

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2018

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		4777	
GEF Agency project ID		615694	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		FAO	
Project name		Mainstreaming of the Use and Conservation of Agrobiodiversity in Public Policies through Integrated Strategies and in situ Implementation in three Provinces in the Andean Highlands	
Country/Countries		Ecuador	
Region		LAC	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD-2- Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors; BD-4 Build Capacity on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing.	
Executing agencies involved		National Institute of Agricultural Research Ecuador (INIAP); Heifer Foundation Ecuador	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Heifer Foundation	
Private sector involvement		None	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		5/9/2014	
Effectiveness date / project start		8/1/2014	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		7/31/2017	
Actual date of project completion		3/30/2018	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	UA	
	Co-financing	UA	
GEF Project Grant		1.25	1.25
Co-financing	IA own	0.67	0.69
	Government	3.50	2.38
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		0.06
	Private sector	1.63	0.35
	NGOs/CSOs	0.79	0.92
Total GEF funding		1.25	1.25
Total Co-financing		6.59	4.40
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		7.84	5.65
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		July 2018	
Author of TE		FAO Office of Evaluation (no author credited)	
TER completion date		December 2018	
TER prepared by		Ritu Kanotra	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Cody Parker	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

As per the Project Document (PD), the Global Environmental Objective of the project was ‘to integrate the use and conservation (*ex situ* and *in situ*) of agrobiodiversity in policies, farming systems and education and awareness programs of Ecuadorian highland provinces of Loja, Chimborazo, Pichincha and Imbabura with the aim to contribute to the sustainable management and resilience of agro-ecosystems in the Andean and other similar mountain dry-land regions’ (Appendix 1, PD).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

As per the Project Document (PD), the Development Objective of the project is ‘to integrate the use and conservation (*ex situ* and *in situ*) of agrobiodiversity in the Ecuadorian highland provinces of Loja, Chimborazo, Pichincha and Imbabura with the aim of increasing and improving the provision of goods and services from agriculture, contributing to food security, and reducing rural poverty’ (Appendix 1, PD). The project had the following three components:

Component 1: Integrating the sustainable use and conservation of agrobiodiversity in public policies and their implementation – Action plan developed and implemented for the agrobiodiversity component of the National Biodiversity Strategy (1); Coordination mechanism established and operational for the strategic partnerships among National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), Ministry of the Environment (MAE) and Decentralized Autonomous Governments on policies for the promotion and conservation of agrobiodiversity (1); Proposal developed and validated for national public policy addressing the conservation and utilization of agrobiodiversity (1); Methodology developed and validated in the province of Chimborazo for the assessment of diversity in traditional biodiversity-based farming systems (1); Study and proposal developed for the analysis of the implementation of Farmers’ Rights in Ecuador (1), Information campaign implemented on Farmers’ Rights (1); Proposals for provincial regulations on conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity (3); Provincial Development and Land Use Plans integrating the value, sustainable use and conservation of agrobiodiversity; DLUP (Loja, Chimborazo and Imbabura) integrating the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity; Community microenterprises (4) generate new products (10); Agritourism routes (2) expose and promote local agrobiodiversity.

Component 2: Scaling up of good practices in the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity - Collections of fifteen (15) crops established or expanded, and their characteristics identified; Collaboration agreements (5) on agrobiodiversity between five farmers'/indigenous organizations, National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP) and other partners, including actions for *ex situ* conservation and *in situ* management; Rural families trained on *in situ* management and utilization of agrobiodiversity (3,000 families); Local inventories(3) of agrobiodiversity and its related traditional knowledge, and community registers (500) of crop diversity in family farms; Local seed fairs (3) formalized; Bio-knowledge and Agriculture Development Centers and community seed banks established or strengthened (6); Participatory Guarantee System(PGS)s developed with defined standards (3); 3,800 households (of which at least 30% are led by women) trained, of which 800 sell their products under local PGS; proposal of quality label based on the local guarantee systems developed and validated (1); Local weekly local market fairs strengthened (7)

Component 3: Education and awareness of decision-makers, teachers and consumers about the environmental, nutritional, cultural and economic value of agrobiodiversity - Information and awareness-raising program for decision makers on the importance of agrobiodiversity; Methodological Guide for integrating agrobiodiversity and its values in the education systems at school and high school levels; School teachers (90 teachers in 30 schools) trained on the many values of local agrobiodiversity and the application of the Methodological Guide; Schools integrating agrobiodiversity issues using the Methodological Guide; Promotional campaign on the importance of food security and sovereignty and the benefits of the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity; Campaign to promote the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity; One document developed and published integrating all project experiences; One promotional campaign implemented.

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

The TE doesn't report any changes in the global and development objectives of the project.

4. GEF IEO 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
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The TE rated relevance as 'highly satisfactory'. This TER rates relevance as 'satisfactory'.

Despite its high socio-economic value and considered as valuable genetic resource, Ecuador's agrobiodiversity faces major threats. The diversity of local varieties used in production systems, as well as of wild species important for agriculture, has been declining due to several factors. Some of these

threats included adoption of specialized and non-diversified production systems; changes in nutrition patterns and trends in markets and trading companies to favor uniform products. The project was designed to address these threats and aligned with the political processes of the central government and the Decentralized Autonomous Governments relating to acknowledging and mainstreaming agrobiodiversity in the country's strategic and legal framework and in the Land Use and Development Plans (LUDPs). It also aimed to contribute to the fulfilment of relevant international agreements such as the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (particularly Targets 7, 13 and 18) and make progress with the application of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

The project was also consistent with GEF-5 Biodiversity Strategy objectives BD-2 'Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors' and BD-4 'Build Capacity on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing'.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE rates the effectiveness of the project as 'satisfactory'. This TER rates effectiveness as 'moderately satisfactory'.

The project was effective in fulfilling the vast majority of targets of components 1 and 2. At a national level, the project contributed to the mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in the National Biodiversity Strategy and its 2016-2021 Plan of Action and to the formulation of the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds approved in 2017. At the level of Decentralized Autonomous Governments (DAGs), the project facilitated the mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in the Land Use and Development Plans (LUDPs) of the provincial council of Chimborazo and promoted agroecological fairs in the three cantonal LUDPs. The project also imparted training to farmers and promoters, facilitated official collaboration agreements with peasants' associations and organizations and carried out the collection and submission of 494 accessions of 17 crops to the Autonomous National Institute of Agricultural Research.

However, the project was less successful in achievement of outputs under the third component. In particular, it did not manage to develop the exchange of information, lessons learned or good practices among its farmers and its intra- and inter-provincial organizations. Furthermore, it did not establish a communication strategy geared towards promoting the approval of the regulation to implement the new law on agrobiodiversity and seeds as a national priority, due to which the effectiveness of the project is rated as 'moderately satisfactory'.

Component 1 - To mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in public policies and promote their implementation – **Satisfactory**

The project facilitated the mainstreaming of the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in the National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS) and its plan of action. The coordination mechanism established through the creation of the Coordination and Technical Committees facilitated the approval of the LUDPs at a provincial and cantonal level. In addition, the mechanism facilitated the preparation of official reports to fulfil international agreements and conventions to which Ecuador was a contracting party. One of the significant achievements under this component was the passing and registration of the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds in 2017. However, as the TE notes, even though the law was passed, it

couldn't be implemented unless regulations to enforce the law were approved. Another target related to the preparation and validation of the methodology of assessment of diversity in biodiverse peasant agricultural systems was worked on successfully by the Heifer Foundation. The methodology resulted in the identification of data on the state of agrobiodiversity and the presentation of seven recommendations to strengthen food security by means of agrobiodiversity practices. The law on agrobiodiversity and seeds passed in 2017 represented substantial progress in farmers' rights, which made it possible to complete the campaign about farmers' rights targeted by the project. But the TE notes that there was not enough time to prepare a program proposal to apply the farmers' rights as envisioned under the ProDoc (target 1.2.2). The project also facilitated the formulation of three proposals of ordinances regarding the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in the provinces of Chimborazo, Imbabura and Loja. While the provincial council of Chimborazo approved the ordinance, the proposal presented in the province of Imbabura was not adopted at the time of the TE. The project also didn't manage to finalize the provincial council's proposal in the case of Loja. The TE identified lack of political will in both these provinces as the reason that the proposals couldn't be prepared or adopted.

Component 2 - To scale up existing good practices of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity - **Satisfactory**

The project was effective in expanding knowledge about genetic diversity in the Andean region by means of the collection of a total of 494 accessions from 17 crops (target – collect 210 accessions from 15 crops). The National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP), directly or through the Heifer Foundation, established collaboration agreements with a total of 19 peasant organizations and associations, contributing to conservation of plant genetic resources and native species. The project trained 4,509 local farmers (target of 3,000) and promoters on the in-situ conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity covering a total of 1,790 ha (target: 1,500 ha). The TE confirmed that the project managed to complete the three inventories anticipated in the provinces and cantons resulting in a database of 546 seeds (target: 500 records). As per the target, the project established three Bio-knowledge and Agricultural Development Centres (BADC) but it faced some operational challenges in executing its management plans.

The project made it possible to sign five Deeds of Commitment to establish participatory guarantee systems (PGS) in the four provinces. However, as per the TE, the proposal of a seal of guarantee prepared for products of agro-diverse plots of land under PGS focused on promoting agroecology, which is not a guarantee that the farmers will recuperate, conserve, develop and research native crops for the purposes of food and nutritional security and for the sale of surplus marketable varieties. Since the proposal was also designed before the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds was passed, it didn't have the legal and political support in accordance with the National Biodiversity Strategy and relevant international agreements. The project successfully strengthened 7 seed fairs. The TE notes that 4 community micro-enterprises supported through various interventions would need long-term support for their sustainability.

Component 3 - To educate and raise awareness among decision-makers, teachers and consumers about the environmental, nutritional, cultural and economic value of agrobiodiversity – **Moderately Satisfactory**

The project organized various forums, fairs and symposiums to raise awareness. But, as the TE notes, these were organized as a series of isolated events and were not very effective towards the change in

policies or specific strategies at a national and/or regional level. But the target of preparing a methodology guide to mainstream agrobiodiversity and its values in the educational systems at primary and secondary school levels was met satisfactorily. A total of 87 teachers were also trained in around 8 educational units in the four provinces. The project led to the incorporation of agrobiodiversity in 8 schools in the four provinces through trainings regarding an induction to agrobiodiversity and agroecology and the preparation of Bokashi and organic insecticides. The project produced publications and audiovisual material to promote the specific aspects related to agrobiodiversity. However, the TE notes that the project lacked an appropriate communication strategy to raise awareness among the decision makers, due to which this component is rated as 'moderately satisfactory'.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately unsatisfactory
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This TER concurs with the rating assigned to the efficiency of the project by the TE as 'moderately unsatisfactory'. The TE notes that the 'institutional structure, in which the project operated, and the financial, technical and operational resources available to the project' were only 'partially sufficient' for the project to achieve its stated objectives (TE, Pg 42). The project faced delays due to changes in the operational modality at the start of its operations in 2014. The project was designed to be executed in the Operational Partner Implementation Management mode by executing the project through the National Institute of Agriculture Research (INIAP). However, institutional reforms in 2014 led to a reduction in the responsibilities of the INIAP and the decision was made to assign the management of the project directly to FAO representation in Ecuador (FAO-EC). Change in the management mode from Operational Partner Implementation Modality to Direct Implementation Modality caused problems with the division of work/responsibilities between FAO-EC and the Heifer Foundation, leading to delays. Moreover, the Heifer Foundation, one of the co-executing agencies, didn't have staff or offices in the four target provinces which, according to the TE, increased the logistical cost of FAO-EC coordination and also contributed to delay in certain priority activities such as identification of seed suppliers and native plants to promote the conservation and replication of these seeds in the agro-diverse plots of the farmers. However, the TE notes that the shift to Direct Implementation management mode and recruitment of a new coordinator by FAO-EC in 2015 expedited the project activities in the last two years.

The TE found the budget assigned for the management of the project (USD 117,000) to be insufficient for three years (with an average of USD 39,000/year). This was particularly challenging as the project had to be operated in four provinces with a wide range of stakeholders without offices, specialists and field vehicles. Moreover, the interviews during the TE confirmed that the GEF stipulation to hire cars for the field work ultimately worked out to be more expensive as against buying cars. But the project improved its efficiency through hiring motivated local promoters in the four provinces and through agreements with peasants' organizations and associations which in turn helped in developing close relationships with the parish bodies and cantonal Decentralized Autonomous Governments that enabled dialogue around the approval of ordinances and promoted the development of agroecological fairs and seed fairs crucial for the sale of local products and the exchange of local seeds.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Unlikely
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The TE assessed the overall sustainability of the project to be 'moderately unlikely', which this TER has revised as 'unlikely'. As per the TE, it is moderately unlikely that the project activities can be sustained without additional resources, particularly to cover technical monitoring in the field. The sustainability of

many activities geared towards the conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity was also dependent upon the approval of the regulation to implement the law on agro-biodiversity and seeds, which was still pending at the time of the TE. Without these funds, there was no specific evidence that the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) had the necessary funds or political will to strengthen its organizational capacity as well as invest in improving its communication mechanism with the Autonomous National Institute of Agriculture Research (INIAP) and other public institutions including peasant's organizations and sustain project activities. All the four dimensions of sustainability are reviewed below:

Financial: Unlikely

The TE didn't assign a rating but based on the evidence in the available reports, this TER assessed the financial sustainability as 'unlikely'. In the light of the economic crisis in Ecuador in 2016, the overall economic situation in Ecuador at the time of TE was not conducive to the allocation of government funds for agro-biodiversity. Moreover, sustaining the project activities and scaling up of agrobiodiversity was also strongly contingent upon the approval of the regulation and constituting a national fund to implement law on agrobiodiversity and seeds, which was still pending at the time of the TE. In addition, the project didn't manage to establish a communication strategy to promote passing this regulation. Moreover, the TE also highlights other risks such as budget cuts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) since the start of the economic crisis in 2016, further reduce opportunities for fulfilling essential services such as scaling up, technical monitoring and sustaining the project activities.

Institutional: Unlikely

The TE didn't assign a rating but based on the evidence in the available reports, this TER assessed the institutional framework to be weak and hence rated as 'unlikely'. The project was instrumental in scaling up awareness within the Autonomous National Institute of Agriculture Research (INIAP) about the important role of family farming in conserving native varieties and their wild relatives. However, the INIAP faced cutbacks in its roles, that led to passing responsibility for technological transfer on to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and in its budget, particularly since the start of the economic crisis in 2016. This situation also restricted opportunities for the INIAP to maintain close relations with peasants' organizations and the Decentralized Autonomous Governments (DAGs).

Other risks classified as 'high' in the TE include 'high rotation of public staff'. At present, the TE found the institutional framework to be weak and highlights some of the other barriers at the institutional level such as lack of internal skills within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to lead research and promote agro-diversity in a coherent manner; need for coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Environment and other public institutions such as Ministry of Public Health with regard to promoting agrobiodiversity and improving public health and nutrition via the agricultural sector. As per the TE, sustainability of the activities performed with the peasants' organizations and their members was also strongly dependent upon the approval of the regulation to implement the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds, which was still pending at the time of the TE.

Socio-political: Moderately unlikely

The TE didn't assign a rating but based on the evidence in the available reports, this TER assessed the risk from socio-political factors as 'unlikely'. According to the TE, approval of the regulation, which was still pending at the time of the TE, to implement the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds and constitution of national funds, is a strong determinant of whether the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has the

political will and the necessary funds to strengthen its technical and organizational capacity to sustain initiatives taken under the project. The TE identified, 'lack of consumer awareness of the benefits of Ecuadorian agrobiodiversity', as one of the high risks that could impede sustainability of the project activities. At the ground level, the TE found a strong evidence that the farmers were committed to continuing with the conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity, but the sustainability of their agrobiodiverse plots was found to be at risk due to factors such as lack of 'monitoring services' and farmers not trained to monitor their own agrobiodiverse plots, more support needed for farmers to perfect their seed storage/selection skills and agroecological fairs not generating necessary funds to sustain their activities.

Environmental: Moderately unlikely

The evaluation identified the effects of climate change as the highest risk to the sustainability of agrobiodiversity. The project also didn't place enough emphasis on the role that agrobiodiversity could play in strengthening family farming's adaptation to climate change and, consequently in ensuring food security, due to which the risks due to environmental factors are identified as 'moderately unlikely'.

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?

A total amount of \$5,650,380 of co-financing materialized as against a planned co-financing of \$7,846,235. While the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) contributed \$116,350 (122%), National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP) provided \$410,000 (63%) and couldn't contribute the full amount as its participation in the project was reduced after the institutional changes in 2014 as well as the budget cuts due to economic crisis from 2016. As a result, the project didn't have its own vehicles and equipment which impacted the quality control, replication, storage and refreshment of seeds by farmers and their peasant's organizations. Decentralized Autonomous Governments (DAG) also provided only \$1,856,170 (67%) of its commitment due to lack of participation of some DAGs in the project, particularly for the province of Imbabura and Loja. However, the peasant's organizations provided to the extent of \$328,120 (168%), which was more than set forth in the Prodoc due to the involvement of 19 peasant's organizations as compared to 6 identified in the Prodoc. The Universities and research centers contributed only \$ 348,900 (21%) as they were involved much less than expected in the Prodoc, due to the budget cuts.

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?

The project experienced delays of more than nine months during the initial stages due to the decision to change the management mode from Operational Partner Implementation Modality (OPIM) to Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) which caused problems with the division of work between FAO representation in Ecuador (FAO- EC) and the Heifer Foundation. As per the TE, it took several months of negotiations of division of responsibilities and required three months of training to the Heifer Foundation before the administration of the project was streamlined. The change in management mode

led to delays in the implementation of activities particularly under component 2, from August 2014 to May 2015. In addition, the Heifer Foundation didn't have staff and offices in the four target provinces, which also led to delays in certain project activities such as the identification of seed suppliers and native plants to promote the conservation and replication of these seeds in the agrobiodiverse plots of the farmers. However, the project picked up momentum in the second and third year and was able to finish most of its activities with a no cost extension of 7 months.

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:

As is evident from the narrative in the TE, the project had a mixed level of support and contribution from the government. The government institutions were the main executing agencies at the national and provincial level. The government was open to mainstreaming the conservation of agrobiodiversity in the National Biodiversity Strategy (2016) and in several LUDPs at the provincial and cantonal level. The project facilitated the formulation of the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds, which was passed in June 2017, but the future of some of the project interventions depends upon formulation of a regulation to execute the law, which was still pending at the time of the TE. The co-financing contributions from the national government through National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP) and Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

were met to the extent of 62% and 122% respectively. The INIAP didn't manage to pledge all of the co-financing intended due to budget restriction and political changes that reduced its role in agriculture extension, particularly with respect to transfer of technology. The contributions from the local government varied at the province level, due to lack of participation of some Decentralized Autonomous Governments (DAGs) in the project, particularly for provinces of Imbabura and Loja.

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: Moderately satisfactory
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The TE didn't assign a rating to M&E Design at entry, but based on the evidence in the Prodoc, this TER assessed it to be 'moderately satisfactory'. The Prodoc (Annex 2) clearly specified the entities responsible for monitoring the project and the framework defined the details related to baselines, indicators of the output and outcome for each project component. However, as highlighted by the TE, indicators placed emphasis on measuring the operational achievements rather than impact of the project. According to the TE, 'lack of SMART indicators reduced the opportunities for reinforcing the relevance of the project with the decision-makers' (TE, Pg 27). For instance, the framework didn't include impact indicators, such as data related to the performance of traditional crops; regarding the

recording of economic income and relevant information relating to the health and nutrition of beneficiaries as well as gender equality. The TE notes that this data on impact could reinforce the justification of the replication of agrobiodiversity and promote the project further amongst the decision makers, due to which the M&E design at entry is assessed as ‘moderately satisfactory’.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately unsatisfactory
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The TE didn’t assign a rating but based on the evidence in the available reports, this TER assessed the M&E implementation to be ‘moderately unsatisfactory’. The TE found that the logical framework was not reviewed during the implementation. The monitoring system was geared towards informing GEF and FAO about the implementation rather than encouraging internal reflection by the Steering and Technical Committees as well as by Decentralized Autonomous Governments and local peasant organizations. The timely preparation of annual Progress Implementation Reports (PIRs) for submission to GEF and FAO was crucial for the adaptive management of the project. However, the TE noted delays in the submission of these reports to the GEF and FAO. The main reasons for delay in preparation of these reports were delays in provision of data from the stakeholders and a focus on implementation of project activities to recover from the delays during the first year of the project.

The project also lacked sufficient resources to hire a monitoring and evaluation specialist that impacted the monitoring of activities in the field. For instance, the project lacked crucial field data related to efficiency of the peasant organizations (and the Heifer Foundation) in the management of seeds. Lack of data on the amount of seeds delivered, returned, kept for consumption, sale and the next campaign, ‘restricted the possibilities for learning with regard to the consolidation of food and nutritional security, and in terms of developing farmers’ sales skills’ (TE, Pg 44). Moreover, the mid-term evaluation was also not conducted as intended in the Prodoc (section 4.6) due to delays in executing the project in the first year of operations. The monitoring and management of risks were focused on pursuing targets to fulfil the reporting needs of the GEF and FAO rather than helping the project track outcomes, results and for adaptive management, due to which the quality of M&E implementation is rated as ‘moderately unsatisfactory’.

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: Moderately satisfactory
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The TE didn’t assign a rating to the quality of project implementation. Based on the evidence in the reports available for the review, this TER assessed the quality of project implementation to be ‘moderately satisfactory’. Some of the proactive measures taken by the FAO Representation in Ecuador

(FAO-EC) helped the project immensely. The decision by the FAO-EC to recruit a new coordinator in May 2015 resulted in ‘a new dynamic within the project, and in particular the intensification of activities which made it possible to fulfil most of the outcomes’ (TE, Pg 43). However, the transformation of the project management mode from Operational Partner Implementation Modality to Direct Implementation Modality led to delays and was not followed by comprehensive review of the project design and co-financing arrangements by the Steering Committee and the FAO task force in charge of supervising the project. But the TE also acknowledges that direct implementation/administration by FAO-EC was a substantial factor in facilitating the transformation of project resources into the outputs expected in the remaining two years.

However, FAO's financial procedures with regard to completing tenders for the acquisition of materials and equipment did not facilitate the management of the project. For example, FAO could not assume the role of buying uncertified seeds from producers of native crops due to which the Heifer Foundation was held in charge of making these acquisitions although the foundation had no knowledge of FAO's procedures. This resulted in around three months of training of the Foundation by FAO-EC before starting to buy seeds in 2015. Consequently, the purchase of seeds took longer than expected and resulted in a delay in the delivery of the seeds to the producers, which was crucial for a project of this nature which needs to be aligned with the agriculture season.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE didn't assign a rating but based on the evidence in the available reports, this TER assessed the quality of project execution as ‘moderately satisfactory’.

As per the Prodoc, Autonomous National Institute of Agriculture Research (INIAP) was the main project executing partner of the project, with Heifer and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock as the co-executing partners. The project was designed to be executed in the Operational Partner Implementation Modality (OPIM) management mode through INIAP. However, the decision made during the initial stages of the project to change the management to Direct Implementation Mode (DIM), with the involvement of FAO Representation in Ecuador (FAO-EC). But this was not followed by modification in the project's design to clarify the responsibilities of the stakeholders in the new mode of management that led to a delay in project activities. This lack of comprehensive review of the project's design is an indication of limited technical supervision by the Steering and Technical Committee in supervising the project. Moreover, the institutional reforms in 2014, which were beyond the control of the project, led to a reduction in the responsibilities of the INIAP in areas such as transfer of technology to farmers and the decision to execute the project through the provincial departments of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG). INIAP also faced cutbacks in its budget, particularly since the start of the economic crisis in 2016, that further restricted its opportunities to maintain close relations with peasant's organizations. The co-financing contribution from MAG was met fully but INIAP could meet only 62% of the financial contributions due to budget cuts during economic crises.

However, measures such as recruitment of three coordinators for each intervention area (north, central and south) and six promoters, four of which were bilingual indigenous people, facilitated the participation of Kichwa-speaking men and women supporting project activities at the local level. The project was also successful in establishing the coordination and technical committees that facilitated the approval of the LUDPs at the provincial and cantonal level. But the project failed to establish sufficient coordination

mechanisms to stimulate reflection on the outcomes, lessons learned and good practices that could facilitate replication of the project activities in other areas.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

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

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

No environmental changes are reported in the TE.

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.

1. The project facilitated the development of agroecological fairs that contributed to increasing farmers' incomes from \$20 to almost \$100/week, which demonstrates that rural women's smallholdings can generate income exceeding the country's minimum wage of \$375/month (TE, Pg 3).

2. Introduction of more native varieties of crops with only organic supplies contributed towards improving the food and nutritional security of more than 39 families (TE, Pg 60).

3. The project was instrumental in the gathering and registration of 494 accessions of native varieties and their wild relatives of 17 crops, and in developing a database of 546 seeds from Chimborazo, Imbabura and Loja. According to the Autonomous National Institute of Agriculture Research (INIAP), the registration of these accessions increased by 35 percent compared to previous accessions of grains and tubers in the National Bank of Germplasm (BNG). This brought new opportunities for identifying native crops apt to promote the adaptation to the effects of climate change in order to ensure food security and sovereignty in the long term (TE, Pg 32).

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

A total of 809 families were trained in applying four Participatory Guarantee Scheme (PGS) placing emphasis on the establishment of local guarantee committees and the application of good management practices such as organic farming and the use of organic supplies. Interviews conducted by the TE with sellers at some of the sites confirmed the preference for agroecological production as it reduced their dependence on chemical supplies, encouraged the intensive management of associated crops that did not require large areas of land like the monoculture systems and added value to the products sold at the fairs. The sale of agroecological crops contributed not only to diversifying their sales but also encouraged them to scale up agroecological practices to other crops on the farm. However, as the TE notes, the Ecuadorian government had not accredited any agroecological land under PGS till the time of the evaluation. Consequently, it was not possible to specify how many of the hectares the project intervened in (1,790 ha) were under PGS.

b) Governance

1. The project facilitated the integration of agrobiodiversity in the National Biodiversity Strategy and some Land Use and Development Plans (LUDPs) at a provincial and cantonal level, and supported the drafting of the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds, which was approved and registered in June 2017. The law constitutes a strategic milestone for family farming, promoting research into and the development of agrobiodiversity in the country, and progressing the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), particularly Article 5 and Article 8 geared towards farmers' rights (FR).

2. The project arranged a series of forums, fairs and symposiums that raised awareness among more than 1,100 participants. However, these were organized as a series of isolated activities rather than a coordinated program of communications geared towards the change in policies and specific strategies at a national and/or sub-regional level.

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.

The TE doesn't report any unintended impacts of the 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.

As per the TE, the catalytic effect of the project was restricted to certain isolated activities where the peasants' organizations were able to exchange experiences and replicate the activities they liked. The project's potential impact in the future is dependent upon the approval of the regulation for the implementation of the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds that would bring new investment opportunities involving scaling up of agrobiodiversity in the Andean mountainous region.

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 Lessons listed in the TE are given below:

1. Agrobiodiversity can support farmers in adapting to the effects of climate change, which is essential for ensuring food and nutritional security in the medium and long term of small-scale farmers and their marginal rural communities.
2. Agroecological production is not a synonym of agrobiodiversity but a method for sustaining the production of agrobiodiverse plots of land where it is possible to grow native or improved crops and promote added value at the same time. Improved crops must not include genetically modified organisms, as possible crosses between the genes of native crops and genetically modified organism risk genetic erosion in the farm.
3. The training and employment of local bilingual promoters (Spanish and Kichwa) constitutes an efficient and effective method to promote and monitor activities concerning the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity with the farmers and their organizations.
4. When promoting the production of agroecological crops for the fairs, it would be important to include the training of promoters and farmers in calculating the economic, social and environmental outputs of agrobiodiversity as this would enable farmers to be able to make informed decisions and promote learning at family and inter-family level.
5. The production of agrodiverse plots of land under agroecological practices can generate net benefits of up to USD 100/week (when there is drip/spray irrigation), and this shows that smallholdings can generate economic income that is higher than the country's minimum salary.
6. Teachers who established the school gardens visited used them effectively to promote interactive education, children's diet and the promotion of income by means of the sale of seeds, crops and meals to parents of the families. This confirms the relevance of schools and the approach of school gardens as channels to promote agrobiodiversity.
7. The duration of the projects that aim to promote the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity and improve income by means of the development of short sales channels and the promotion of micro-enterprises requires a period that adapts to the needs of the beneficiaries⁶⁶. A detailed analysis of these needs before designing the project can help to determine the duration and the approaches most appropriate to the context of such.
8. Projects funded by the GEF and executed by FAO require the coordinators to establish the process of dialogue and constant reflection on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project's main activities.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The recommendations given in the TE are listed below:

For FAO (HQ and FAO Representation in Ecuador)

1. Devising the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources under agroecological concepts is recommended, not only to ensure food security within family farming but also to promote sustainable rural development to support the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Developing a communication strategy that raises awareness of the contribution of agrobiodiversity in a more holistic manner and makes it possible to insist that relevant policies, strategies and plans be updated, is recommended.
3. Resuming the legal process for the approval of the regulation to implement the law on agrobiodiversity and seeds, is recommended, alongside the establishment of the National Agricultural Authority (AAN), which would facilitate political dialogue on the reforms to apply at an institutional and political level, with regard to the promotion and development of agrobiodiversity, particularly as regards family farming.

For the FAO Representation in Ecuador

1. Continuing to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) in training experts on the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity, in order to bolster interest and ensure the appropriate implementation of holistic programmes, is recommended.

For FAO (HQ and FAO Representation in Ecuador)

1. Projects of this nature should be designed to have an inception phase of around three to six months, in line with the agricultural season, to: a) accommodate possible changes in political, institutional, social, or environmental etc. order; b) complete/update the socio-economic and environmental diagnosis in order to establish the baselines and adapt the targets if justified, together with the budget; and c) clarify the stakeholders' responsibilities. Similarly, including a closure phase (of at least three and no more than six months) is recommended, in order to clarify the continuity of the main activities after the closure of the project.

For the GEF and FAO (HQ and FAO Representation in Ecuador)

1. It is recommended that future projects include "Field Files" designed to gather information about the production and productivity of the different crops handled, production costs, gross and net income from the sale of products at the markets and fairs, etc., in order to enter them in the financial systems.

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 IEO 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 covers the assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts on project achievements in a comprehensive manner. However, the TE also notes that the analysis was constrained by the lack of indicators and data in the project's M&E framework to analyze the impact of the interventions. For instance, the project did not maintain the monitoring of data regarding the impact of agrobiodiversity activities on the production, productivity, dietary changes and increase in income of the beneficiaries.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report was consistent in terms of providing complete and convincing arguments. However, the TE doesn't include adequate information on the assessment of the quality of project's implementing and executing agencies.	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE covered this aspect adequately.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Most of the lessons drawn are supported by the evidence presented in the main report, except a few such as 'improved crops must not include genetically modified organisms, as possible crosses between the genes of native crops and genetically modified organism risk genetic erosion in the farm'. It was not clear if this lesson was drawn from the project's experience.	MS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE includes the actual project cost and a detailed analysis of actual co-financing realized.	S
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The assessment of the quality of the project's M&E systems was detailed and adequate. The TE provided the complete analysis but didn't provide the ratings.	S
Overall TE Rating		S

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

This TER didn't use information from any other documents.