8 national development programs started to base their design and ongoing management decisions on up to date and accurate information on other initiatives. All 8 national programs started to base their design and ongoing management decisions on up to date and accurate information on biophysical and socioeconomic conditions.

There was more than a 20% increase in the percentage of staffs related to SLM within 4 key line ministries nationwide: MINAG (Ministry of Agriculture); MINAZ (Ministry of Sugar); INRH (National Institute of Hydraulic Resources); IPF (National Institute of Physical Planning). A significantly increasing number of non-state farms, individual producers in CCS (Credit and Service Cooperative) and state enterprises have received support from line ministry extension staff to implement SLM practices. 20 educational texts, more than 10 informative and promotional materials, and state environmental inspection guidelines under the project have been produced/published covering relevant topics reflecting the policy, legal and regulatory changes after incorporating SLM contents.

A research project has been conducted by the Centre of Cuban Institute of Radio and Television Social Research in order to assess the knowledge of people about SLM and the impact of media. 140 training activities on SLM were conducted where over 3900 people from different sectors participated. A total of 1730 news events of various kinds related to the SLM and the project were developed, with participation of 24,483 people of different age and sectors. On national television channels, 24 programs dedicated to issues related to sustainable agriculture and SLM were performed. TV spot about forests, soils, biodiversity, and use of renewable energy sources throughout the year were presented. The website http://www.educambiente.co.cu/Desercuba/index.php throughout the year 2013 has had a total of 50104 visits.

3 demonstration sites and 4 productive entities in the Pinar del Rio (intervention) region, and 2 demonstration sites and 5 production entities in the Guantanamo (intervention) region have received technical assistance on SLM practices. In the Pinar del Rio region, 1 provincial level land use plan, 11 municipal level land use plans, and 6 land use plans for community-based organizations based on SLM principles were developed; in the Guantanamo region, 1 provincial level land use plan, 7 municipal level land use plans, and 2 land use plans for demonstration sites based on SLM principles were developed. In the Pinar del Rio region 659 ha of agricultural land, 65.3 ha of grazing land, 29.8 ha of forest land were under sustainable management; in the Guantanamo region, 62 ha of agricultural land, 17 ha of grazing land, 3 ha of forest land were under sustainable management by the EOP. In the Pinar del Rio region, 119 individual farmers, 9 cooperatives, and 2 state companies started applying the SLM practices by the EOP; In the Guantanamo region, 20 individual farmers, 2 cooperatives, and 4 state companies started applying

the SLM practices. The volume of irrigation water used per ton of agricultural crops in the Guantanamo intervention area produced decreased to 520. There was an increase in the productivity of staple crops in both the Pinar del Rio and the Guantanamo region.

M&E and early warning system for extreme climatic events and the degradation of water and soil resources was established and functioning in an integrated manner in the Pinar del Rio region. The establishment of a communication network for sharing information on existing conditions, threats/barriers, and management systems for land resources functioning between all key participating entities in the Pinar del Rio region was completed by 85%. A local database on conditions of soil and water resources and climate was established in the Pinar del Rio region which provides information to 100% of local production entities. Information tools and systems were established and in place for dissemination of lessons learned and best practices from Pinar del Rio region.

b) Governance

The TE reported following change in governance: (PIR 2015, p.4-26)

Decree 179 was updated to incorporate SLM contents and is functioning well. 101 technical standards related to soil, water and forest were updated (85 more than originally planned). The updated New National Environment Strategy (which incorporates SLM) is in place and functioning well, with the support of the implementation of the Decree-Law 300.

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.

Relevant project documents didn't identify any 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.

The project didn't have any immediate scale-up or replication, but as this project was approved under the CPP (Country Program Partnership) program, the project's sister projects which are to be implemented after this project will contribute to the same GEO as this project. Also, the TE did mention that during the project "a comprehensive model of sustainable land management in severely degraded drylands for application in small scale landscapes has been tested and implemented, and a model for climate monitoring and land degradation has been implemented and tested", and they all have potential for replication in many other places in Cuba. (TE, p.5)

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 summarized the following lessons learned (TE, p.6-7):

- "Only actions that have government approval ensure long-term sustainability, so there are no contradictions between the government and the project. The policy guidelines and strategy of project P1(the project code) are attuned to the needs of producers in the demonstration sites and are the basis to produce an effective, efficient and friendly way with the environment and thus protect the long-term natural resources.

- The exact selection of actors is important in the design of the project. For the construction of the anticipated results it is important that all stakeholders in the project are present and actively participate.

- The selection of equipment and supplies that are purchased on a project of this type with imports must be acquired as early as possible, to not waste time and delay the progress of the project.

- The risks can be managed with adaptive management, necessary to respond to all the problems and circumstances that arise in the way of the project.

- Only an understandable language of the logical framework ensures the active participation of the producers because without them an SLM project cannot be successful.

- Partnerships at all levels allow more effective and efficient use of funds. The partnership between UNDP - GEF and the government of Cuba was successful in fundraising.

- Do not overload the workers of institutions with tasks outside the project to ensure the quality of their work."

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE provided the following recommendations (TE, p.6):

- "P1 (The project code) actions were successful, viable and sustainable, so it is important to replicate also in the future actions of P2, P3 and P4. These actions should be prioritized so that the results of future projects are introduced in regulatory and political platforms of Sustainable Land Management. Equally important is the publication of the increases in production and of the most important advances in the results, to contribute to an international debate about SLM and the conditions necessary to implement a successful project.

- For the success of future projects, it is necessary to generate increases in the income of farmers, improving their knowledge and access to financing and markets, in addition to sufficient resources in consulting and training in all the demonstration sites. Sites should be expanded in the demonstration

areas for the replication of good practices of SLM, which will help conserve resources like soil, water and forests, as well as increasing the diversity of animal and plant production to foster the reduction of disaster vulnerability of populations.

- GEF funding should be only an initial contribution while establishing alliances with national and international donors and thus ensure the future viability and sustainability of GEF projects. The adaptation to the circumstances of Cuba in the import of equipment and supplies is necessary, considering the difficulties in this regard."

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?	The TE assessed the project's achievements, but without comparing them in detail with the expected targets	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE report is internally consistent, evidence presented complete and convincing, with the majority of its ratings well-substantiated	**Satisfactory**
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE assessed the project's sustainability with sufficient evidence, but more details would be preferable; the TE didn't mention the project's exit strategy	**Moderately Satisfactory**
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The "Lessons Learned" section is adequate and comprehensive.	**Satisfactory**
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE presented in detail the actual costs (total and per activity), as well as the actual co-financing executed. (one of the most detailed financial breakdown I have ever seen)	**Highly Satisfactory**
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The project's assessment of M&E is adequate, but more information such as the quality of indicators will be preferable.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
		Moderately Satisfactory

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

In the preparation of this TER, no additional documents were referred to as the source of information apart from PIRs, TE, and PD.