

FINAL EVALUATION

PROJECT:
CATALYZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF URUGUAY'S NATIONAL PROTECTED
AREA SYSTEM (Project NPAS)

URU/06/G34 GEF – UNDP

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List of Acronyms

AECID Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
ANEP National Public Education Board
PA Protected Area
APR Annual Project Report
APW Annual Project Work Plan
ARU Rural Association of Uruguay
BD-1 Strategic Priority 1 in GEF Biodiversity
BID Inter-America Development Bank (IADB)
BM World Bank
CAE Specific Advisory Commission
CIEDUR Inter-disciplinary Development Study Center, Uruguay
CIID International Development Research Centre, Canada, IDRC
CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CLAEH Latin-American Center for Human Economy
CMAP World Protected Areas Commission
CMS Convention on Migratory Species
CNA National Advisory Commission
CNFR National Commission for Rural Development
CO Country Office – United Nations
CONAP National Council on Protected Areas
CoP Conference of the Parties
COTAMA Environmental Technical Advisory Commission
COTAOT Territorial Planning Technical Advisory Commission
CS Steering Committee
CSA Environmental Service Certificates
CTMFM Maritime Front Technical Commission
DGRNR General Renewable Natural Resources Agency
DINAGUA Water National Department
DINAMA National Environment Agency
DINAMIGE National Mining and Geology Agency
DINARA National Water Resources Agency
DINOT National Territorial Planning Agency
DIPRODE Project Development Agency
EA Executing Agency
ET Evaluating Team
EEI Invasive Exotic Species
EIA Environmental Investigation Agency
ECOPLATA Integrated Coastal Zone Management of the Rio de la Plata
FFEM French Fund for Global Environment
FMAM Global Environment Facility
FONAMA National Environment Fund
FPNRF Federation of French Regional Natural Parks
FREPLATA Environmental Protection of the Río de la Plata and its Maritime Front
GEF Global Environment Facility
GDP Gross Domestic Product
HIPC Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative
ICAS Analytical Institutional Capacity System
ID Provincial Authorities
IMC Municipality of Canelones
IMEBA Tax on the Sale of Agricultural and Farming Goods

IMM Municipality of Montevideo
IMSJ Municipality of San José
IMTT Municipality of Treinta y Tres
IMRocha Municipality of Rocha
INDE National Spatial Data Infrastructure
INE National Statistics Institute
INIA National Agricultural Research Institute
IR Inception Report
IUCN International Unit for Conservation of Nature
IW Inception Workshop
LATU Technological Laboratory of Uruguay
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
MDN Ministry of National Defense
MDR Rural Development Forum
MEC Ministry of Education and Culture
MEF Ministry of Economy and Finances
METT Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MEVIR Movement for the Eradication of Sub-standard Rural Housing
MGAP Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fishery
MI Ministry of the Interior
MIEM Ministry of Industry, Mining and Energy
MINTURD Ministry of Tourism and Sports
MIRNA Integrated Management of National Resources- now called PPR: Responsible Production Project
MTOP Ministry of Transport and Public Works
MVOTMA Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment
NIP National Implementation Plan
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
NPAS National Protected Area System
OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONF Forests National Office
OP GEF Operational Programme
OPP Planning and Budget Office
OPYPA Agricultural and Farming Programme and Policy Bureau
OSE State Water Utility
PACT Protected Areas Conservation Treaty
PDF B Project Development Facility B
PDGM IV Project of Development and Municipal Management IV
PIR Project Implementation Review
PNM National Municipal Park
PNN National Coastal Guard
PNF French National Parks
PNRF Federation of French Regional Natural Parks
PPR Integrated Management of National Resources; now called Responsible Production Project
PRENADER Natural Resources and Irrigation Development Program
PROBIDES Program for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Eastern Wetlands
PSA Payment for Environment Services
PSAG Environment Protection and Sustainable Development of the Guarani Aquifer System Project
PTR Project Terminal Report
RAPPAM Rapid Assessment and Priorization of Protected Area Management
RCU Regional Coordinating Unit
SEPAE Park Services of the Army
SIA Environmental Information System

SIG System of Geographic Information
SISNAP NPAS Information System
SOHMA Oceanographic Hydrographic and Meteorological Services of the Uruguayan Navy
SATD Decision Making Support Program
TNC The Nature Conservancy
TPA Environmental Preservation Tax
TPR Tripartite Review
TTR Terminal Tripartite Review
UDELAR University of the Republic, Uruguay.
UE European Union
UEP Project's Implementation Unit
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNDP-CO UNDP Country Office
UNDP-GEF RCU UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WWF World Wildlife Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NPAS PROJECT - FINAL EVALUATION

AIM OF THE PROJECT

The Project aims to support the design and initial implementation of a National Protected Area System *that effectively preserves a representative sample of Uruguayan biodiversity in order to meet national development objectives as well as to promote conservation commitment at international level.*

Four interrelated **results** were defined:

- 1) Legal and institutional frameworks and political agreements that contribute to the effective management and sustainable funding of the NPAS have been achieved and are operational.
- 2) The strengthening of key stakeholders individual capacities contributes to the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS and constituting PAs.
- 3) The increase of awareness about the value and importance of biodiversity and PAs in key stakeholders contributes to the promotion of policies and practices that foster the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS.
- 4) Different governance models approved through demonstrative experiences contribute to the effectiveness of PAs management, and the NPAS sustainability, and also to strengthen the relationship between biodiversity conservation and local development.

Interventions at site level were designed to test implementation of new legal and political frameworks, the evaluation and development of new tools to strengthen the effectiveness of PAs management including different PA models of governance, modalities for the generation of opportunities from tourism and the development of educational and training activities.

FINAL EVALUATION PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the Project Final Evaluation “Catalyzing the Implementation of Uruguay’s National Protected Area System” is to evaluate the accomplishment of objectives and outputs near the end of the implementation period in relation with the Detailed Work Plan and the respective Annual Work Plans approved by the UNDP.

An ET visited a sample of PAs and carried out nearly 50 interviews and focal groups in the area apart from analyzing documentation produced by governmental and non-governmental sources. Likewise, the ET was complemented with the evaluation developed by the FFMAM, with which joint activities were developed and results shared.

PERFORMANCE RATING

Topic	Rating
Conceptualization and design	Satisfactory
Stakeholders’ participation in the formulation of project	Highly Satisfactory
Implementation approach	Satisfactory
Monitoring and evaluation	Satisfactory
Stakeholders’ participation in the implementation of project	Highly Satisfactory
Achievement of outputs/results and objectives	Highly Satisfactory

NPAS PROJECT -SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND RESULTS

At the time of this evaluation (first semester 2013) the NPAS has 10 protected areas in the system with a surface that reaches 123,500 hectares which represent 0,388% of the land and marine surface of the country, and also five areas in process of incorporation.

List of Protected Areas	Status
Quebrada de los Cuervos	New
Esteros de Farrapos	New
Cabo Polonio	New
Valle del Lunarejo	New
Chamangá	New
San Miguel	New
Laguna de Rocha	New
Cerro Verde	New
Rincon de Franquia	New
Grutas del Palacio	New
Humedales de Santa Lucia	In process
Montes del Queguay	In process
Laureles- Cañas	In process
Isla de Flores	In process
Laguna Garzón	In process

Source: PIR EDB

In the NPAS there are 70 officials, 52 of these are distributed in the territory and 18 in the central level including managers, park rangers, coordinators, facilitators, and technicians of the NPAS Project from the Biodiversity Division and Protected Areas from the National Environment Agency from the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment, provincial municipalities and other institutions.

As from 2005, 81 documents and work reports, books, guides and manuals, a series of 9 digital and printed newsletters have been developed as well as a great amount of leaflets, cards and posters, all available at the NPAS web site (www.snap.gub.uy). A system of information (SISNAP) collects relevant information for the management of Protected Areas constituting the base for the development of a Decision Making Support Program (SATD).

During 2011, 104,000 people visited the Cabo Polonio National Park, 53% of these were foreigners. Almost 75,000 came between January and March. The interest of foreign visitors in PAs is evident when information is compared with neighboring countries such as Argentina. It is estimated that 25% of Argentinean tourists had a protected area as one of their main destinations (IADB's Tourism Corridors Project).

Several public opinion surveys carried out between 2005 and 2012 show that 80% of Uruguayan people agree or strongly agree with investment in a National Protected Area System to help protecting the environment. Seventy four percent agree that protected areas are an opportunity for the country's economic and social development, 31% know about a protected area, and 25% state they have been to one.

Biodiversity conservation is important for the international cooperation that has contributed to the development of the NPAS between 2005 and 2013 through a GEF/UNDP project for US\$2,500,000 and US\$1,300,000 from the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and technical and financial resources for nearly US\$ 1,000,000 from the Autonomous Organization of National Parks in Spain and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AEICD). Contributions by decentralized cooperation and the Small Grants Funds executed by the UNDP with GEF funds should be added.

Project Summary Table				
Project Title: Catalyzing the implementation of Uruguay's National Protected Area System				
GEF Project ID	2545 (PIMS3173)		At endorsement	At November 2013
UNDP Project ID	53930	GEF Financing	2,500,000	2,500,000
Country	Uruguay	IA/EA own	50,000	60,000
Region	Latin America	Government	-----	2,043,359
Focal Area	Biodiversity	Other	----	1,000,571
Operational Program	OP5	Total Co-financing	50,000	3,463,930
Executing Agency	PNUD	Total project cost	2,550,000	5.603.930
Other Partners involved	MVOTMA	Prodoc Signature (date project began)	24-Aug-2007	-----
		(Operational) Closing Date	Proposed: 23-Aug-2012	Actual: 31-Aug-2014

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Regarding Level of Design: design was developed within a **context of economic changes in Uruguay** and tension between concepts of Productive / Natural Uruguay that the NPAS tried to overcome through an inclusive approach. From the political standpoint, this context fostered governmental policies, plans, and programs that gave relevance to environmental topics and a new concept of land-use management and decentralization.

The Project shows a **flexible, participatory, and adaptive design and management** of all outputs involved. The use of a participatory methodology and a collaborative approach with local stakeholders has contributed to mutual understanding; however, this point still needs to be

strengthened. Likewise, work on joint activities with provincial authorities (ID) should be reinforced.

The ET points out the **design's coherence** with GEF's objectives and with the Uruguayan Government's strategy, commitments entered into, and synergy with other national, regional, and local initiatives, and other national and international cooperation key stakeholders.

The **Project was well-conceived and designed** achieving expected results; PAs' autonomous financing results, however, were achieved to a lesser extent.

Regarding the level of process and process implication: there was little inter-institutional articulation during the implementation of the NPAS and pilot PAs, said articulation was adequate at initial level. However, this articulation requires a strategic approach to bridge gaps that affect design and further accomplishment of Management Plans.

Regarding efficiency, the ET considers that **most of expected results were accomplished;** however, additional efforts and involvement by stakeholders is required. Many outputs and results were affected by internal factors such as lack of previous experience in a PA system. There was, however, international help from French and Spanish cooperation, as well as regional cooperation to handle the new situation, comparing it to the international experience. There were agreements with international stakeholders who provided relevant technical information; regional expertise was sought, including South-South cooperation. There were external factors, change of government and authorities at MVOTMA that changed some guidelines without making major modifications. Some local stakeholders were not involved as from the design stage and their participation is low or, do not feel confident about potential consequences of being in a PA.

Degrees of ownership vary among stakeholders. It was possible to consolidate interdisciplinary work groups aiming at work focused on the PA, adopting participation schemes from other programs such as PROBIDES and strengthening bonds with other strategic partners, especially with international cooperation and financing key stakeholders.

The main strength of the Project is its **professional expertise and high commitment to territorial work and, in general, the creation of a new environmental concept for Uruguay,** as well as, the human capital and technical teams involved in the projects as well as the confluence of interdisciplinary work teams with specific training and different experiences. The role of the **NPAS is relevant and it is especially important that it is the State the one in charge of implementation without generating an independent executive unit.** Internal NPAS management and coordination including articulation with DINAMA departments with similar objectives is highlighted as a good practice. The **stability of the working team** contributed to generate bonds of trust within MVOTMA and with several interlocutors at all jurisdictional levels.

The design and implementation of M&E system has been appropriate and the reports were clear and precise, however, a higher level of dissemination would be necessary to allow other public and private key stakeholders to take advantage of it. The ET considers that the indicators could have been revised aiming to improve analysis of how each activity contributed to expected results; defining new indicators if necessary.

The ET has **detected, apart from numerous achievements in the articulation and in the joint effort, some difficulties in the interaction at provincial/national levels, depending on each political institutional situation;** this includes leaders' personal characteristics at the different levels, political factors and ideas regarding conservation and productive use.

The structure of **management for the implementation of the Project has been adequate.** Despite this fact, it was not always possible to define an internal mechanism of joint response to

allow for a greater institutional support to some issues (such as sustainable funding and tax exemption.)

For the achievement of expected results, **alliances and inter-institutional relationships** developed within the project have been fundamental; these varied in each territory and included the active participation of international partners- AECID and FFEM- as well as the civil society and academic organizations (such as Aves del Uruguay, UDELAR and RETEMA), and stakeholders from the productive area (farming and livestock, and tourism), this varied in the different areas.

All key stakeholders are certain about the program's continuity and the use of its strategies and outputs; said continuity is not threatened by changes in officers' staff since there is an important legal framework that supports it.

The ET considers that although some of the activities carried out focus mainly on journalists, it is difficult to **find a place of relevance for the topic of PAs in the media outlets. This issue is expected to be solved over time by raising journalists' awareness** and placing environmental issues on front pages beyond natural catastrophes.

Regarding the level of results, novel land intervention techniques were introduced involving educational centers, rural development, Human Rights, and producers' organizations that generate an idea of important changes in the future.

Project Cost-effectiveness in terms of invested resources and achieved results has been positive. Administrative management was efficient at maximizing results with budget available and getting resources from other sources. Necessary steps were taken to leverage other institutional resources especially at a provincial level.

The NPAS is aligned with the country's territorial planning policies that include the participation of the civil society as a key tool. Most successful PA experiences had had previous territorial experience and mobilized local groups.

Gender strategy has not yet been consolidated but there is still an important effort to be made regarding training and assistance so that officials can work on the mainstreaming of a gender policy in environmental projects in general and specially in PAs. The UNDP is establishing gender standards in environmental projects and is carrying out training for executive units of GEF projects that can be useful for the NPAS in the mid and long term. It cannot be concluded that there was a strategy but specific actions, in some cases of high impact on a specific territory (craft activities, visitors centers, educational activities in Quebrada del Norte and a fishermen community in Laguna de Rocha, for example) within a general approach of promotion of participation and opportunities especially focused on less privileged stakeholders.

Policies in Uruguay show high levels of centralization at a national scale. The ET considers that there were stakeholders involved in the municipal governments, however, they were not involved enough to ensure ownership by the different decentralized levels of government. From the 10 NPAS PAs, only 3 are managed by central government bodies, and 7 are managed or co-managed by municipal governments. This problem is being solved and it represents a learning opportunity for all parts regarding decision making schemes. The implementation of PAs with different legal frameworks has produced **the implementation of innovative modalities, but this can, in turn, generate confusion in a system that is based on PAs that vary greatly among them.**

The **tension between Outputs/Processes** is due to the length of the Project circumscribed to times set that when changes of mentality regarding conservation are involved can be singularly long. The ET considers that some actions require time periods longer than the project's

duration; these will surely be tasks to be handled by the NPAS until a change of paradigm is achieved.

Regarding the level of sustainability, the NPAS through this Project and other concurrent cooperation alternatives contributed to the strengthening of national institutional capacities and provincial and local governments generating real sustainability options. Outputs that have been institutionalized and that are being implemented in the future are crucial; besides, existing PAs will not be threatened in their continuity, their plans of work, however, may face implementation difficulties.

As from the implementation of NPAS and PAs analysis, there are high chances of replicating the experience **broadening its scope** until issues in those areas considered critical are resolved. Training and strengthening activities carried out have contributed providing solutions by parties giving a commitment to find a balance between protection and exploitation of the land and its resources increasing citizen participation, especially in the creation of a shared environmental agenda.

Bonds of trust were built among key stakeholders through opportunities for discussion and debate. The presence of provincial authorities in consultation and coordination forums (National Advisory Commissions) and the creation of local or regional spaces (Specific Advisory Commissions, Regional Water Resource Councils) have promoted this process. From this relationship among co-administrators, a common agenda was created. They agree on trying to improve tourism value chain with PAs and taking care of the environment. By doing this the private sector can get involved as a specific ally for sustainability. The community, as from NPAS intervention, generates new projects, mainly tourism-related.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the National Public Administration (especially to MVOTMA and DINAMA):- Due to the characteristics of the end of the presidential period, and the impossibility of new contracts for public officers, the SNAP institutional situation should be analyzed in a very short period of time. This evaluating team (ET) believes it is crucial to formalize the NPAS structure within the reform proposed by the MVOTMA despite the fact that the definite proposal for the service may acquire a greater degree of autonomy (agency of protected areas, autonomous administration or other).

The NPAS/DINAMA, together with other agencies from the MVOTMA (such as DINAGUA and DINOT) should establish a decentralized permanent link aiming to get to know the opinion of the “silent majority”, defining how to maintain community participation in the control of resources and decision making.

Regarding monitoring and assessment, it would be advisable that other key stakeholders could use the information, disseminate it among potential users, and ensure their access according to well-defined, public accessibility criteria.

The Project would need a great communication event aimed at public opinion with national political and provincial authorities as well as the international cooperation. This could take place in one of the PAs or in Montevideo using all the media capacity of key stakeholders. A possible concept for such an event could be defusing the tension between the ideas of a Productive and a Natural Uruguay, suggesting an Intelligent Uruguay.

To measure the impact, the best-quality information should be developed on the concept of producing by conserving (advantages) resorting to all media outlets available.

Pilot experiences on PA financing will probably be included in a next step, however, it is advisable to incorporate these issues in the budget debate making all necessary agreements that will contribute to next government programs.

The need to strengthen the NPAS with experts in environmental economy and tourism is justified in this phase provided the existence of tools that should be evaluated in depth since they are pilot experiences with new regulations in a state that is still reluctant to consider tax exemptions as a stimulus for the private sector in PAs.

Legislation on private contributions to PAs, tax exemptions and other legal mechanisms should be discussed at the corresponding government levels with political and private stakeholders using all existing spaces.

To establish deadlines for decision making about PAs affected by administrative circuits and political decisions such as Santa Lucia, bearing in mind time required to replace PAs in annual operational plans. It is also necessary to facilitate decision making processes regarding the approval of management plans to speed up implementation of conservation plans.

To analyze whether fund transfers to the Protected Area Fund could have been considered an obstacle or a risk, defining whether they can be implemented. Universities or research teams could operate as articulators, making projects with potential donors, obtaining authorization from the Ministry of Economy (according to the criterion of donations that was incorporated in 79bis of Law 18,083). Thus, even without incorporating the Protected Areas Fund to the recipients, a mechanism could be developed with academic institutions and companies that support work with PAs through university projects (research or implementation of strategies on territory).

Recommendations for provincial governments and municipalities: Institutionalization at provincial government and municipality levels requires an in-depth discussion about decentralized roles in the PAs where all participation mechanisms at a decentralized level should be available. Inter-institutional coordination with areas where incentives to producers who settle in PAs are being discussed and with rural development projects, should be considered crucial and all institutions related to the project should compromise their effort to give the topic an increasing importance for the interlocutors.

There are several undergoing projects at the MGAP that would contribute to the strengthening of the NPAS and actions in the territory, among them: (a) the project through the Fund for Adaptation to Climate Change in two landscape units and (b) the climate change adaptation program (World Bank). To expanding articulation with local experiences to complement SISNAP work regarding decentralized management when local decision making is possible.

Provincial governments should define their PAs development strategies together with the national government, including implementation schedules and budget resources to be allotted. This interinstitutional space represents a challenge and an opportunity based on an already existing regulatory framework that allows for the development of protection actions that require more urgent measures. Coordination of actions with what is established in the NPAS Act and other environmental policies regulations is suggested, also the possibility of having technical and financial resources to provide support to PA's producers.

To prioritize PA regulation and structure in terms of their effective performance, consequences on the territory, access to areas, AP use protocols, and their relationship with municipalities and managers including provincial government stakeholders in the discussion.

Recommendations for the international cooperation that has been involved in the NPAS process and could be related to in the future: The discussion enriched by international Best Practices (BP) could improve its quality by the joint contribution of the international cooperation that has been linked to the project UNDP/GEF, AECID/ OTC/, Administration of parks in Spain, French Cooperation/ FFEM/ Federation of Regional Natural Parks. The cooperation would also work as a neutral moderator which is crucial in political contexts close to elections.

The Project also had the contribution of the “decentralized cooperation”: Spanish municipality of Huelva and with the Italian region of Liguria. Currently, there is progress in cooperation processes with other regions in France: Provence-Aples-Côte d’Azur and Rhône Alpes. It is advisable to strengthen these bonds and to take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen process and capacities at a local/provincial level.

It is recommended to analyze environmental calls from the European Union that could contribute with efforts developed by other cooperation agencies as well as CAF, World Bank, and IADB. In protected areas that limit with other countries, the IADB’s initiative Regional Public Goods could be explored.

In matters related to governance, the role of cooperation is important, for example, the Project AECID with the Congress of Mayors or UNPD prioritization and the French Cooperation in decentralization, can make different projects interact, thus improving the current institutional quality at PAs level.

It is suggested to prioritize the new initiative that is under preparation to present a project before GEF that includes, apart from the proposed innovative aspects, the consolidation of PAs incorporated to the NPAS and their insertion in broader spaces, as well as a careful incorporation of new areas considering the availability of resources for sustainability as well as new ways of integration which depend on the institutionalization that the NPAS and each of the PAs will adopt. It is recommended to revise intermediate modalities of protection (at different provincial government levels).

To analyze the synergy with other cooperation projects in each of the territories, establishing work experiences where equipment and human resources can be shared. Regarding GEF, it is important to consider the strengthening of current agreements with other projects with Mercosur members, other countries in the region, and the South-South cooperation¹, taking advantage of the recently created AUCI and its explicit support to several initiatives promoted by NPAS. It is also suggested to work jointly with other GEF initiatives, related to PAs that have similar tools that could be assimilated. The international cooperation could provide technical assistance in many key aspects, but especially regarding PA financing, systems institutionalization, planning methodologies, development of value chains on lands of high financial and environmental value. *Recommendations for civil society stakeholders:* The organizations of the civil society (OSC) should establish priorities when negotiating with international cooperation including the NPAS as well as the PAs. Since NPAS is perceived as a referent, as a tool to give value to APs biodiversity/landscapes before academic, community and business stakeholders, it can be considered as a strategic partner before potential donors.

It is necessary to intensify actions to raise awareness among PAs population about the need for a change to improve the life quality of inhabitants and the importance of income to sustain the PA. Also, it is important to raise awareness among the private sector regarding the value of conservation.

Key local stakeholders should be identified and incorporated when establishing a PA before incorporating the area to the NPAS, informing and raising awareness about implications among the local community.

To consider the use of participation and inter-institutional coordination events at the PAs aiming to listen to the “silent majority.”

¹Continuing with the expansion of existing South-South agreements or those in process (Chile, Colombia, Argentina) and under preparation with Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

It is suggested to prioritize the consolidation in the future of OSCs participation in PAs incorporated to the NPAS to develop maps of key civil society stakeholders before incorporating new PAs.

It is suggested to explore the incorporation of OSCs in roles traditionally assumed by the public sector.

The OSCs could, in agreement with the NPAS and provincial governments, improve provision of services in the PAs by their inhabitants, such as support for tourist circuits, set up of interpretation centers, teaching of artisan jobs such as knitted fabrics and fishing.

High-technical-level OSCs, NGO networks with expertise should provide support to base organizations by defining strategies promoting participation in the territory and by creating discussion forums that allow those citizens not familiar with environmental issues to better understand OT and management plans.

To define spaces together with research centers and universities to raise awareness, to warn about critical processes and/or about opportunities in the territory.

OSCs specialized in gender issues, Afro-descendants, rural poverty could focus their efforts on establishing mechanisms to strengthen the population in PAs and define a monitoring role from the perspective of the society regarding both, public and private conservation initiatives.

Organizations from the rural sector could work jointly with the NPAS in the design of strategies of different levels of involvement, local and national.

Recommendations to GEF Project: We propose a series of suggestions for the evaluated project. It is recommended, with previous agreement with MVOTMA and UNDP/GEF, to extend the implementation of the project for some months during 2014 to ensure an adequate transition between the current structure and the new structure of the ministry which has been recently approved. It is pertinent to complete and promote the approval of general NPAS planning and management guidelines. Also, to complete and promote the approval of management plans of areas where significant progress has been made and to support the initial implementation of management plans and/or operational plans. Likewise, to complete the setting up of SISNAP.

Regarding indicators and information analysis, it is recommended to incorporate, as one of the NPAS procedures, the comparison of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) with information about governance models, so as to detect different levels of achievement depending on each model, advantages and disadvantages of each management model and their impact on the management effectiveness.

Achievements are highlighted taking into account there was not a national system of protected areas in Uruguay before its implementation. The development of a new project strengthens commitment entered into by involved stakeholders, actions started and their sustainability. In this new stage, it is recommended to prioritize conservation objectives over management objectives without leaving aside the strengthening of the new management structure.

The Project has actively contributed to the development and strengthening of national, provincial, and local institutional capacities. In order to ensure sustainability, it is recommended to develop plans aimed at strengthening institutional capacities for the formulation and approval of management plans, participative events, application of tools regarding PA management effectiveness and financial sustainability at a central and provincial level.

To generate biological corridors with more surface and protected biodiversity, the NPAS should make an additional effort to integrate public and private stakeholders, as well as those already articulated and those who have not had any previous participation yet along the corridors.

LESSONS LEARNED

Institutions that are sound and consolidated within public areas enjoy credibility before the civil society, they define sustainable management techniques regardless of institutional changes since they define an institutional tradition that enables them to absorb impact from changes in leadership and follow working guidelines beyond political preferences of those in charge.

Adaptive management of the system and areas suggesting solutions to challenges in each territory, with creative and inclusive solutions with the private sector, define a replicable parameter. Regarding governance, flexibility of models applied by the Project shows that the NPAS was opened to experimentation.

Role of Pilot Areas: Selection criteria for those areas to be included in national programs should be systematized taking into account assessment of pilot experiences defining how to implement replicability guidelines.

Role of decentralized governments (local or provincial) and decentralized national teams is key to achievement of results. When starting work at a PA, contributions and potential roles of other institutions working in the territory should be considered, defining alliances to improve management plans.

The key role of the private sector as mentioned in EI: “Any Project that aims to work with biodiversity issues in a territory where 95% of land is in private hands needs to have local coordination instances that need to be supported, and should have the opportunity to contribute to the project’s implementations.”

Institutions involved in environmental issues require a special political influence due to the type of interests they face and to the fact they are relatively new in the institutional stage to promote a new national political culture. Only with the support of the highest authorities (Ministers and Presidents) will they complete high-level negotiations with the private sector.

Training as part of investment: the strengthening of organizations’ capacities that articulate and add interests to the planning, management, and participation in the dialogue with the government in each PA, allows for the generation of leaders trained in the language of projects and conservation principles aligned with production criteria.

Adoption of project's outputs at different governmental levels: once tools developed by a program are accepted and internalized by national and provincial authorities, project sustainability is in part ensured; however, its use in the long term can be later revised.

Length of processes in PAs should be controlled so as to avoid mistrust in stakeholders involved, management plans should be immediately completed after registration of the area in the national system to avoid compromising credibility at regional and local level; this can be solved with the creation and approval of operational plans to be implemented during preparation of management plans.

Multi-stakeholder national counseling institutions, (e.g.: CAN) should be defined by regular criteria, and should have feedback from the different parties

Mass social communication should be at the service of a project that generates a new institutional framework to generate at least basic understanding in all interested parties of a project that generates new patterns of behavior.

The highest decision-making level must react quickly in situations of conflict in PAs so that they do not extend over time and create the idea that PAs mean conflict between stakeholders at territorial level.

Educational centers involved in biodiversity projects ensure changes in awareness in young people, and impact on family context.

One of the lessons learned was that key **local stakeholders should be identified** before establishing the PAs and incorporating them to the NPAS, in order to inform and raise the local community's awareness about its implications.

The creation of a PA is practically irreversible. A territorial process is consolidated although it sometimes cannot be sustained financially.

INDEX

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION	1
B. KEY ASPECTS DEALT WITH	2
C. EVALUATION’S METHODOLOGY	2
D. EVALUATION’S STRUCTURE	4
II. THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT	4
E. PROJECT’S START, DURATION, AND CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	5
F. ISSUES THE PROJECT TRIED TO ADDRESS.....	7
G. IMMEDIATE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT’S OBJECTIVES.....	10
H. STAKEHOLDERS	11
III. FINAL EVALUATION RESULTS	11
I. PROJECT’S FORMULATION	11
<i>Regarding level of design and conceptualization (S).....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>National ownership (HS)</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Stakeholders’ participation in the design (HS).....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Replicability</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Other aspects</i>	<i>13</i>
J. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.....	14
<i>Implementation approach (S).....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Operational relationships among participating institutions and their incidence in the implementation and achievement of the project’s objective</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) (S).....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Stakeholders’ participation (HS).....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Financial Planning.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Modalities of execution and implementation.....</i>	<i>21</i>
K. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS	21
L. ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS/RESULTS AND OBJECTIVES	21
<i>RESULT 1:.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>These findings do not in any way go against the quality of work performed and the positioning the subject. They work as a warning that Project goals should not be considered completely accomplished and efforts should be made to obtain effective levels of commitment and have legitimized tools (resolutions, decrees, or laws) to improve them, even taking into account that it is a task that is far beyond the possibilities of the Project and DINAMA.</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>RESULT 4.....</i>	<i>29</i>
M. NPAS - SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND RESULTS	32
IV. SUSTAINABILITY.....	35
N. INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	35
O. SOCIO-CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY	36
P. FINANCIAL-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY	37
Q. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	37
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38
<i>Conclusions about the level of design.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Conclusions on the process level and process implication.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Conclusions on efficiency</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Conclusions on sustainability</i>	<i>41</i>

<i>Recommendations</i>	42
VI. LEARNED LESSONS	45

List of Annexes

Annex Number	Contents
ANNEX I	Terms of Reference of Final Evaluation
ANNEX II	Final Evaluation Agenda and Itinerary
ANNEX III	List of Stakeholders Interviewed
ANNEX IV	List of revised documents
ANNEX V	Tracking Tools –METTs
ANNEX VIa	Questionnaire to Key Stakeholders
ANNEX VIb	Presentation letter interviewees
ANNEX VII	Interviews data upload form
ANNEX VIII	Electronic survey form
ANNEX IX	E-interviews follow-up form
ANNEX X	Focal Groups Guide
ANNEX XI	Ecoturismo – Focal Group Report
ANNEX XII	Summary of field visits
ANNEX XIII	Uruguay SNAP Presentation
ANNEX XIV	Minutes Steering Committee
ANNEX XV	Evaluation criteria and questions
ANNEX XVI	Organizational chart – institutional design related to SNAP
ANNEX XVII	Land marine coastal surfaces SNAP
ANNEX XVIII	Chart of main institutional stakeholders
ANNEX XIX	Financial information by cooperating agency
ANNEX XX	Financial execution of project’s results
ANNEX XXI	Chart of executed funds by demonstrative experience
ANNEX XXII	Table of personal competence levels evolution
ANNEX XXIII	Table public opinion survey
ANNEX XXIV	Table SNAPProject results

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the joint work guidelines between the Government of Uruguay and SNU are outlined in the UNDAF 2011-2015 which is conceived as a flexible and adaptive framework to changes in national priorities. It is a document that tries to increase effectiveness of assistance to the country's development; this is aligned with its planning cycle.

The direct effects defined in this document are specially focused on four areas: (1) productive diversification and international insertion, (2) environmental sustainability, (3) equitable social development, and (4) democratic governability. To achieve them, the SNU is based on a Human Rights approach. The components, gender, decent work, and environmental sustainability are also mainstreaming issues in different organizations that make up the System. UNDAF proposes cooperation for a total of USD 168,801,681 from which USD 44,000,000 correspond to the financial gap that SNU will mobilize from the international community. National resources, financial and human, make up for an essential element in the joint cooperation of SNU in Uruguay.

The program's Document for Uruguay has been prepared in consultation with the Uruguayan Government through the Planning and Budget Office (OPP) and with United Nations System agencies in the country. The Document was written taking into account government documents of strategic definition, the country's second report on Development Millennium Goals; the mid-term evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2007-2010 (UNDAF Uruguay 2007-2010); the Common Country Assessment (CCA); the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2011-2015; the UNDP's Strategic Plan 2008-2011 and the Regional Program for the same period.

The four components of the Program for the country, that coincide with the four priorities of UNDAF, are: 1) inclusive growth, productive diversification and technological innovation; 2) environment and vulnerability reduction; 3) fight against poverty and inequality; and 4) strengthening of democratic governability at a national and local level.

In the case of Uruguay, the development of the first cooperation framework 2007-2010 and, later, the Joint Program 2007-2010 took place within the context of the pilot experience of the United Nations System Reform, "Delivering as One." The Joint Program, developed together with the government with the support of UNDP was signed by the government and SNU on October 19, 2007 considering three strategic lines: i. "State Reform (with focus on sectoral reforms) and development strategies." ii. "Decentralized development with citizenship participation." iii. "Policies to overcome poverty and inequities structured in a new Welfare State".

It is in this framework of agreements that NPAS Project was developed and started to be implemented to belater reinforced with the Country Program 2011-2015. It was constituted as a public policy that promotes a model of development that considers the protection of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources to preserve nature for future generations, reduce socio-environmental vulnerabilities, and minimize damage to productive sectors.

A. Purpose of evaluation

The Final Evaluation (FE) aims to revise the implementation progress, revising project achievements and outputs, and determining the progress towards the objective and expected results as well as learned lessons.

In this context, the aim of the Project's Final Evaluation "Strengthening of the Process of Implementation of the National System of Protected Areas in Uruguay" is to evaluate the achievement of objectives and project's outputs, at the end of the execution period in relation

with the Detailed Plan of Work and the respective Annual Working Plans approved by the UNDP.

As every final evaluation, it also has the following complementary aims:

- To promote accountability and transparency when evaluating and disseminating progress in the accomplishment and achievement of project’s results.
- To identify main lessons learned that can be disseminated among FMAM-GEF relevant projects and that can help to improve the selection, design, and implementation of future UNDP/FMAM-GEF initiatives.
- To provide feedback and observations regarding recurrent key aspects in the portfolio that require the attention, and also about improvement of key issues.
- To spread results and conclusions, and to provide recommendations to cooperation entities, executive bodies, people responsible for policies implemented and stakeholders involved, to provide tools and criteria to take decisions that allow for the adjustment of current actions and improvement of future ones.

Table 1. Rating by Topic

Topic	Rating
Conceptualization and design	Satisfactory
Participation of stakeholders in the project’s formulation	Highly Satisfactory
Implementation approach	Satisfactory
Monitoring and evaluation	Satisfactory
Participation of stakeholders in the implementation of the project	Highly Satisfactory
Achievement of outputs/results and objectives	Highly Satisfactory

B. Key aspects dealt with

The current FE report includes an analysis of the project’s development context that describes problems dealt with by the Project, its objective; stakeholders involved in its execution, and expected results. Methodology applied to develop the evaluation is briefly described and its results and conclusions are detailed. The report finishes with sections revising recommendations by the evaluating team, lessons learned, and a series of annexes.

C. Evaluation’s methodology

Based on reference terms in this FE, the Project was evaluated by using a multiple methodology approach and following the proposal included in the TDR (ANNEX I). The following activities were developed:

Definition of work agenda: The Evaluating Team (ET) defined a work agenda with staff from the Uruguay UNDP and with the NPAS team. After the definition of key stakeholders, a program

of fieldwork was structured as well as the schedule of field missions. The fieldwork has been concentrated in the city of Montevideo, the province of Treinta y Tres (Quebrada de los Cuervos), province of Rocha (Cabo Polonio, Laguna de Rocha) and in the province of Rio Negro (Estero de Farrapos) between June 11 and July 19, 2013 (ANNEX II). There was also information on field work carried out by the French cooperation evaluator that covered areas in the provinces of Rivera, Tacuarembó, and Rocha.

Documentation analysis: A study on the availability of information to identify the universe of participants (mapping of stakeholders, compilation of experiences through civil society and academic institutions) has been carried out with the support of the project's coordination; a list of key stakeholders based on the developed documentary analysis is presented (ANNEX III).

Literature and materials produced by the Project have been revised. The list of revised materials is attached in ANNEXES IV and V.

Interviews: A model of semi-structured interviews was applied and contents were agreed with the NPAS team, as well as a letter of presentation of the final evaluation with a brief explanation of the study (see ANNEX VIa and VIb). A total of 50 people were interviewed.

At the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment the following people were interviewed, the Minister Francisco Beltrame, DINAMA, DINOT, and DINAGUA directors, the director of Protected Areas and Biodiversity, the MVOTMA East region, the NPAS coordinator, and approximately 13 technicians. There were 46 face to face interviews (ANNEX VII) and 9 virtual interviews (ANNEX VIII). For these, there was a follow-up of electronic mails and/or phone calls to interviewees (ANNEX IX). Representatives from UNDP were individually contacted (from the offices of Uruguay and Panama), as well as national, provincial, and municipal authorities, and in some cases there were group interviews. Authorities and technicians from other public institutions were also interviewed, as well as representatives from the civil society, NGOs, academic representatives and researchers, and relevant figures from the private sector.

Focal groups: A guide of focal groups was agreed with the project's coordinating team(ANNEX X). There was a group interview with the NPAS team in Montevideo and a focal group in Rocha with officials, private sector and Ecotourism companies (ANNEX XI).

Visits to places where project activities were executed: Four provinces where project actions were carried out were visited: Montevideo, Treinta y Tres, Rocha, and Rio Negro. These visits included areas of action of the project, especially Protected Areas (PA), as well as key stakeholders' offices to see achievements on field and talk to the staff and institutions involved and/or affected by the project (ANNEX XII). The NPAS team was in charge of making contacts with institutional authorities in charge and key stakeholders to define date, time and place of meetings for the interviews.

Discussion of results and systematization of conclusions and recommendations: Meetings with key referents were conducted and contact was kept throughout the evaluation period to validate preliminary results after the analysis of: documentary aspects, interviews and focal groups' results, general systematization of collected information, direct observation on field, and observations and conclusions by the French Fund for World Environment(FFMAM) evaluator. Comments and observations were added; the possibility of additional interviews or replacement of referents by institutions was reassessed.

Evaluation completion and presentation: in the last stage, a draft of the FE report was made and handed out to UNDP and the NPAS. Taking into account suggestions to improve the draft, a summary of the report and a document were made to be presented before the Steering Committee and the NPAS team (ANNEX XIII). A final evaluation report was then made taking into consideration every opinion recorded in the Steering Committee minutes (ANNEX XIV). Revision of reports was carried out through virtual means until consolidation of a final report.

D. Evaluation's structure

The FE is oriented following key analysis criteria or evaluating criteria groups, of projects and established programs in the OECD documents (pertinence, internal and external design's coherence, impact/effect, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability); and by principles that consider the evaluation as part of the projects and programs' permanent actions and not as a static external element. The design's pertinence and logic, as well as its permanence before change verified in the context of recent years, have been considered in the analysis.

In the analysis of the implementation and achievement of results, the information has been considered in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. There was also an approach towards sustainability of the project's results and a set of recommendations is detailed as well as a summary of lessons learned.

The aim of this type of evaluation, apart from providing conclusions and recommendations for executors and actions recipients, is to provide tools for political decisions by government officials and members and other key stakeholders regarding the convenience of continuing with the implementation of this line of projects as well as defining which possible design for future operations should be chosen.

The questions for the in-depth interviews and guidelines for focal groups were based on GEF and UNDP evaluation frameworks following the analysis' different phases, and by the discussion with people in charge of this study. Apart from the guidelines established in TDR, in ANNEX XV, a table of evaluation criteria is presented making explicit how the levels of analysis were analyzed: Design, Follow-up, and Evaluation, Lessons Learned and Best Practices, Management, Process, General Results, Specific Results, Association and Coordination and Evaluation criteria: Pertinence and coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, appropriation and sustainability.

II. THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Since the passing of the regulation for the creation of the NPAS, after the design and approval of the strengthening project, the country went through a deep crisis, starting in 2003, a recovery that is still under way. This process of recovery was evident during the project's preparation but it was difficult at the time to analyze it in its entire dimension. In the mentioned evaluation report, elements from the international, regional, and national context are mentioned. These elements generated important investments which were mainly directed to the agricultural and agro-processing sectors while some investments were aimed at the country's provinces with great impact on the territory.

The flow of tourists has also increased and there is an important flow of capital in investments in the coastal area. As a consequence, there is a radical change in the use and occupation of land.

The two most relevant changes in the use of land are the development of commercial forestry based on exotic species that started in 1990 and the great expansion of cereal and oilseeds agriculture as from 2003. Together with the development of the area, there were important changes in cultivation techniques. Rotation of crops and pastures has been replaced by continuous agriculture. While in the past, Uruguay cultivated 400,000 or 500,000 hectares a year of non-irrigated crops, it is currently cultivating 2,000,000 hectares producing an increase in the price of land, land lease by rural owners (including small and medium), as well as in several indicators of activity and comfort. Forestation of exotic species, under the Act of promotion of the activity by the end of the 80's changed from near 50,000 hectares of planted forests with commercial purposes to more than 850,000 hectares in the present.

Additionally, great investment made or projected in activities such as production of cellulose or open-pit mining, introduced new tensions to the subject of conservation of natural resources.

As mentioned in the IE, at the moment of the formulation of the Project, the phenomenon was probably not seen in its entire dimension or continuity in time. Once the global crisis was overcome in the developed world in 2008, growth was resumed. It is also important to consider that the country has resources that allow for the expansion to continue.

E. Project's start, duration, and current implementation phase

In 2004, the Protected Natural Areas Division, with support from a small technical team hired by UNDP, intensively worked in the development of the project's Concept Note. Before the change of administration in 2005, all administrative documents were signed by MVOTMA and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), whose funds are managed by UNDP and, once under the new administration and with initial financial resources from GEF, the Spanish and French cooperation, the design of the full-fledged Project is carried out and it is approved in mid 2007.

The Protected Areas National Advisory Commission started working in 2005; and in 2008 the Protected Areas and Biodiversity Division is created; the Biodiversity Department and Protected Areas Department are created within this division in a broader institutional re-structure (ANNEX XVI). The budgetary allocation provided to the novel NPAS grows gradually but significantly through the Act 17,930, passed in 2005 defined by the five-year budget 2005-2009. This national budget reinforcement would continue in the following five-year period. The growth of allotted resources to protected areas of several provincial governments is added to the mentioned increase.

The **Project URU/06/G34 Catalyzing the Implementation of Uruguay's National Protected Area System** is approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2007, which was designed between 2004 and 2007 as support to the NPAS process of implementation. It is worth mentioning that during the design phase, some support actions were carried out thanks to contributions by the Spanish cooperation and Uruguay's government. This allowed the project to begin making progress at a central and local level, and has been crucial to catalyze the beginning of the system.

The Project had a total fund of 8 million dollars for a period of eight years, two years of formulation (2005-2006), and six years of execution (2007-2013). The fund was made up of contributions from the Uruguayan government, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the French cooperation (French Global Environment Facility – FFEM-) and the Federation of Regional Natural Parks of France(FPNRF), and the Spanish cooperation through the National Parks Autonomous Agency(OAPN), dependent on Spain's Ministry of Environment, Marine and Rural Affairs and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), apart from other smaller contributions.

The Project aimed to provide support to the initial design and implementation of a National Protected Area System that effectively *preserved a representative sample of the country's biodiversity, contributing to national development objectives and conservation commitment entered into at an international level.*

To achieve this, it was structured in four inter-related results:

- 1) The legal and institutional frameworks and the political agreements that contribute to the effective management and sustainable financing of the NPAS have been built and are operational;
- 2) The strengthening of key stakeholders' individual capacities contributes to the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS and PAs that constitute it;
- 3) The increase of awareness about the value and importance of biodiversity and PAs in key stakeholders contribute to the promotion of policies and practices that foster the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS.

- 4) Different models of governance implemented in demonstrative experiences contribute to the effective management of PAs and the NPAS sustainability, and the relationship between biodiversity, conservation, and local development.

Interventions at site level were designed to test the implementation of new legal and political frameworks, the evaluation and development of new tools to strengthen the effectiveness in the management of PAs, including different models of PA governance, modalities of generation of opportunities from tourism, and development of educational and training activities. Taking into account that the NPAS long-term accountability will depend on the country's capacity to ensure enough financial resources to cover PA management costs, the financial aspects have been highlighted and treated in a cross-cutting way through the Project.

Debate with organizations from the civil society (OSC) was evident in different moments of the formulation process of the NPAS² strengthening Project. The questioning by the Uruguayan Network of Environmental NGO's in 2005 was focused on the fact that the project needed to prioritize problems and actions, improve existing knowledge by conducting new studies and evaluations, and be clearer in relation to models of state or private management of the system. The network also highlighted the importance of debating in greater depth the model of implementation and demonstrative experiences proposed in relation to conservation general objectives and governance model, and social participation. Table 2 shows the general situation (complementary, a detailed analysis of land, coastal-marine, and total surface is presented in ANNEX XVII).

²Scarlatto, G., & Torres, A. (2005). Comments and contributions about the Draft of Catalyzing the Implementation of Uruguay's National Protected Area System. Montevideo.

Table 2.NPAS General situation

Area	Management Category	Location	Year of incorporation	Manager	CAE	Staff	Management Plan
Quebrada de los Cuervos	Protected Landscape	Treinta y Tres	2008	MVOTMA – ID Treinta y Tres	Working since December 17, 2009	Director Assistant Director 2 park rangers Service Staff	Approved
Esteros de Farrapos	National Park	Río Negro	2008	MVOTMA	Working since February 2, 2009	Director 2 park rangers 2 field staff	In process of approval
Valle del Lunarejo	Protected Landscape	Rivera	2008	MVOTMA – IDRivera	Working since 30/8/2011	Director Facilitator	In process
Cabo Polonio	National Park	Rocha	2009	MVOTMA – IDRocha	Officially appointed. Working since December 17, 2010	Director Park rangers chief Facilitator 8 park rangers	In process
Localidad Rupestre de Chamangá	Protected Landscape	Flores	2010	Municipality of Flores	Working since 2011	Director	In process
San Miguel	National Park	Rocha	2010	MVOTMA – PROBIDE S	Not appointed	Park ranger	In process
Laguna de Rocha	Protected Landscape	Rocha	2010	MVOTMA Municipality of Rocha	Working since March 10, 2011	Director Facilitator 3 park rangers	In process
Cerro Verde	Habitat/Species Management Area	Rocha	2011	MDN – MVOTMA	Working since August 19, 2013	Director Facilitator Technician planning	Pending
Rincón de Franquía	Habitat/Species Management Area	Artigas	2013	To be defined	Not appointed	park ranger	There is a plan to be revised and approved
Grutas del Palacio	Natural Monument	Flores	2013	Municipality of Flores	Not appointed	Municipal Staff	Pending

Source: “El proceso de construcción del Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Uruguay: Sistematización y Aprendizajes”, Alain Santandreu et al.

F. Issues the Project tried to address

Following the reflection made in the systematization document. “The Process of Construction of the National Protected Area System of Uruguay Systematization and Learning 2012,” NPAS’s preliminary version, the creation and implementation of a National Protected Area System (NPAS) is one of the milestones in the national environmental policies, together with the creation of the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment (MVOTMA), the implementation of the System of Evaluation of Environmental Impact (EIA), the approval of the Code of Waters and administrative reform that promoted the creation of the Water National Department (DINAGUA) and the approval and implementation of the Act of Territorial Planning and Sustainable Use. This legal framework shows that environmental problems and use of land were in the public agenda and required a special treatment.

President Jose Mujica’s speech at Rio+20 Summit (Mujica, 2012), stated that governing globalization, in a world of crisis, seemed to be the message sent by politicians. In this global

context, the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes becomes more relevant and not only at a local, national or regional scale but also at a global level, beyond its relationship with the economy, exportations, and growth. To have protected areas as a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity, landscapes, and the most representative ecosystems can make the difference in the process of construction of a policy of sustainable development.

Uruguay required a new institutional scheme that considered conservation of biodiversity and protection of natural areas a priority and put the issue in the national, provincial, and local political agenda.

From the institutional point of view, the State and several local stakeholders showed a limited capacity to develop management processes, planning, monitoring and evaluation of environmental and conservation public policies, despite the fact that the country had a background of regulatory and institutional matters. On the other hand, a growing mobilization of national and local NGOs required the political parties and the State to pay greater attention and show a more democratic relationship, reacting before the lack of solutions to a variety of environmental topics, such as the need for a Protected Area System.

Some milestones of the country conservation efforts

Uruguay has approved an important number of regulations related to biodiversity conservation. The 1996 Reform of the Constitution includes environment protection in the “general interest” category (Article 47). This category provides priority to the collective interest over the private/individual, this is crucial in a country such as Uruguay where more than 90% of land is in private hands. The General Act of Environment Protection (Act N°17,283 from 2000) provides the same status to the protection of water, land, landscapes quality, and conservation of biodiversity. This also extended the protection to shared resources, including those outside national jurisdiction highlighting the country’s commitment to international environment cooperation and the solution of global environmental issues. Before this General Law, the country had a series of legal and political tools that offered a regulatory framework to biodiversity conservation.

At an international level, Uruguay is signatory of agreements and conventions relevant for the conservation of biodiversity that include CBD, Ramsar, and CITES. In conformity with CBD, Uruguay developed a National Strategy for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (1999). This considers PAs as “essential pillars” for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the country; it places the NPAS as a main priority for *in situ* conservation in Uruguay and considers it essential to fulfill international commitments. Act 17,234 (2000) included the National System of Protected Areas in the “general interest” category, it also defined the NPAS and management categories for PAs, appointed the MVOTMA through DINAMA, as the agency responsible for the NPAS regulation, it proposed the creation of Advisory Commissions and Protected Areas Fund. The NPAS Regulatory Decree (52/005) was approved in 2005.

Poor inter-institutional articulation of projects and programs was the result of a highly sectoral management structure, lack of an institutional culture for the implementation of cut-crossing public policies with different stakeholders and sectors, and an extremely instrumental vision of social participation. There were not many records of successful public-private policies and the overlapping of competences among ministries (MGAP, MDN, and MEC) and regulatory gaps (for example in territorial planning) characterized the institutional scenario.

The strengthening of the technical, administrative, and managerial capacities was identified as a necessity, especially for the management of a non-existent Protected Area System in the country. Additionally, the lack of scientific and social knowledge about conservation and the mistrust from the academics in the political system made up a scenario which seemed difficult to overcome.

Finally, the difficulty to implement a public Protected Area System in private lands added complexity to the process of approval of a regulation that allowed the beginning of a process of implementation of a National Protected Area System.

Among problems to solve there are, the challenge of growing agricultural and livestock production, the mining and the wood industry as key economic tools, and a process of urbanization that concentrates the population in big cities depopulating the countryside (approximately 5% of the population in Uruguay lives in dispersed rural areas).

The average price of land in Uruguay increased 6 times between 2000 and 2010. Two years after the IE, the price had increased an additional 27%. This motivated a drastic increase in the “cost of opportunity” of rural lands in the period the project was planned, designed, and implemented. Rural producers have increased their profit, population in the provinces, where agriculture has grown, has shown great improvement in their living conditions, above the rest of the country, including Montevideo. A research on changes in the agribusiness sector and its effects provides valuable information. The hypothesis is that the recent agricultural development produces an important spillover effect generating added value in those areas which have shown the greatest growth. However, this hypothesis has been challenged and there is no definite opinion about this topic.

Even though there are no public figures on the price of land on coastal touristic areas, the information shows that prices have considerably increased. The increase in the number of visitors and investors generates dynamism in the area and important opportunities for owners. This deep change in the context generates at least three effects:

- a. The pertinence and opportunity for the Project increase. Some sectors of the public opinion that are aware of conservation issues feel the project is “necessary”.
- b. There is tension between the concepts of “Natural Uruguay” and “Productive Uruguay” and among project’s beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. There has been great improvement in the levels of activity and profit as a result of the deep modification of the primary production structure that is mainly related to the progress of rain-fed agriculture and with some industrial investments in the provinces. This reinforces the idea of an increase in the “cost of opportunity” of conservation regarding the moment in which the Project was formulated if the actions are seen as constraining factors to land exploitation.
- c. Uruguay is the last country in creating a Protected Area System in Latin America. The implementation of a system faces critical challenges since land property is mainly private in contrast with other countries where national parks are based on large federal lands.

The NPAS was implemented with population and producers living and producing in the PAs and with the implicit risk of people reacting due to lack of knowledge, making comments such as: “Are you going to tell me how to work on this land? This is my property, I’m the boss!”³

In the first stage of the Project’s planning and implementation, Alicia Torres, former DINAMA Director, stated: “...This use of the land- conservation of biodiversity- where the general interest is more important than the individual one, generates another point of view on the relationship the owner has with the property of the land. In the city, we are used to having regulations that limit the capacity of using the land. There are aspects imposed on us such as the maximum authorized building height or the style of facades be respected, and we, as citizens comply with these regulations. But in rural areas, the Protected Areas start to question the idea of up to which extent I have the right to use a territory that has certain value from the conservation standpoint. I always say that if that piece of land came to us with those conservation and biodiversity values, it was because

³See interview to Alicia Torres quoted in the report “The Process of Construction of a National Protected Area System in Uruguay, systematization and lessons learned 2012.”

there was a producer, a family, or a surrounding that valued it and I have always thought this could open more opportunities if they believed that the process could also diversify production and open new business related to tourism. But we had to do something to show those possibilities, with the additional problem that it was something new and we had no previous examples in the country to show...”

At the diagnosis and design stages, a series of restrictions or barriers were identified. They would make it difficult to implement a National Protected Area System in the country efficient in the achievement of objectives. These barriers were:

- a. Severe restrictions of resources aggravated by the economic crisis of the last years.
- b. Insufficient capacities for the management of PAs at an individual, institutional, and systemic level.
- c. Problems related to the ownership and management of land, mainly of private property and agricultural use.
- d. Low levels of awareness of some stakeholders about the role of these areas in environmental conservation and its contribution to national sustainable development.

Conservation evaluation in Latin America and the Caribbean rate the eco-regions in Uruguay as “vulnerable⁴” and its aquatic biodiversity as “in danger”. There are 38 mammal, 37 bird, 5 reptile, 7 amphibian, 39 fish, 1 insect, 2 crustacean, 2 mollusk, and 5 plant species “in danger” (UICN, 2005). These problems stem from the transformation of natural habitats by the productive sectors and the over exploitation of some species, especially in aquatic habitats.

Threats identified in the formulation process have increased in some cases due to the dynamics of the agricultural production in the last 10 years as well as the IED in other areas in the provinces.

Despite the threats mentioned before, the country still has rural areas with a very low population density focused on extensive livestock farming and agricultural activities which produce low levels of pressure on biodiversity in a great part of the territory.

There are still large areas of hardly-modified habitats and ecosystems of great conservation value including grasslands, native forests, wetlands, and marine environments. Taking into account this situation, the 1999 National Strategy for Biodiversity implemented an approach of double perspective: one focuses on the integration of matters related to conservation in productive sectors, mainly agriculture and livestock (approach developed by other Projects carried out by MGAP financed by the World Bank and GEF); the second perspective focuses on the creation of a National Protected Area System (NPAS) as a priority action for the conservation *in-situ* to strengthen the planning of the use of land and to protect representative samples of the country’s biodiversity.

G. Project’s immediate and development objectives

The Project Catalyzing the Implementation of Uruguay’s National Protected Area System (NPAS Project) aims to overcome problems in the design and implementation of a National Protected Area System that effectively preserves a representative sample of the country’s biodiversity contributing to the objectives of national development and conservation commitment at an international level. To achieve this the Project aims to strengthen key capacities for the design and implementation of the NPAS and the effective management of PAs at a systemic, institutional, and individual level, through: (i) the development of legal frameworks and adequate policies; (ii) the strengthening of institutional capacities through the definition of appropriate institutional arrangements, structures,

⁴Dinerstein, E., Olson, D., Graham, D., Webster, A., Primm, S., Bookbinder, M., & Ledec, G. (1995). A conservation Assessment of the Terrestrial Ecoregions of Latin America and the Caribbean. Washington, DC: The World Bank & World Wildlife Fund, World Bank.

responsibilities and occupational standards; (iii) promoting knowledge, skills, and competence, and (iv) increasing the knowledge of the society on PAs and the value of services provided.

The project’s long term goal is: *the conservation of biodiversity and Uruguay’s natural heritage contribute to the objectives of national development*. This clearly supports the national strategy for biodiversity. The project contributes to achieve this goal through a specific intervention that has as an Immediate Objective (purpose); *A National Protected Area System that effectively preserves a representative sample of Uruguay’s biodiversity that is designed and in process of implementation*. This objective will be achieved through four inter-related Results:

Table 3. Project’s Expected Results

Result 1	Result 2	Result 3	Result 4
Legal and institutional frameworks and political agreements that contribute to the effective management and sustainable funding of the NPAS have been implemented and are operational.	The strengthening of key stakeholder’s individual capacities contributes to the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS and PAs that constitute it.	The increase of awareness about the value and importance of biodiversity and PAs in key stakeholders contributes to the promotion of policies and practices that foster the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS.	Different governance models approved through demonstrative experiences contribute to the effectiveness of PAs management, and the NPAS sustainability, and also to strengthen the relationship between biodiversity conservation and local development.

H. Stakeholders

The Project is related to a very complex structure of stakeholders that is systematized in the Institutional Stakeholders table (ANNEX XVIII).

III. FINAL EVALUATION RESULTS

I. Project’s formulation

Regarding the level of design and conceptualization (S)

The Project was elaborated in a context of institutional changes in Uruguay where the creation and implementation of the National Protected Area System (NPAS)- Act N° 17,234- has set a milestone in the national environmental policy, together with the creation of the MVOTMA- Act N° 16,112-, the implementation of the System of Evaluation of Environmental Impact (EIA), the approval of the Code of Waters and the administrative reform that fostered the creation of the Water National Department (DINAGUA) and the approval and implementation of Act of Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development. The project is considered an appropriate tool to support policies, plans and programs related to biodiversity preservation in protected areas in Uruguay. It is also relevant regarding national guidelines and policies.

The project’s proposal is coherent with problems identified and analyzed in previous studies and it represented a “leap forward” in the way and intensity in which problems are dealt with in the country. The design of the Project’s Executive Unit, profiles and required qualifications, together with the institutional reality of MVOTMA, determined that the Project had a relevant role in the Ministry’s policy which influenced the way in which the design was conceived.

The technical proposal was considered of a high quality, recognized and legitimized by a great part of organizations and institutions related to the subject.

The NPAS's design was based on the use of private lands turned into private protected areas with an important alternative use. This is an answer to a specific reality in Uruguay where more than 90% of land is private and has an alternative lucrative use which is, in many cases, the support of family businesses⁵. Thus, the way of making demonstrative areas generate replicable results was to make progress in concepts, methodologies, and practices for the creation and management of protected areas that involve private land and use. The design took this situation into account, established actions, and designed specific indicators to measure progress in the degree of adoption of conservation proposals by private land owners.

The Project publicly recognized the historical role of settlers and producers in the conservation of biodiversity. Statements by DINAMA Director quoted in previous paragraphs, are evidence of this challenge. However, subsequent evidence showed that assumptions about reactions of these agents and possibilities of demonstrating possible benefits for private parties in conservation were not as expected. In many cases, there have been delays and the adoption of management plans is probably expensive and partial despite the important participation effort by stakeholders involved in the implementation phase. Probably due to budget restrictions, the combination of private lands next to public "nuclei" was not included in the development alternatives, where the most intense conservation measures can be applied. For the constitution of these public property surfaces, expropriation could be an alternative or other alternatives that in any case would imply expenditure.

Another aspect that was not sufficiently considered in the design was the establishment of actions to improve efforts of biodiversity conservation carried out by organizations (in general NGO's) and private companies. Probably, because of the little development these initiatives had when the Project was designed, their potential was difficult to determine but, it is understood that the design could have considered the possibility of developing actions in this sense, even within the restrictions set by the legal framework.

National ownership (HS)

The Project has made a relevant contribution to the accomplishment of the National Agenda of Public Policies regarding environment. At an institutional level, the PAs are considered a strategic subject in all territorial planning instruments. Likewise, people from several parts of the country are aware about PAs, know them, and in some cases asked for their inclusion in the NPAS.

The Project gathers aspirations from sensitized sectors of the civil society and the academic community in the country.

Opinion polls commissioned by the Project show important levels of coincidence with conservation objectives at public opinion level in general, as well as among managers and decision makers interviewed.

Although there is wide "support" or "approval", when it comes to "tough" decisions, the behavior of decision makers is variable and probably less favorable than what is expressed in different areas.

The overall result is favorable; the Project represents a substantial change in the knowledge and awareness about the problem in the country. There is an important involvement of not-specialized institutions such as Provincial Governments and Executive Power agencies.

⁵The "family business" concept is used in a strict sense, and it includes, according to international parameters, not only small-sized units but also medium, or large-size units, in which the business constitutes the main activity to be conducted by the owner generating most of the family's income.

Stakeholders' participation in the design (HS)

The Project presents an adaptive design and management which is flexible, it has several stakeholders, and it is intersectoral and participative; ensuring cross-cutting interventions at a national, provincial, and civil society level.

The Project was developed in such a way that during the two years and a half of set up and approval, resources were also oriented to support the beginning of the NPAS implementation. This way, once the project was approved, the country had already taken the first steps in the implementation of the NPAS.

In some places, not including those involved (local stakeholders) that were not proactive in the design stage or start of the project, led to the creation of rumors about the PAs (things like “they will deny us everything”, “They won’t let us enter the beach”) with a clear attitude against declaring lands PAs. This reaction has been reversed in some areas, through the awareness and inclusion of stakeholders in the process of NPAS implementation.

There was wide participation of stakeholders from the scientific community, national NGOs, and other groups from the civil society in different consultation activities nationwide, with a great effort of communication and participation in the communities involved.

The evaluating team has analyzed the documentary evidence about the model of participation of the civil society and other NPAS key stakeholders, and the willingness of technicians involved to make changes every time design alternatives were suggested, especially, at a national level. At a local level, however, OSCs and representatives from weaker collective interests could have made it difficult to participate in the design. The effort made and its results are rated as Highly Satisfactory.

Replicability

Replicability of the project's formulation and implementation process, especially of lessons learned, could be shared through discussion forums institutionally articulated at provincial level. A constraint to the possibility of replicating a project, as the one we are evaluating in this case, is the quality of human resources, experience, and the NPAS's higher level of organization, cohesion and experience after long years of working as a team, and the articulation with government agencies involved in joint activities. Also the level of understanding with officers from other government areas is sometimes difficult to establish among civil society/state/company.

The design was conceived so as to try and validate different management and governance criteria as well as funding and sustainability alternatives for the areas and the NPAS. In this sense, the experience generated by the Project will be valuable for future decisions in case of expansion of the System in the country. The potential to replicate the Project's experience in other realities is conditioned by the fact that it was designed for its development in private lands with the necessary agreements for its execution. On the one hand, this aspect would limit the broad application of its possible results; on the other hand, it represents an opportunity to generate pioneer progress in the modality to be replicated in the future.

Other aspects

The UNDP being the implementation agency of GEF Projects, both in Uruguay and at an international level, has been a comparative advantage in terms of support to a non-governmental organization in its role of Project executor. The UNDP also provided support through its reputation and expertise to national and provincial governments and to the interface with other concurrent projects of cooperation and multilateral financing.

In terms of the production of specific documents (manuals, operational plans, etc.), the NPAS professionals met the requirements and standards set by the UNDP and GEF. An institutional strengthening process was established improving capacities and generating institutionalism at a central and territorial level but at different levels.

The institutional context and the initial context of the System made some performances go beyond their descriptions. This represented, in a certain stage, a tension and a risk of “losing focus” that was addressed to reach a balance. This was the reason for a careful follow-up between the project’s coordination and DINAMA direction.

J. Project implementation

Implementation approach (S)

The implementation was consistent with designed objectives and strategies. Regarding the institutional approach and the role of the Project’s prominence and its relationship with MVOTMA’s structure, the implementation recognizes two clear stages. In a first stage, from the beginning to 2010, the Project was a relevant and visible structure as a main executor of public policies regarding biodiversity, this was due to the needs of the political authorities at the moment, DINAMA’s own weak points and restrictions, and the commitment and qualifications of the Project’s team.

The change of national authorities in 2010 and several provincial authorities, and the creation of the third level of government, from the Act of decentralization and citizenship participation, 2009, and the subsequent changes in technical teams made changes to the project’s approach. These changes affected the duration, agreements, and decision-making processes in the institutional representation. However, since the execution is in charge of a unit set up for this purpose, strategies were implemented to overcome these difficulties and keep the project’s continuity.

Technical capacities and their role in the project’s development, management and achievements.

The Project’s management team and most of the specialized staff have produced quality work and have made an important adaptation effort to challenges that implies making progress in a changing context. Based on these capacities and the necessary leadership, the Project strongly contributed to the inclusion of an important number of areas in the system, despite difficulties and in some cases, hostile attitudes. This judgment has been confirmed by a wide variety of informants including those who disagree with the Project’s proposal.

The area of economy of natural resources needs, according to interviews and this ET, greater development. How to evaluate and value “environmental assets”, managing them in harmony with financial development, constitutes a decisive aspect. It is not something that the Project or DINAMA can solve independently, given the magnitude of the effort that would require inter-institutional coordination and the link with universities or agencies such as ANII or others capable of articulating different disciplines, especially technical support from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Planning and Budget Office from the Presidency of the Republic.

Operational relationships among participating institutions and their incidence in the implementation and achievement of the project’s objective

The Project has tried to improve the level of adhesion and initial collaboration by a network of contacts and institutions that agree in technical, scientific terms, or feel identified with governmental policies.

It made important efforts to include in the debate people and institutions that did not agree with, and in many cases were hostile to, Project’s actions and objectives, especially at a local level (on PA lands). This has been recognized and valued in interviews and has increased the actions’ legitimacy and improved the atmosphere in which the actions are executed, it has also increased the number of interlocutors going beyond university research groups, specialized NGO’s, and associations or representative entities.

The greatest difficulty is in the involvement of institutions or people with a “neutral” or indifferent attitude. The institutional weakness of MVOTMA (specifically DINAMA) and the recent development

of the subject in the country make it difficult to place the issue of biodiversity conservation in equal terms with other “development” issues. Although “production” ministries (Agriculture, Industry and Mining) have their concerns about environmental issues, they try to address them themselves. At a university and academic level, groups with incidence in the country’s productive development have less relationship with the Project than those of greater incidence in the conservation subject. In the case of MVOTMA, the Project’s “visible faces” enjoy, in general, a good technical and personal reputation.

At a local level (PAs’ area of influence) an intense relationship has been developed with provincial and local governments and civil society organization.

Opinions of local stakeholders, however, point out some overlapping of activities, with several stakeholders performing the same activity. According to statements, coordination could be improved. Through the implementation of the project, there has been improvement regarding articulation and coordination efforts involving different institutions and in some cases, specific legislation (Rural Development Forums- RDF. The inter-institutional Forums on Social Policies- IFSP- and other discussion forums in the territory are examples in this sense). This generates problems of multiplication of these types of forums generating overlapping or duplications. Institutions and programs are much more coordinated than some years ago.

Relationship at a local level has sometimes been affected by delays to make up Specific Advisory Commissions, some working difficulties, and changes of political authorities in some provinces.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) (S)

Management of the Project and specialized staff make an important effort to keep supervision and monitoring reports updated. The PIR requires a considerable effort from the project’s monitoring and evaluation department and Direction. The same happens with the discussion and preparation of the Annual Operating Plan. All the information that must be reported to sponsors and other parties is generated according to schedule.

During mid-evaluation, a detailed analysis of the status of the Monitoring and Evaluation system was carried out. It included comments and recommendations about indicators chosen, their use, and interpretation. There was reference to the little systematic use of planning, monitoring and control tools, and little incorporation of the system’s information to the decision making process.

The current evaluation has shown that the management and handling of reports required is still carried out according to schedule.

Also, it was found there is plenty of detailed information at different levels and an appropriate understanding by the Project’s central team members. In general, all the members of the central team are able to accurately answer questions and requests involving information.

Despite this abundance, there is an underutilization of information as support for decisions. There is no updated system that generates, standard reports and indicators to be used as input before group planning activities. Besides, there is a difference in the availability and use of information by the Project’s central level and decentralized units at protected areas. Staff at the protected areas is aware of what happens in the territory but access to systemized information is not as easy. There is a constant concern about information. The Project has made an important effort in the creation of a comprehensive information system (SISNAP) that supports evaluation and decision making. Although the system is complete, structure and operation are simple. It is not yet working and it has not been able to collect information at a decentralized level. The team working on it is aware of this issue and is currently incorporating MVOTMA’s key technicians, as well as articulating with a new Spanish cooperation project.

Another aspect of the system is that it is oriented to monitor the NPAS and not specifically the Project and its actions. This intention, that is reasonable and understandable, has generated a link between the

Project's monitoring and Logical Framework indicators that could be reinforced with information regarding the logical framework. The SISNAP, and the type of information it generates, was a deliberate decision by the project (according to senior management) that aimed at sustainability once the project was over.

An aspect highlighted in the Mid-Evaluation, and taken into account by the Information System being developed, is the need for monitoring direct indicators of biodiversity results consequence of management in the area that help making decisions increasing efficiency. The SISNAP allows for the upload of information generated by academic centers that in the past were not received or analyzed in a homogeneous way. This represents a practical and intelligent solution, and once completed, it would represent great progress. Apart from direct survey regarding priority species or other in effectiveness of conservation, the Mid-evaluation recommended the integration of other indicators or study areas, such as: Monitoring of threats: areas of annual crops, forestry and others in the area of influence.

- Price of land, amount of land transactions, etc.
- Management effectiveness, complementing METT contributions.
- Measurement of progress in the implementation of management plan measures by PAs' private companies and, eventually, their area of influence.
- Best practices. Periodic record of activities and comparison with protocols.

Generally speaking, in all PAs there is tacit knowledge of what happens in the area, but this knowledge is not systemically recorded or managed. A great portion of these information areas is to be included in the NPAS. However, the project will probably finish without achieving a good record of these variables.

Stakeholders' participation (HS)

Although *participation* is a concept of general use, its complexity requires clarity in its definition and scope, especially when applied in inter-cultural contexts, as it happens with the generation and formulation of this project.

Evaluation of the quality and degree of the stakeholders' participation in the implementation process should take into account the heterogeneity of the intervention. It is concluded that the project has worked hard to disseminate its goals, to include involved populations (livestock owners, rural workers, small producers, artisanal fishermen, or tourism operators, etc.) in the design and implementation of activities and in the implementation of training actions obtaining, in general, satisfactory results.

Participation was promoted through formal (meetings, later CAEs) and informal instances, with important and frequent presence of the decentralized staff and in many occasions, the authorities of the Project, DINAMA and MVOTMA; guides and guidelines were developed to foster participation processes in the PAs.

Several areas presented some level of conflict. Some of them due to organized resistance groups, but also related to uncertainty and anxiety generated by the lack, or not implementation of communication procedures. The delay in developing some CAEs and in producing and approving Management Plans, sometimes justified by the need to achieve high levels of participation, contributed to the generation of these situations. Conflict in some areas made the Project progress carefully and slowly so as not to increase the level of tension; this may have helped to increase uncertainty in some agents.

The Project, however, was consistent in the promotion of participation and the search for solutions to conflict by consensus, something that could have delayed the processes increasing uncertainty. They did so to find lasting and feasible solutions.

As mentioned before, the Project has not avoided conflict and has been especially careful in considering opinions and positions of groups or individuals opposed to its proposal. In some cases, the incorporation of groups of the civil society or public programs to the debate and assessment events tried to solve the need for representation of PAs' settlers and neighbors. Positions and attitudes of

these individuals or less mobilized groups appear explicitly or implicitly, and are decisive when developing actions. Experience shows that it is a difficult aspect to tackle that needs to be carefully handled when evaluating positions in direct participation events.

Work with other stakeholders such as livestock producers, agricultural or milk producers, artisanal fishermen, tour operators, craftsmen, journalists, politicians, and the average citizen, and to a lesser extent, the forestry and mining sector, has been successfully developed within the strategic framework of the project and a strategy of institutional positioning from the NPAS. Especially, activities of tourism promotion in which there is a successful experience (Polonio) that should be replicated. Key stakeholders that participate of these initiatives have specific work proposals which are incorporated to the project with possibilities of continuing and contributing to its sustainability.

Financial Planning

The implementation of the National Protected Area System has been financed with resources from the government and the international cooperation through support from the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Program, Spanish and French cooperation, among others, together with provincial governments' support, from the private sector and civil society organizations.

In August 2007, the Project Catalyzing the Implementation of Uruguay's National Protected Area System was signed between the Uruguayan Government, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and UNDP; this project involves technical and financial support from these institutions of multilateral cooperation of US\$2,550,000.

In November 2007, the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) approved its contribution to the project of €1,000,000 being executed since mid 2008

The Spanish Cooperation through the Autonomous Authority for National Parks, Spain's Ministry of Environment, Marine and Rural Affairs, and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, has been providing technical and financial cooperation since 2005. Between 2005 and 2012, the Spanish cooperation contribution reached US\$ 919,000. There was a significant increase in relation to what was planned in the initial project which was US\$ 400,000. The amount was more than duplicated due to a work agreement with the Spanish cooperation. Besides, there was an increase in cooperation from AECID project to support SISNAP's Support System for Decision Making (another US\$ 200,000).

At the same time, cooperation from other programs and projects supported by other agencies were articulated with this effort: Small Grants Program (UNDP/GEF-MVOTMA), Program of Articulation of Territorial Networks (UNDP/ several sources), Uruguay Integrates Program (Planning and Budget Office from the Presidency of the Republic- European Union), Ecoplata Program (with support from the International Development Research Centre, Canada), decentralized cooperation, South-South cooperation with financial support from AUCI and cooperation agencies of partner countries through cooperation agreements among environment ministries from Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay.

Based on financial information provided by the Project up to June 2013, almost at the end of the total time allocated to the project, USD 2,492,852 of the funds provided by the GEF have been disbursed, representing almost 100% of the budget. Besides, UNDP through TAC funds has provided US\$ 10,000 more than originally budgeted. Cash contribution by MVOTMA, exceeded in 40% the original budget, and FFEM, after this final request for funds which is underway, will complete 100% of budget. This means the Project has been agile and diligent in the financial execution of the funds allocated.

Information about the financial execution by cooperating partner provided by the Project, according to Uruguay's UNDP records is attached to this report (ANNEX XIX). This information does not take into account financing from the Spanish Cooperation or in-kind cooperation from different sponsors or other contributions that have not been managed through UNDP.

Table 4 presents information as it was projected in PRODOC, updated to June 2013. Spanish cooperation funds, in-kind counterparts, as well as funds from the French cooperation transferred to Parks Federation (FPNRF) and directly executed by GEF, are included. Adding all sources, in the period 2008-June 2013, executed funds for expenses and investments in the NPAS reached US\$ 7.3million.

Table 4. Project budgetary execution

Totals (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (US\$)		TRAC/PNUD Financing (US\$)		Government (US\$)		FFEM (US\$)		Spanish Coop. (US\$)		Other (**) (US\$)		Total (***) (US\$)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual			Planned
GEF/PNUD Grants	2,500,000	2,492,852	50,000	60,000									2,550,000
Cash Co-financing – UNDP managed					1,420,000	1,327,384	984,750	960,506					2,404,750
In-kind support					1,050,000	874,664	600,000	50,000	749,000	749,000	64,000	6,000	2,463,000
Cash Co-financing – Partner Managed						600,000	315,250		170,000	170,000			485,250
Totals	2,500,000	2,492,852	50,000	60,000	2,470,000	2,802,048	1,900,000	1,010,506	919,000	919,000	64,000	6,000	7,903,000

Governmental in-kind cooperation includes cash transfers to provincial governments of Treinta y Tres, Rocha, and Rivera for US\$ 335,000. Of funds provided by GEF, the equivalent to US\$ 315,250 are transferred to FPNRF and directly executed by FEM.

The amount by the Uruguayan Government included US\$ 1,370,000 from MVOTMA, and 50,000 from the MGAP, a total of US\$ 1,420,000 shown in the chart. The total funds from the Spanish cooperation have already been provided.

Analysis of the figures show there has been no problems with the accomplishment of commitments, budgetary availability, and quotas for financial execution, there have been no problems. As well, the participation from different sponsors has been complemented and generated a precedent of value to develop similar experiences to the current one.

The technical and financial contributions of the Project had a “leverage” effect promoting the participation of other financial sources that provided approximately US\$ 1,700,000 to the NPAS. These additional sources articulated after the project’s approval includes MINTRUD, IADB, CIEDUR-CAF, GEF- Climate Change Adaptation, AUCI, Cooperation Agencies from Chile and Colombia, and national NGOs such as Aves del Uruguay.

Another relevant aspect is to analyze the financial execution of different results and its relationship with rating provided to each of the achievements. In ANNEX XX, fund allocation for each result is shown, the verified execution between 2008 and 2012, and how the execution was developed in relation to annual disbursements estimation for each result developed in the PRODOC.

The information shows that there were fund transfers between results. Result 4 executed 28% more funds than those originally budgeted while component 2 executed half of them.

Disbursement of Result 2 is basically explained because it received an important proportion of the additional fund from the Spanish cooperation and the Autonomous Authority for National Parks of Spain (OAPN) which “alleviated” and compensated the demand on GEF funds.

Result 3 also received budgetary reinforcement from the Spanish cooperation.

The execution of Result 4 reflects its complexity and the efforts the Project had to make with an important set of executed activities which in some cases had not been originally foreseen. Despite these efforts, results, when measured with indicators of the current Logical Framework, are the least satisfactory; as a consequence evaluation of cost/efficiency of this result is the lowest among those analyzed.

Another interesting piece of information is related to transfers made by the Project to several protected areas. Information and analysis are presented in ANNEX XXI.

Information shows that a significant part of funds was allocated to resources for PAs that constitute demonstrative governance experiences (Result 4) as well as funding activities and tourism development (Result 1 of the Project), and environmental education, in the case of Humedales de Santa Lucía (Result 3). Considering funds managed by UNDP, funds executed in the areas represented 31% of the total. The table includes Humedales de Santa Lucía and the area of Laureles -Cañas in Quebradas del Norte. These areas, despite the fact that they have not been formally incorporated to the system, have received actions since the beginning of the Project. Areas of Chamangá and San Miguel, financed with MVOTMA’s funds, are not included; the same is the case of the recently incorporated Rincón de Franquía.

The four protected areas considered demonstrative of governance systems in the Project’s Result 4 (Quebradas del Norte, Laguna de Rocha, Cerro Verde, and Estero de Farrapos,) concentrate 67% of PAs funding. Taking into account that the surface of these pilot areas is 65% of the total, it could be deduced that, fundings proportional to surface. Figures, however, can be affected by two areas, Humedales de Santa Lucía and Laureles-Cañas that, because of having great surface and not being incorporated to the system, would receive resources only for some activities. Excluding these areas, the governance system demonstrative PAs would represent 79% of funding and 87% of the surface.

Modalities of execution and implementation

Project implementation is considered effective. Evidence indicates that communication with UNDP has been efficient and has contributed to planning and problem solving. Procedures established between both parties have been followed and the financial management and budget execution have been satisfactory. Contributions of funds managed by UNDP have been timely, and technical and administrative support has always been available, based on good communication between the project and the local UNDP office.

Supported by the UNDP, the Project selected a highly-qualified, highly-committed technical team, clearly defining tasks and responsibilities. In a new phase of the Project, however, the size and structure of the work team should be re-assessed. At the same time, it is important to plan an effective solution to keep the Coordination Unit running in the event no external funding is available (as it is forecasted). This continuity is important, on the one hand, to retain trained technicians, and on the other, because the role of the project in the conservation of protected areas is still critical, and cannot be fully replaced by MVOTMA permanent structures.

K. Progress in achievement of results

Table 5: 'Progress in achievement of results

Result	Rating
1) Legal and institutional frameworks and political agreements that contribute to effective management and sustainable funding of the NPAS have been implemented and are operational.	Highly Satisfactory
2) The strengthening of key stakeholders' individual capacities contributes to the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS and protected areas that constitute it.	Satisfactory
3) The increase of awareness about the value and importance of biodiversity and PAs in key stakeholders contribute to the promotion of policies and practices that foster the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS.	Satisfactory
4) Different governance models approved through demonstrative experiences contribute to the effectiveness of PAs management, and the NPAS sustainability, and also to strengthen the relationship between biodiversity conservation and local development.	Satisfactory

L. Achievement of outputs/results and objectives

The project's global objective is to preserve Uruguayan biodiversity relevant at national and global level.

The project objective is to strengthen and/or develop systemic, institutional, and individual capacities necessary for the implementation of a sustainable National Protected Area System in the medium and long term. Outputs and results achieved are detailed as follows:

⁶Categories: Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project shows no deficiencies in the accomplishment of objectives, regarding relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Satisfactory (S): The project shows minor deficiencies in the accomplishment of objectives, regarding relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project shows moderate deficiencies in the accomplishment of objectives, regarding relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The Project shows significant deficiencies in the accomplishment of objectives, regarding relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Unsatisfactory (U): The Project shows major deficiencies in the accomplishment of objectives, regarding relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project shows severe deficiencies in the accomplishment of objectives, regarding relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

RESULT 1:

Legal and institutional frameworks and political agreements that contribute to the effective management and sustainable funding of NPAS have been implemented and are operational.

Act 17,234 (2000) included the creation of a National Protected Area System in the "general interest" category thus providing a fundamental tool for the planning and management of protected areas. This act defined the NPAS and management categories for protected areas, giving the MVOTMA, through DINAMA, the ability to regulate the NPAS, establishing regulations to incorporate areas to the NPAS and its management, the creation of instances of central participation (National Advisory Committee) and by areas (Specific Advisory Committees), and the Protected Areas Fund. In 2005 the Regulatory Decree (52/005) which regulates the NPAS was approved. In 2005 regulations included in Act 17,930, which establish changes that contribute to the implementation of the previous act was also approved. These acts, the decree and the national environmental policy framework provide an opportunity to make progress in the conservation of biodiversity in Uruguay. At the same time, funding from international cooperation was approved, the Global Environment Facility, to support the development of a project to strengthen capacities to implement the NPAS. In this context, the approval of the decree was a political signal from the government of the importance given to the subject. The project, with approved cooperation funds, and taking into several stakeholders' views, constituted the foundation to start the NPAS process of implementation.

Six areas have developed, or are in the process of developing, Management Plans based on the Guidelines for the Planning of Protected Areas formulated in the period.

It is important to highlight the degree of achievement of guidelines' production, as an output within this broader output, as well as the progress made in adaptive management and planning incorporated by the project into the planning and management of PAs.

The project led a guidelines production process for protected areas planning. At a methodological level, Planning Guidelines are based on tools to facilitate adaptive management as open standards for conservation (Conservation Measures Partnership), it provides a logic that integrates the different planning scales, and links planning to instruments of monitoring and evaluation of management processes such as the tool for monitoring of management effectiveness, METT (World Bank / WWF), SNAP's Information System, and methodologies for governance evaluation and planning of the areas.

Specific Advisory Committees (CAE) from seven protected areas are permanently working. The National Advisory Committee (CNA) composed of delegates from 17 institutions, and public, private and civil society organizations has met 30 times between 2005 and 2012.

Output 1.1. NPAS's consensual and officially approved NPAS Strategic Plan

Since 2005 a group of articulated activities has been developed and integrated into a Medium Term Plan 2010-2014 approved by MVOTMA's Resolution 171 (2010), after a development process involving multiple stakeholders. Through this, a long-term vision and guidelines for the development of a National Protected Area System was established in the five-year period, including an estimate of resources required.

Since 2012 and based on a gradual and adaptive planning approach, the plan is being revised for a 2014-2020 strategy that would be integrated to the National Biodiversity Strategy in that period.

Output 1.2. Financing strategy and instruments and business plan for the SNAP adopted by the Government

As stated in the document "The Process of Construction of the National Protected Area System of Uruguay. Systematization and Learning"(NPAS project, version under development, by Alain Santandreu et al.) at international level it is generally the governments who finance most of the management of protected areas. Biodiversity is considered a public good and governments have an

inescapable responsibility for their conservation that should be translated into public budget for systems.

The NPAS design has selected a decentralized, co-managed system. To make this possible it is necessary to have a set of income sources and instruments for channeling resources to adjust specific solutions to specific problems and not proposing one solution to all problems (Picerno, 2005).

The legal framework enables the financing of the NPAS including "budgetary resources"; income generated by entrance fees; income derived from fines and confiscation; the possibility to create specific taxes to finance the NPAS; the possibility of entrance fees to PAs; the possibility of subsidies (that even though they do not strictly finance the NPAS regarding structure, they would contribute to funding by private parties the adoption of recommended implementation practices for the NPAS), apart from instruments traditionally considered in Uruguayan legislation (donations, inheritances, etc.) and funds from the International Cooperation that are significant in these subjects"(Picerno, 2005).

Up until some months ago, the Executive Power was authorized by MVOTMA to set prices for the provision of services, exploitation, and entrance fees to protected natural areas. This was legally modified in the last budget re-allocation process thanks to the technical team, and there is now a price range to be fixed. Profit will be transferred to the Protected Areas Fund (Article 17 of the Act).

In order to attract donations from the private sector, there was a proposal for tax incentives to donations made by companies. There are already examples of this in the country, providing incentives to donations made to state schools and high schools, the University of the Republic, and Private Universities, the Clemente Estable Institute for Biological Research, the Teletón Foundation, among others. In this framework proposals were elaborated and submitted, but they have not been approved yet. This instrument would generate additional benefits by linking the business network and the management of protected areas.

From the operational standpoint, other alternatives to the Fund were evaluated, these were: Trust Fund and Non-state public entity. In the current framework, the Protected Areas Fund is a set of resources especially allocated and is governed by instructions by the Nation's General Accounting Office.

The Fund still faces difficulties in its capitalization, in other words, there are difficulties in its implementation, due to lack of mechanisms to promote contributions by private funds, and due to the fact that its location in a general accounting office's account implies centralized procedures and controls, that are in a way distant from management in the areas, and because self-generated profit, which would naturally go to the Fund, have been directly allocated to needs in their own areas, being decided its management would be decentralized. Apart from these difficulties the first deposit to the Fund has already been made through a donation of one of the programs of Middlebury College-Vermont, USA, in Latin America, and also the first payment of a tax included in the operation contract of "Puerta del Polonio".

Output 1.3. *Instruments for income generation and distribution based on tourism and recreational activities fees tried in demonstrative experiences.*

In the context of interventions by the Project to strengthen the NPAS (PNUD/GEF), the Quebrada de los Cuervos was selected as a pilot area to develop and try a system for financial resources generation based on entrance fees to tourist and recreational services.

An agreement signed in 2012 involving the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the MVOTMA, the National Development Corporation and the IDTT has allowed the development of various measures to improve the conditions of the Quebrada de los Cuervos as a tourist destination in a protected area. In this context, works have been done regarding effluent treatment of staff and visitors' center, fire safety, Interpretation Center equipment, visitors' bathrooms, and interpretation trails.

Also, within an agreement signed in 2013 between the MVOTMA and MINTURD for the definition of guidelines for the development of tourism in protected areas, the Quebrada de los Cuervos became a

pilot site for the development of plans for tourism in protected areas. This agreement has MVOTMA financing through the National Agency for Research and Innovation (ANII). In this context, there will be support for the development of a business plan for the area, evaluating visitation potential, characterization of current and potential visitors, and analysis of different options for income generation (e.g., improving the system of differential rates for local, national, and international visitors, senior citizens and children, etc.).

Cabo Polonio is financed through contributions by public funds by IDR and DINAMA and NPAS funds. In addition, the MINTURD through IADB funds has financed major infrastructure works. Other ministries (MGAP, MI, and MDN) develop actions (forestry management and surveillance) with their own budget. The area receives around 105,000 visitors annually. A percentage of public transport tickets, and illegal constructions owners, and vehicles with special permits for transit generate revenues that cover almost 80% of management costs. A tax was recently implemented on the operation contract of "Puerta del Polonio - concession made by public call and which is expected to strengthen the self-financing management of the area. In the first phase (three years) income generated through this tax is fully allocated to the area, either through the Protected Areas Fund or direct investment.

Two surveys were carried out among visitors to Quebrada de los Cuervos (2008, 2009 respectively). Results of both surveys show clear evidence of satisfaction with the visit, and it is detected that total expenditure in Treinta y Tres is significantly higher than expenditure to visit the Quebrada, which proves the indirect benefits of the area for the province. Surveys showed that the implementation of an entrance fee that would contribute to maintenance and preservation costs of goods and services offered by the Quebrada would be well accepted by most visitors. Although the survey does not show elasticity of tourist demand, results obtained allowed for the development of a tourist fee to improve current tourism revenues; and to create an instrument to better appreciate natural resources and their management.

As a tourist destination Cabo Polonio National Park generates job opportunities and income for the local community and promotes and disseminates its values. That flow of visitors, with strong seasonality, also presents a challenge for conservation objectives in the area. Knowing the profile of visitors and their experience contributes to management decisions of the protected area. In this context visitors need to register since 1 January 2011. Moreover, under the NPAS Project, in the period 2009-2010 a survey among tourists was developed in order to characterize visitors, their assessment of the area, and services, they were also asked about their daily expenditure.

Output 1.4. *Institutional arrangements, structures, and defined responsibilities and occupational standards for the NPAS management.*

The current institutional structure of the NPAS is organized with the NPAS Division of Biodiversity and Protected Areas and their Management Department with three units from DINAMA providing management support which are the Legal Department, the Planning Unit and the International Affairs Advisory Division. The Division has 18 people; half of them work on protected areas (at a central and area level). DINAMA institutional framework (both, at a central and local level), is currently supported by the Catalyzing the Implementation of NPAS Project, which has 27 people dedicated to the task (at central and areas level). It is organized with a General Coordinator and a Technical and technical teams at central and area level where pilot experiences are developed. The main team is divided into components of Biodiversity Conservation and Planning, Communication and Environmental Education, Training and Human Resources Development, Economic and Financial, Participation, Information System and Administrative Support, which articulate with the heads and area teams.

DINAMA is highly committed to the NPAS and is currently in the process of adapting its institutionality. It also opens the debate on environmental institutionality within broader governmental and social transformations.

Although the Project and DINAMA's structure are individual entities, there is interest and the political will to formally include it in the structure of the agency, especially when considering the restructuring of MVOTMA in general, and especially DINAMA's. Regarding DINAMA, two, equal-hierarchy departments, one of PAs and one of Biodiversity, are to be created. The resolution to structure the NPAS, defining its sustainability, is included.

Between 2009 and 2010, a specific consultancy was conducted to contribute to the institutional design of the NPAS (CPA-Ferrere, 2010) which recommended a central structure strengthened within MVOTMA with human resources in the territory articulating with areas' managerial units working with other institutions, especially provincial governments. This design was partially considered in the general restructuring process of MVOTMA and its approval and implementation is still pending.

Output 1.5.*Information system, knowledge management, evaluation and adaptation for the NPAS and the Project.*

The NPAS developed some knowledge management tools such as the portal or METT application and, more recently, the NPAS Information System (SISNAP) seeking to take into account the diversity of actions when implementing an initiative with high levels of complexity and uncertainty. It developed and implemented a variety of instruments in vast areas of knowledge such as the identification of high-priority species and ecosystems for conservation, or governance of protected areas. The various books, guides and manuals, the 27 Working Papers, more than 30 technical reports and numerous articles, papers and reports of workshops and seminars indicate a significant wealth in intellectual production of biodiversity, conservation, protected areas, and sustainable development in the country.

These actions identify three main interrelated frameworks containing: the NPAS Project's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, that despite focusing on the project seeks to guide these activities into the system construction; monitoring system of DINAMA's five-year and annual plans, and SNAP Information System (SISNAP).

The website is created in 2006 as an information tool to raise awareness and share knowledge, to support a participatory process involving a wide audience ranging from people interested in the subject for the first time (teachers, students, local stakeholders, etc.), and those already dealing with the issue and looking for specific information (technicians, researchers, NGOs, environmentalists, national and international organizations, etc. It aims to establish a communication channel with people concerned and interested in biodiversity and protected areas, providing knowledge obtained in the years of work and progress in the implementation of the NPAS, providing information mainly to local and governmental stakeholders, researchers, political and tourism sector, area users and journalists.

Given the progress of technology and the NPAS, it is necessary to redesign the structure of the web page so that it includes changes that may arise from demands by the NPAS or the users.

On the other hand, between 2006 and 2010, the management of geographic information by the NPAS focused on the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) of the protected areas and the NPAS that became important tools for decision-making in planning and management of the System and its areas. Then, the need to add non-geographical information to developed GISs led to the need to initiate a process of conceptualization of an Information System for the NPAS transcending geographical information and allowing the coordination and integration of information of protected areas and the NPAS. A process for the design and implementation of an Information System for the NPAS or SISNAP articulated with the Environmental Information System (SIA) of DINAMA / MVOTMA was started in 2011.

The SISNAP consists of a set of processes and systems for data, information and knowledge management generated in Uruguay's protected areas. It is based on current user-friendly information and communication technologies for those not specialized in programming. It is structured into two levels: NPAS and peripheral nodes. The NPAS level is the central node of the system, with national coverage and a function for centralization of information of peripheral nodes and information

nationwide. The peripheral nodes level refers to protected areas that integrate the NPAS and works centralizing specific information from each PA.

In 2009 a specific program (software) was designed in agreement with the School of Engineering of the University of the Republic called JSNAP. This software facilitated the process of areas selection and the temporal prioritization for the gradual development of the NPAS physical network. The optimization module is implemented by using the GLPK linear programming library. It has a user-friendly interface with graphical results, tabular and statistics that allow for an easy interaction with the user, as well as the possibility to export data in spreadsheet format and reports in PDF format. Geographic program outputs can be directly viewed through the GIS software Arc Map through the generation of thematic maps resulting from analysis processing. The program's manual is user-friendly and guides the user through analysis's various stages. The JSNAP is structured in windows that correspond to each of the four stages of analysis of areas selection:

1. To calculate minimum number of areas
2. To evaluate equivalent solutions
3. To look for the best combination of areas
4. To identify order of area incorporation

A species database of public internet access is developed in 2010 featuring taxonomic and distribution data of priority and non-priority native species (<http://www.dinama.gub.uy/sia/snap-species-app/>). Finally, between 2011 and 2012 a group of researchers reviewed the lists and maps, and making progress in threat assessment.

Based on the notion of gradual and adaptive planning, the NPAS leads, as from 2012, a revision process of the physical network system design, based on three main aspects: a) incorporation of new information on ecosystems and species of interest for conservation, b) review of the system's conservation objectives, incorporating new elements of interest for conservation, c) update of pressure and opportunity scenarios in the country.

In 2005, the NPAS first applied the METT methodology (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool), before having an operational National Protected Area System, formulating a baseline of protected areas which would be later incorporated to the NPAS. In 2009 and 2012 similar METT applications were developed in protected areas incorporated into the System and some in the process of incorporation in order to have follow-up information once they were incorporated.

In the context of SISNAP's implementation process, the cooperation project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, Ecosystem Resilience and Climate Change" between the MVOTMA and AECID is currently under the execution stage. Its main objective is to promote the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity facing the challenges of climate change. For the first phase (2013-2015) a System of Support for Decision Making (SATD) is being developed to incorporate biological connectivity criteria to environmental management tools. In the second phase (2015-2017) progress will be made towards the implementation of the Invasive Species National Plan according to the action plan generated by the National Biodiversity Strategy.

The SATD in Protected Areas and adjacent areas, is a system specifically designed to provide information and support different stages of a decision making process on land management.

SATD production is based on progress made in technology tools for decision making by the NPAS in coordination with the Environmental Information System (EIS). The SISNAP integrates procedures and information from different NPAS scales and DINAMA departments. Also, the GIS integrates territory attributes at local and national level which are part of the SISNAP's spatial component.

It is important to mention that the SATD design will use some of the PAs as pilot cases, and there is a deep articulation forecasted with the National Environmental Information System (SISNIA).

RESULT 2:

The strengthening of key stakeholder's individual capacities contributes to the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS and PAs that constitute it.

Output 2.1. Program of HR training- at all levels- for the System and PAs effective management.

The project has developed a great number of training activities in different management areas of protected areas reaching a large number of people, from the project itself and from departments related to the NPAS.

Achievement is measured through the evaluation of the percentage of staff that does not have the required competences. The mid-evaluation considered it a costly indicator and it was recommended to replace it by some "proxy" of a better cost/benefit ratio. The Project, however, decided to re-measure, since it had baseline information and committed goals. This measurement represented a major effort, but it allowed for the adequate characterization of the progress.

The project has shown great progress compared to the baseline. However, overall goals have not been met; at this stage, it can be said, they were too ambitious. Levels showing the most progress and close to meeting goals are those of technical and supervision levels, as well as field workers'. The largest deficits are verified in the management's ability to monitor and preserve natural resources, especially park rangers'.

In ANNEX XXII, there is a table where the evolution of personal competence levels in PAs is described compared to the baseline.

Output 2.2 Staff training program on PAs financial planning and operation

Training has been largely accomplished, and progress has been made, as it is evident from the figures in the table of Annex XXII. Evidence of this, however, is delayed, since most Management Plans are neither approved nor operational.

Output 2.3: Tertiary education strategy aligned with the skills' goals required for the effective management of PAs and the NPAS.

The goals for this output have been amply met and ahead of schedule. The project has been active in the design of curricula, and in the establishment of agreements and alliances with educational centers. It also had an adequate response capacity, when expectations of budget allocation for the current period were not met. The project's strategy aimed to: 1) start with "tailored courses" to fulfill immediate needs, 2) promote and set up permanent courses incorporating them to national training institutions to contribute to long-term continuity.

Between 2008 and 2012, in alliance with different public and private institutions, 105 nature guides have been trained as well as more than 30 park rangers, nearly 60 technicians and 9 managers (that together with the current Diploma in Management of Natural Areas students add up to more than 20 people). Coordination with foreign institutions has represented an innovation in the way of approaching the process contributing to activities' quality and results. Furthermore, 16 UTU teachers have received specific training in protected areas, in conservation, planning, and management topics. UTU trains and certifies park rangers' knowledge. A Diploma course is run in coordination with the School of Agriculture, University of the Republic (UdelaR).

Summing up, compliance of the result is Satisfactory. Analysis of activities show efforts were made to include other disciplines in staff training, related to the production, management, among others. In the case of production disciplines (especially agriculture), it is recommended to maximize efforts to relate with groups and people in the sectors leading production as trainers. It is important that personnel involved in conservation knows the most popular production techniques, scientifically analyze processes and outputs used and their impact on the environment, is aware of the economic result of these activities, including but not limited to sustainable or environmentally friendly technologies.

RESULT 3:

The increase of awareness about the value and importance of biodiversity and PAs in key stakeholders contribute to the promotion of policies and practices that foster the consolidation and sustainability of the NPAS.

Outcomes contributing to the achievement of this result are:

Output 3.1. Education program for school and high school students

Original goals, which referred to the percentage of schools participating in PAs educational programs, were basically met. Over 2500 primary school students participated in environmental education activities conducted in protected areas and their surroundings. It should be mentioned that in 2011 the original strategy was modified, deciding to work on the development of contents to be incorporated into school curricula at a national level, and on the training of primary and secondary school teachers on the subject. This included activities already underway since the beginning of the project that were expanded in the last phase such as developing and including contents in CEIBAL Program's platform and in textbooks of primary and secondary education. Based on the experience generated over these years, a book for primary school teachers on education for conservation will be published and distributed in public schools in 2013.

Output 3.2. Awareness program aimed at the political sector and key sectoral stakeholders.

Specific studies show that 74% of political leaders agree on giving priority to environmental protection even when this can slow economic growth. Special events in the PAs were carried out to achieve this output, and specific materials were generated such as "Nature's accountability" focused on the analysis of the accountability law during one year of the project. There were also activities specifically designed to raise awareness among particular interest groups such as rural producers. In addition to including various workers' unions in monitoring and advising bodies, an agreement with the National Commission on Rural Development was signed for four consecutive years.

Output 3.3. NPAS's institutional image and mass communication strategy

The project worked intensively on this output. Regarding the importance given by the general public to environmental issues, biodiversity, and PAs, the Project decided to modify the questions in the original document, and has conducted opinion surveys whose results are summarized in ANNEX XXIII.

Generally speaking, all indicators show progress has been made; this is evidence of the general public's commitment and involvement. It draws significant attention the high percentage of the population (68%) who believe environmental protection should be prioritized against economic growth, and the favorable evolution of these opinions. Progress in this area allows us to conclude that "environmental" issues in general, and PAs in particular, are taken into account by the general public. This wide acceptance, however, is probably not directly linked to the willingness to make individual sacrifice, such as donating money; the distance between the issuance of a favorable opinion and the willingness to assume greater commitments should be considered at all times.

Progress made on this Output was characterized by a set of indicators which required the development of a series of opinion surveys and measurements:

a. Percentage of population that knows what a protected area is

Sixty three per cent know what a PA is, when the baseline was 48%. The survey indicates that only 44% adequately understand the concept of PA. That level doubles the baseline, which was only 20%. The goal was that 70% knew what a PA was, and over 40% had a proper understanding of the concept. Additionally, 38% of the population is able to mention one specific PA. This indicates remarkable progress in the level of knowledge of the system; the goal can be considered as accomplished.

b. Involvement of the general public in activities related to conservation and PAs.

The baseline showed that 20% of the population visited PAs, 15% requested information on conservation of natural resources, and 7% said they donate money for conservation. The goal was to achieve a sustained increasing trend in these indicators. In the last survey, data showed: 33% of the population visit PAs, 33% sought information on issues of conservation of natural resources, and only 3% reported donating money to environmental conservation. There is an increase in percentages, except in those representing a "stronger" commitment.

Summing up: The Project has invested significant resources in this component, and has executed many actions with a high degree of professionalism. It has also made systematic efforts to measure results. In general, there is a positive evolution of all variables, which confirms the idea that the project has "succeeded in placing the issue on the agenda" and that the level of knowledge of environmental conservation problems has been increased.

However, interviews and collected evidence show some aspects in which the system should focus on in future. Primary answers from different agents including policymakers, are favorable, and show an increasing trend. When assessing budget allocations, adherence of companies to the proposals, and even the willingness of the population to make donations or financial sacrifice for conservation, the distance between the expression of "support" and most costly decisions is once more verified.

These findings do not, in any way, go against the quality of work performed and the positioning the subject. They work as a warning that Project goals should not be considered completely accomplished and efforts should be made to obtain effective levels of commitment and have legitimized tools (resolutions, decrees, or laws) to improve them, even taking into account that it is a task that is far beyond the possibilities of the Project and DINAMA.

RESULT 4

Different governance models approved through demonstrative experiences contribute to the effectiveness of PAs management, and the NPAS sustainability, and also to strengthen the relationship between biodiversity conservation and local development.

Mid-evaluation showed the Project's effort to implement and validate governance models suggested. Proposed indicators, especially those involving producers and inhabitants carrying out managing plans in private lands, imply changes in agents' behavior. This aspect that goes beyond Project's "deliverables", implicitly presents a hypothesis on processes' causality, and as a result they were included in the Project's Purpose.

For different reasons, basically related to commitment to cooperating parties, said indicators have been maintained by the Project. As a consequence, this result shows the lowest level of goal accomplishment; its performance being considered satisfactory.

From the management effectiveness point of view, the four pilot areas considered, measured through METT, obtain "fair" results; at baseline only one of them reached that level, the other three were "poor." The goal was for the four areas to reach a "good" level. This implies some progress, but goals were not met.

Regarding hectares in private property incorporated to the areas, results are favorable. Areas formally incorporated include more than 60,000 hectares out of a total of 85,000 hectares, thus tripling goals set.

There is, however, only one management plan formally approved (Quebrada de los Cuervos). Although in some other areas processes have shown progress (especially Esteros de Farrapos, C. Polonio, L. de Rocha, and Lunarejo), levels of acceptance and effective application of Plan's contents vary, and there is resistance that can only be overcome with some flexibility.

Level of acceptance by producers, land owners, and inhabitants vary. There is no way of checking goals achievement; goals should have been set in relative terms (percentage of producers adopting uses proposed) instead of absolute terms. Project documents consider the existence of agreements with producers' unions, or official programs and projects as evidence of progress in that subject. This is a recurring issue throughout this report. The Project should carefully consider this evidence, since it is generally biased in favor of the proposal, something that shows at the moment of taking actions in the behavior of those individuals whose decisions are required.

The introduction of indicators referred to the recording of lessons, their analysis and discussion at technical and corporate levels was suggested in the mid-evaluation. This record would be the result of PAs implementation in private lands, innovative process that has required diverse efforts and has had different types of response by local agents, especially land owners and business people. If this learning was systematized, recorded, and discussed at different levels, it would represent a high value outcome not initially expected.

Governance models show different levels of progress.

Output 4.1. *Management of a publicly owned PA, involving national government agencies and the participation of local communities in the management and derived benefits (Esteros de Farrapos and Islas del Río Uruguay).*

As expected, the PA showing sustained progress and lower levels of conflict is the one in public property. The PA has made progress, making agreements with private users and reaching good levels of involvement of authorities. Efforts should be made to add value to area contents, to measure evolution of selected protected objects, and to involve locals and visitors.

The visible invasion of the exotic species, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, has become a concern. There is important progress in the design of technical solutions for its eradication; implementation, however, is still limited and experimental.

According to testimonies, there is more control over other threats such as illegal fishing and poaching.

There is a good level of community participation; local coordination is characterized by promotion and local involvement.

Efforts are being made to develop tourism. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports will provide financial support, through IADB funds, to develop nautical tourism. The possibility of generating income through visits or use of the facilities is still far from being a reality.

Output 4.2. *Management of a publicly owned coastal-maritime PA, involving governmental agencies and NGOs (Cerro Verde and Islas de La Coronilla)*

This area represents a special case. Although most of its surface is water (7,000 ha. out of 9,000 ha. are in the ocean), and ownership being governmental (under co-management by National Defense Ministry and MVOTMA since 2013), there was high initial conflict due to antagonism between local groups, rather than sound economic or social reasons.

Area management processes, and the preparation of a Management Plan, are behind schedule, being the pilot area with the least progress. It is important to highlight, however, that there has been important progress thanks to the Project and DINAMA's Management.

Due to the area's features, possibility of generating income through "conventional" sources (tourism and fees) is limited; other mechanism should be explored such as bioprospecting agreements, research fees/licenses, strategies to attract funding (donations, sponsorships, etc.)

Output 4.3 *Management of a multiple-use private-public PA, involving medium-sized producers, local communities, and provincial and national governments (Laguna de Rocha).*

Although there are areas of public lands (lagoon and ocean coastline), as well as the surface of the lagoon and the ocean surface in the area, which are of significant importance in the total, this area as it happens with Quebradas del Norte has an important part in private lands. There are two communities of artisanal fishermen, several farms, and a strip of land (between the lagoon and the sea) for tourism. Most of the area is on agricultural and livestock lands, basically family businesses with important differences regarding size (from just a dozen hectares to thousands of hectares) Although the periods of greatest conflict occurred with agricultural producers in stages previous to the formal incorporation of the Area to the System, one of the threats and source of tension is represented by lands of potential tourist use, investment in surrounding areas, development of the land strip between lagoons (Laguna Garzón and Rocha.)

The issue of probably affecting private wealth or income, and municipal plans for expansion and improvement of income is highly relevant and has been discussed when analyzing design. The decision to develop much of the PAs in private lands with important alternative value through the application of mandatory Management Plans, is a very complex challenge, and relatively unprecedented at international level. If financial constraints do not allow for another alternative (expropriation) Project should be moderate and flexible with the contents of the plans and their implementation. As a response, with the support of the French cooperation, it has been suggested to develop a model inspired in the Regional Natural Parks, similar to those in France, with more surface than the PAs (140,000 ha.), greater contact with usual activities in the area, and increasing volunteer participation in the system.

This area also shows delay in the approval of the Management Plan. This should be ready to be discussed at CAE and approved afterwards. It is said that together with the decrease in the level of conflict there may have been some loss of interest in the subject, this could be analyzed during the implementation plan. The plan envisions the inclusion of adaptation to climate change issues, based on joint work with another project funded by the UDELAR and the work of its technical team

Interviews show that the Project's management has reduced level of conflict in some areas during the mid-term evaluation, and that difficulties have been analyzed in depth; analysis results will be incorporated to the design of future actions.

Output 4.4: *Management of multiple-use PA under private property and profit sharing by small-sized rural producers (Quebradas del Norte).*

The PA is limited to the Valle del Lunarejo, with a surface of 29,000 ha., mainly on private livestock land. The area is jointly managed by DINAMA and the Municipality of Rivera. Addition of another area in the region of Quebradas (PA Laureles-Cañas) had to be postponed due to opposition by local agents. The area is jointly managed by DINAMA and the Municipality of Tacuarembó. Again, with the support of the French cooperation, a model inspired by the French Regional Natural Parks is suggested, including both areas and a larger territory that includes them.

Quebradas del Norte's configuration that involves two municipalities with different interests and positions regarding this topic, together with the high number of land owners involved, adds difficulty to the joint governance of these two PAs.

The updated Management Plan for the PA Valle del Lunarejo has not been approved either, a 1999 proposal is currently being updated. Actions linked to adaptation to climate change are added, focusing on the most vulnerable sectors of the population, as part of an initiative with an NGO, CIEDUR – funded by the Andean Development Committee (CAF).

The Project has worked hard on this area; progress has been slow but steady. However, result indicators, as defined, have not been met.

M. NPAS - Summary of progress and results

At the time of this evaluation (first semester 2013) the NPAS has 10 protected areas added to the System with a surface of 123,500 ha. that equal 0.388% of the country's land and marine surface; there are also five other areas in the process of incorporation.

There are 70 staff members in the NPAS, 52 of them working nationwide and 18 at central level including directors, coordinators, facilitators, technicians from the NPAS Project, Biodiversity and Protected Areas Department of the National Environment Agency (DINAMA) of the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment (MVOTMA), municipalities, and other organizations.

Since 2005 eighty one publications have been released, these including documents, reports, guides and manuals, a series of 9 digital and hard-copied newsletters, and a great amount of brochures, and posters, all of these available on the NPAS's portal at (www.snap.gub.uy). A system of information (SISNAP) collects relevant information for the management of Protected Areas constituting the base for the development of a Support System for Decision Making (SATD).

During 2011, 104,000 people visited the Cabo Polonio National Park, 53% of these were foreigners. Almost 75,000 came between January and March. The interest of foreign visitors in PAs is evident when information is compared with neighboring countries such as Argentina. It is estimated that 25% of Argentinean tourists had a protected area as one of their main destinations (IADB's Tourism Corridors Project).

Several public opinion surveys carried out between 2005 and 2012 show that 80% of Uruguayan people agree or strongly agree with investment in a National Protected Area System to help protecting the environment. Seventy four percent agree that protected areas are an opportunity for the country's economic and social development, 31% know about a protected area, and 25% state they have been to one.

Biodiversity conservation is important for the international cooperation that has contributed to the development of the NPAS between 2005 and 2013 through a GEF/UNDP project for US\$ 2,500,000 and US\$ 1,300,000 from the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and technical and financial resources for nearly US\$ 1,000,000 from the Autonomous Organization of National Parks in Spain and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AEICD). Also, contributions by decentralized cooperation and the Small Grants Programme executed by UNDP with GEF's funds.

In order to systematized analysis of obtained results, the Table NPAs Project Results is attached (ANNEX XXIV)

EVALUATION BY FFEM

Regarding answers to FFEM evaluation, we have included them in this section since they are cross-cutting; a clarification by this ET is necessary, though. We have shared this evaluation with the FFEM team, and key points have been summarized in the table below as a contribution to readers that can access the complete FFEM evaluation document after its publication. It is important to highlight that there is no full overlapping in opinions and answers obtained to similar questions. The ET does not have the same opinion about the NPAS's progress and introduces new concepts related to the possibility of implementing future projects that continue actions started by this Project. This may be the greatest divergence between the set of answers to evaluation questions, since the FFEM team visited regions this ET did not, and interviewed people not interviewed by this ET and vice versa; there may be differences in the conclusions and recommendations. Moreover, this ET's expertise is on national institutional aspects more than specific PAs, this also generates differences in the answers.

SPECIFIC ORIENTATIVE NOTE ABOUT TABLE:

This table shows an adaptation and summary of the Translation of Michel Schlaiffer's preliminary report for the FFEM (July 2013), it aims to provide an overall understanding of

aspects highlighted by FFEM's mission, this ET especially thanks having this valuable contribution and shares it in this table for the reader to access key aspects of a very thorough, high-quality report whose complete reading is strongly recommended.

ANSWERS TO EVALUATION KEY QUESTIONS

1. Which are the lessons learned from pilot projects, taking into account the variety of protected areas' management modes (public, public-public, public—private, or private) for replication at NPAS?

The Laguna de Rocha PA is classified as multiple-use, public-private; while Valle del Lunarejo PA is of multiple-use in private lands.

Key aspects to consider:

-The importance of mutual understanding at different institutional levels both national and provincial (DINAMA/SNAP, other ministries interested, municipalities.)

-Quality of territory diagnosis, including socio-economic aspects as well as the analysis of environmental context.

A sound option for collective agreements that regulate productive activities rather than imposing prohibitions.

-Showing and demonstrating, convincing rather than coercing.

- The “time” variable necessary for the concept, ideas and opinions to mature.

2. Which are the conditions for the creation process of a Natural Park?

-Political will at Municipal government level. In the cases of Rocha and Rivera, the Mayors' commitment is fundamental.

An institutional framework and a clear vision to state “what can be done”, and “what cannot be done” in a Park.

Study trips or seminars abroad can trigger the possibility of new allies or cooperating parties.

Continuity by international organizations providing technical and financial support.

A guiding process of a high personal and professional quality.

3. Which factors motivate the different stakeholders to participate in this process? Political

motivation: for the Mayors this includes a more “environmental” approach, including structural development pillars and productive activities. About progress evaluation in the PA Laguna de Rocha PA and Parque, expected impact on voters in next elections is evident according to what has been said to this evaluating team. **Institutional motivation:** for public agencies such as DINAMA and other partner agencies in the successful implementation of SNAP it has a strong national and legal orientation. **Development motivation:** land owners and producers, especially small and medium-sized. Technical and social support, as well as resource mobilization by the NPAS team to inhabitants of two pilot sites, has shown special dedication to their situation. **Professional motivation** - for the NPAS team taking part in the project is a “Professional Adventure”, educational and innovative in Uruguay. Committed to achieving objectives, the team shows great enthusiasm and involvement. **Alliances motivation:** For the PNR Federation and for technical assistance, to disseminate and promote Park letter models, as a public policy instrument for sustainable territorial development and as a sustainable governance model. The NPAS mentions, in the systematization document, 10 reasons to finance the NPAS as a **motivational opportunity.**

List of 10 reasons mentioned by team:

- It strengthens the image of Uruguay Natural,
- Respect for international commitments–It reduces effects of climate change,
- Ensures natural resources and environmental services.
- To preserve genetic resources not yet explored, - It contributes to economic growth mainly through tourism.

- It contributes to scientific knowledge of PAs; PAs become laboratories for knowledge.
- It contributes to social integration, and physical and mental health,
- It generates work opportunities in rural areas,
- It contributes to local development, conservation and development integration.

4. Which were PNR Federation contributions? The PNR Federation provided technical assistance through a highly qualified professional; said technician was very knowledgeable on PNR letters and how to adapt concepts to the Uruguayan context. The hard work by PNR Directors also contributed to materialize the concept of PNR and its application in Rocha and Quebradas del Norte. The FPNRF actively participates in the organization and implementation of study trips. Representatives from the NPAS visited several PNRs, and attended the PNR Congress. The FPNRF functioned as a methodological support agent, providing technical knowledge, showing good adaptation and readjustment skills as the project progressed.

5. Which is the socio-economic impact of protected areas? Although we have not been able to measure socio-economic impact yet, it can be said that the socio-economic analysis made little progress in the project, especially the economic aspect. From the social standpoint, as it was mentioned in several occasions, the acceptance of the AP is the aspect that teaches the most, and the introduction of the concept together with a system centered on conservation and development represents the greatest impact. This is especially true for family farmers in Quebradas del Norte, as well as social groups in the upper part of the Laguna de Rocha basin. In the economic dimension, the project has made little progress, regarding differentiated benefits for residents and land owners. Repeated efforts have been made to obtain tax exemptions for land owners in the PAs. This item is a matter of frustration in relation to the objectives of the project and it does not seem to be among the government's strategic objectives. The NPAS (in accordance with DGF) supported the creation of records for property tax exemptions to "native forest" plots of land, but this tax provision is not specific to PAs. According to those interviewed by the evaluation mission, there are no studies in eco-tourism market in Uruguay. According to some economic studies and satisfaction surveys conducted by NPAS about several PAs (Humedales de Santa Lucía, Quebradas de los Cuervos, Laguna de Rocha, and Cabo Polonio) showed that although there is an entrance fee to the PA, the biggest benefit comes from visitors' expenditure that impacts on local economic benefits rather than benefits at a national level.

6. Which innovative financial mechanisms have been developed? When compared to the effort made, the Project has made very little progress in this area. The Fund for PAs (section 16 NPAS Act) is regulated by the National General Comptroller, which implies centralized management procedures and controls. More appropriate ways of operation were evaluated (Trust Funds, and "non-state Public Statute"), but no modification has been implemented to date. There are, in Uruguay, tax exemptions for private companies which donate to educational centers, universities, Teletón Foundation, among others; these exemptions are not available to other areas. The extension of these legal provisions for exemptions has been presented in different opportunities at Parliament without any success. When comparing the situation of the NPAS with other countries in the Latin American and the Caribbean region, results show that governments generally cover 70%-90% of the system's cost. Another trend is the increase in income through tourism. Financial diversification is still hard to implement. Question 7 "Which elements could be included in a future program taking into account conclusions reached in this evaluation?" is omitted since these are considered from FFEM perspective.

IV. SUSTAINABILITY

N. Institutional Sustainability

The NPAS institutional sustainability since to be ensured, especially after integration with DINAMA. Ministerial restructure should reinforce its role if implemented. At the same time, resolution regarding the creation of a PA Department is consistent with the project's original design. Future donations already under process from the GEF and the French Global Environment Facility, will contribute, together with budgetary and self-generating resources, to the NPAS's institutional sustainability generating institutional strengthening of PAs through different but complementary intervention models.

Although there is an appropriate legal framework for the project's sustainability, PA Fund progress has been less than expected to ensure funding and to complete the definition of a model for governance and management. A great percentage of PAs in Uruguay are in private lands, this makes the situation more complex and requires participation and incentive tools for those living in the PAs.

On the other hand, this has become a new challenge that requires a specific approach, articulation of two regulations i.e. the NPAS Creation Act(2000), implemented as from 2005, and the Territorial Planning Act (2008) regarding protected areas, included in the plans for territorial planning carried out at provincial level. Progress has been made in Rocha, Treinta y Tres, and Quebradas de los Cuervos, in the context of a DINOT FAO pilot project, to improve territorial planning instruments in rural areas. The NPAS takes part in this project and has promoted articulation of both regulations. In the 2000 Act it was not planned to develop PAs in urban areas, or at least it was not specified, but in the Uruguayan Regulatory Framework what is not forbidden is allowed. As a result, there is no impediment for a PA to include a urban, sub-urban, or rural area. The Executive Branch through direct action or through the MVOTMA can, as a NPAS authority, define different PAs management (and governance) modes. This allows for direct management through MVOTMA, transference of management to third parties (public national or provincial, private, OSC or mixed) and MVOTMA co-management with other agencies (through co-management agreements between DINAMA and municipalities, MGAP, Probides, Ministry of Defense, Instituto Nacional de Colonización, etc.).

There are several acts on implementation and consolidation of PAs that overlap setting criteria that are not necessarily equivalent and generating confusion among stakeholders acting in inter-institutional coordination instances at territorial level. High levels of coordination between management plans and territorial planning instruments included in the OTyDS Act are required. There are still significant levels of uncertainty, tension, and challenges regarding articulation of both regulations due to the fact they are both relatively new. There was some progress regarding this issue in Quebrada de los Cuervos and Rocha, also in a pilot Project carried out by DINOT with FAO funding. Although evaluation of said experiences varies among the different stakeholders involved.

NPAS regulation establishes a one-year period from the creation of PAs to present its management plan. Although these periods have been generally longer, this allows for joint efforts among stakeholders to accelerate agreements required by management plans. It is noteworthy that development of management plans requires, in turn, high levels of coordination with land use plans, which are currently under development. This poses a great challenge to overcome tensions inherent to the application of powerful regulations that directly impact on key stakeholders in the territory.

A third level of government (municipalities) is created through the Decentralization Act. These municipalities become key stakeholders in the PA areas, which is very positive in the long term, but requires a readjustment period to achieve inter-institutional harmony.

Interviews to different public administration key stakeholders have provided the Evaluating Team (ET) with evidence about the existence of a clear trend towards decentralization. This decision affected the NPAS in its consolidation process and required the strengthening of the management model towards increasing decentralization. Work at local level (municipalities) has become an

important tool for sustainability and ownership, collaboration, and for involvement of communities in the PAs. Greater involvement of local stakeholders is expected in the future.

As for the selection and hiring of staff by MVOTMA through Temporary Contract of Public Law, five calls have been implemented (July 2013), the first person was selected by this method: the Park Ranger for Esteros de Farrapos that was previously selected through UNDP. There are currently other 7 calls. The Project has hired a team of approximately 30 people. As the level of stakeholders' awareness increases, other stakeholders will participate in the recruitment of officials in different roles at territorial levels.

Salary of municipal staff is partly financed by municipalities and partly by the MVOTMA through management or co-management agreements including resource transfers. This modality will continue and probably expand and deepen in the future, ensuring decentralized activities necessary for the maintenance of APs. However, these activities will be carried out through a complex web of inter-institutional agreements. The creation of a Park Rangers Department is of crucial importance, this can adopt different models⁷making it more sustainable with the joint work of Provincial Authorities and National Government, this department would be fundamental to ensure enforcement of management plans at protected areas.

Regulation of the National Park Rangers Department is planned to be completed in the remainder of 2013, at least in a first version. The project strongly supports this process lead by DINAMA in the context of an agreement with AUG. The Project has implemented activities through joint activities with educational entities to strengthen the training of officials from agencies in the PA territories. The situation of the Rangers is not defined in terms of formal dependence and this impacts on the description of their role and responsibilities in the institutional framework of each department. To date, the profile for the position and the procedure to certify knowledge required to perform the task has been approved.

PAs are on the agenda, and included in all territorial planning instruments as a strategic topic. They were approved by municipal boards as part of their strategies. The project has generated greater inter-institutional synergy and promoted discussion forums, using articulation spaces in other government mechanisms, e.g. CAE, OGD).

O. Socio-cultural Sustainability

The project has been mainly involved (3-year preparatory phase and 6-year implementation) in the strengthening of the different coordination levels between public institutions and the civil society , non-profit organizations and producers organizations, tourism and private entrepreneurs established in PAs in different ways). It is about the consolidation of a new socio-cultural paradigm implying the involvement of the broader set of citizens in conservation challenges in a country where the role of the private sector in the PAs becomes a specific and different challenge when compared to other Mercosur countries where there is greater availability of government-owned lands. The Uruguayan case can make interesting contributions to their regional counterparts regarding progress in protected areas in occupied, producers' territories (e.g. in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay: "Southern Cone grasslands"; in Chile: the Central Valley. In this sense, and in accordance with national and local strategies, mass prevention and awareness campaigns will continue providing sustainability to the PAs. Said campaigns, in order to provide information and create greater collective awareness have been carried out both in Montevideo and the provinces, and have also been supported by the different stakeholders involved in international cooperation. This new socio-cultural framework is based on social mass communication in general and also on specific media outlets, including radios, web sites, social networks; videos and photography exhibitions, printed materials, events, activities with experts and NGOs networks. The Project has included direct awareness activities in schools, aiming to impact on

⁷ See RECOMMENDATIONS

new generations disseminating message within the children's own families to promote environmental and conservation issues in the whole community.

Activities to give visibility and raise awareness in the general public about the benefits of protected areas (their ecosystemic assets and services) together with the reduction of vulnerability (loss of jobs, health issues, loss of leisure areas) will be based on campaigns regularly carried out by the NPAS, civil society organizations, key institutional stakeholders in education (school groups, UTU), and companies from different areas.

P. Financial-Economic Sustainability

The project's economic viability has been planned through institutional partners from different levels of the public sector, and to a lesser extent from the private sector. The SNAP has had adequate levels of financing for the design of medium-term activities; however, financial autonomy and the ability to scale interventions to new PAs should be improved. Ongoing PAs' activities are voted by the local counterpart including staff from the multidisciplinary team in a sustainable way and complying with Uruguayan legal regulations⁸. The local counterpart also integrates, through development management projects, the growing responsibility of socio-economic stakeholders. Activities to give visibility and raise awareness in the general public about the benefits of protected areas (their ecosystemic assets and services) together with the reduction of vulnerability (loss of jobs, health issues, loss of leisure areas) will be based on campaigns regularly carried out by the NPAS, civil society organizations, key institutional stakeholders in education (school groups, UTU), and companies from different areas. Said institutions are working on these issues in terms of communication; they will use their communication channels for current and future campaigns. Provincial authorities will use public dissemination media (social communication media) to make the system known, generating better funding opportunities.

Private incentive models were designed by the NPAS but their implementation has been rather difficult. Interviews in some areas of the SNAP (by this ET as well as by the FFEM assessment team) identified, in the general population, a preference for no restriction over incentives, although these assumptions are based on how they perceive the possibility of an incentive still not tested in the field. To ensure sustainability, work needs to be done to modify the mistrust of the community about PAs with examples of incentives clearly showing what is allowed and what is not in a protected area. A new project is suggested, to consolidate those existing PAs that have shown to be of value for the territory and to generate information and exchange among citizens from different areas to make consequences "real". On the other hand, the National Fund for Protected Areas started working in the context of the pre-existing act, and the national budget, making its management rather slow and not very attractive for potential donors. The Fund receives deposits from the operator at Polonio's entrance. It is still difficult to say whether this contribution is significant in the long term. This may be the case only for touristic areas. There is a donation process in its initial stage⁹. There are multiple challenges, and stakeholders' opinions about them; challenges include a more dynamic management and incentive for donations. The project worked and generated proposals for both approaches.

Q. Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability of ACHIEVEMENTS by the Project is relevant and has focused on: significantly contribute to environmental conservation through effective participation of the civil society as well as local and municipal governments; goods and services provided to communities in PAs, promoting mechanisms for biodiversity long-term conservation in the pilot areas, but also developing replicable models that consider ecosystems key processes in each area. The NPAS has introduced the adaptive management approach to planning; management of areas is fundamental to environmental sustainability of the implementation process. A strategic plan is being produced providing further insight into this approach.

⁸ See Institutional Sustainability

⁹ As the one received in July 2013 through the program of Middlebury College, Vermont, USA.

The NPAS's strategy aimed to consolidate these guarantees in the mid and long term through the development of capacities in public and private key stakeholders and their ownership; consolidating and facilitating structures to make joint actions efficient in the territory. Participation of stakeholders has increased and some stakeholders are fully aware and committed, some others are not as committed but they are expected to start getting involved. The existing legal framework and stakeholders interested in the compliance of legal provisions are expected to adequately face different environmental threats in Uruguay¹⁰.

Table 6: Classification of sustainability dimensions¹¹

Sustainability Dimensions	Classification
Financial Resources	Moderately Probable
Socio-Political	Probable
Institutional Framework and Governance	Probable
Environmental	Probable

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS¹²

The following conclusions were drawn into two main groups: in the first group there are conclusions regarding the actual summative evaluation of the Project in relation to the degree of achievement in *design, process, involvement in the process, outcomes and sustainability*. The second group has more general conclusions and deals with the impact of the Project and achievement of design effects.

Conclusions about the level of design

Design was developed in a **context of economic changes in Uruguay** and a tension between the concepts of Productive and Natural Uruguay, the position adopted by the NPAS tried to overcome this tension with an integrating approach. This context, from the political point of view, was expedient to support governmental policies, plans, and programs that gave special importance to environmental issues and to a new concept of land management and decentralization.

The project presents **an adaptive, flexible and participatory design and management** of all outputs involved. The use of a participatory methodology (e.g. diagnosis made in conjunction with the population of the PA, reflected in management plans and areas management) and a collaborative approach with local stakeholders has helped to foster mutual understanding, although this point should be strengthened, while relationship with provincial governments should be cemented. Flexibility by the NPAS to provide answers relevant to the local reality, including topics outside its competence, is highlighted. This is a positive point to bond with the local population, but it also has a complex effect regarding the focus of action of decentralized technical teams.

The ET points out the **coherence of the design** with GEF's objectives, with the Uruguayan Government's strategy, with the commitments made by the country, and synergy with other national, regional and local initiatives, other national stakeholders and the international cooperation.

The **project was well conceived and designed**, largely achieving the expected results; results regarding PAs autonomous financing were achieved to a lesser extent.

¹⁰ See Recommendations, special comments on this point

¹¹ **Categories:** Probable (P): there are no risks to this sustainability dimension; Moderately probable (MP): there are some risks to this sustainability dimension; Moderately Improbable (MI): there are significant risks to this sustainability dimension; Improbable (I): There are severe risks to this sustainability dimension.

¹² Recomendaciones desagregadas por actor, pueden superponerse de acuerdo a los niveles de análisis.

Regarding gender strategy, specific actions were carried out, they did not, however, make up a strategy but specific actions, in some cases of high impact on a territory (crafts, visitors' center, educational activities in Quebrada del Norte; fishing community in Laguna de Rocha), all these were within an overall approach to promote participation and opportunities focused particularly on less advantaged stakeholders. The need for a comprehensive gender strategy should be pointed out; anew project should be designed to expand throughout the project.

Conclusions on the process level and process implication

In the different stages of the implementation of the NPAS and pilot PAs, there was an inter-institutional coordination which was restricted but adequate in the initial level. However, this articulation requires a strategic approach to bridge the gaps that affect the design and further implementation of management plans.

Conclusions on efficiency

The ET believes that **most of the expected results were achieved**, but with additional efforts and need of involvement of all stakeholders. Many of the outputs and results were affected by internal factors such as lack of previous experience in a PA system; there was, however, international cooperation from the French and Spanish cooperation and from the region to face this new situation comparing it with the international experience. Agreements with international stakeholders, which collaborated with relevant technical input, were promoted and expertise of countries in the region was requested, including South-South cooperation. There were external factors - change in government and MVOTMA authorities that modified some guidelines, however, there were no essential modifications. Some local stakeholders have not been involved from the design stage or have a low participation, or feel some suspicion about the potential consequences of being in an AP.

The degrees of ownership vary among stakeholders. At a territorial level, interdisciplinary groups have been consolidated to carry out tasks focused on APs, using other participation schemes of programs like PROBIDES and expanding links with other strategic partners, especially with other cooperation and international financing key stakeholders.

The main strength of the project is **the professional expertise and high commitment to the territorial work and, in general, to the creation of a new environmental concept for Uruguay**, as well as the human and technical resources involved in the project and the confluence of interdisciplinary teams, with specific training and different experiences. **The role of the NPAS is relevant and it is especially important that it is the State the one in charge of executing it without generating an independent Executive Unit.** Management and internal coordination of the NPAS, including coordination with areas at DINAMA with similar objectives is highlighted as a good practice. The **stability of the working team** helped to generate internal bonds of trust within MVOTMA and with different interlocutors at all jurisdictional levels.

The design and implementation of the **M&E system** has been appropriate and reports were clear and accurate, explaining that the activities developed required a higher level of dissemination by other key stakeholders (their ownership would be specially relevant by provincial authorities). The ET believes that indicators could have been revised to improve analysis of how each activity contributes to expected results, even including new indicators had this been necessary. Analysis from gender standpoint was not prioritized in the strategy of M&E, and information disaggregated by sex should be gathered.

The ET **has detected, apart from the many achievements in articulation and joint work, some difficulties in the relationships between national and provincial levels, depending on each institutional-political reality** that includes leaders' personal and political factors and conceptions regarding conservation and productive use.

Management structure for the project's implementation has been adequate. However, it was not always possible to establish an internal mechanism of joint response that would allow for greater

institutional support for some of the issues raised (e.g. in relation to issues of sustainable financing and tax exemptions).

Alliances and institutional relationships carried out under the project have been very important to achieve expected results by the PC, for the active participation of international partners, AECID and FFEM, and civil society organizations (such as Birds of Uruguay), academic partners, such as UDELAR and RETEMA, and stakeholders from the productive area (livestock, agricultural and tourism) although this varied on each territory. **Examples of coordination and alliance building have been the capacity to build consensus with businessmen and the civil society also depending on the stimuli produced by users like tourists.**

All stakeholders agree on the continuity of the program and on the use of its strategies and outputs. Its continuity is not threatened by changes of staff since there is a very important legal framework of support.

The ET believes that although activities especially focused on journalists were developed, there are difficulties in getting a prominent place for the subject of PAs in media outlets. It is expected to be resolved over time; sensitizing communicators beyond cases of conflict so as front pages of environmental issues are not restricted to issues of environmental catastrophes.

Regarding the level of results: novel ways of intervention on the territory were possible through the project involving institutions working on education, rural development, Human Rights and producer organizations that generate a perception of significant change in the future.

Cost-effectiveness ratio of the project in terms of resources invested and results achieved has been positive. Administrative management was efficient to maximize revenues with the available budget and mobilize resources from other sources. Necessary actions were developed to leverage other institutional resources, being this own resources or from other institutions.

The NPAS is aligned with the country's territorial planning policies that include the participation of the civil society as a key tool. Most successful PA experiences had had previous territorial experience and mobilized local groups.

The **gender strategy has not yet been consolidated but there is still an important effort to be made** regarding training and assistance so that officials can work on the mainstreaming of a gender policy in environmental projects in general and specially in PAs. The UNDP is establishing gender standards in environmental projects and is carrying out training for executive units of GEF projects that can be useful for the NPAS.

Policies in Uruguay show high levels of centralization at a national scale. The ET considers that, although there were stakeholders involved in the municipal governments, they were not involved enough to ensure ownership by the different decentralized levels of government. From the 10 NPAS PAs, only 3 are managed by central government bodies, and 7 are managed or co-managed by municipal governments. This problem is being solved and it represents a learning opportunity for all parts regarding decision making schemes. The implementation of PAs with different legal frameworks has produced **the implementation of innovative modalities, but this can in turn generate confusion in a system that is based on PAs that vary greatly among them.**

Tension between Outputs/Processes is due to the duration of the project limited to set times and not to processes necessary to reach expected results that regarding the change of attitudes about conservation can be extremely long. Time has been insufficient to work more deeply in some issues, since awareness processes can only be effective in the long term and there were logic delays in the implementation curve. The ET considers that some actions require time periods longer than the project's duration; these will surely be tasks to be handled by the NPAS until a change of paradigm is achieved (Productive vs. Natural Uruguay, and the alternative Intelligent Uruguay before mentioned, by DINAMA's Director, among others.)

Conclusions on sustainability

Regarding the level of sustainability, the NPAS through this Project and other concurrent cooperation alternatives contributed to the strengthening of national institutional capacities and provincial and local governments generating real sustainability options.

Products that have been institutionalized and that are being implemented in the future are crucial. Existing PAs will not be threatened in their continuity, their plans of work, however, may face implementation difficulties. As from the implementation of NPAS and PAs analysis, there are high possibilities of replicating the experience **broadening its scope** until issues in those areas considered critical are resolved. Training and strengthening activities carried out have contributed providing solutions by parties to find a balance between land protection and exploitation, and its resources increasing citizen participation, especially in the creation of a shared environmental agenda (e.g. civil society mobilized to stop mining exploitation in the area of Quebrada de los Cuervos where the management plans foresee the strong regulation of this activity.)

Bonds of trust were built among key stakeholders through opportunities for discussion and debate. The presence of Municipalities in consultation and coordination forums (National Advisory Commissions) and the creation of local or regional spaces (Specific Advisory Commissions, Regional Water Resource Councils) have promoted this process.

A common agenda was created based on co-managers mutual trust, providing, in surveyed areas, clear signs in terms of preservation (as an interviewee points out, "we all say the same").

They agree on trying to improve tourism value chain with PAs and taking care of the environment. By doing this the private sector can get involved as a specific ally for sustainability.

The community, after the NPAS's intervention, generates new projects, mainly tourism-related.

Recommendations to the National Public Administration (MVOTMA. DINAMA in particular): Due to the characteristics of the end of the presidential period, and the impossibility of new contracts for public officers, the SNAP institutional situation should be analyzed in a very short period of time. This evaluating team (ET) believes it is crucial to formalize the NPAS structure within the reform proposed by the MVOTMA despite the fact that the definite proposal for the service may acquire a greater degree of autonomy (agency of protected areas, autonomous administration or other).

The NPAS/DINAMA, together with other agencies from the MVOTMA (such as DINAGUA and DINOT) should establish a decentralized permanent link aiming to get to know the opinion of the "silent majority", defining how to maintain community participation in the control of resources and decision making.

Regarding monitoring and assessment, it would be advisable that other key stakeholders could use the information, disseminate it among potential users, and ensure their access according to well-defined, public accessibility criteria.

The Project would need a great communication event aimed at public opinion with national political and provincial authorities as well as the international cooperation. This could take place in one of the PAs or in Montevideo, using all the media capacity of key stakeholders. A possible concept for such an event could be defusing the tension between the concepts of a Productive and a Natural Uruguay, suggesting instead, an Intelligent Uruguay.

To measure the impact, the best-quality information should be developed on the concept of producing by conserving (advantages) resorting to all media outlets available.

Pilot experiences on PA financing will probably be included in a next step, however, it is advisable to incorporate these issues in the budget debate making all necessary agreements that will contribute to next government programs.

The need to strengthen the NPAS with experts in environmental economy and tourism is justified in this phase provided the existence of tools that should be evaluated in depth since they are pilot experiences with new regulations in a state that is still reluctant to consider tax exemptions as a stimulus for the private sector in PAs.

Legislation on private contributions to PAs, tax exemptions, and other legal mechanisms should be discussed at relevant government levels with political and private stakeholders using all existing spaces, i.e. within legislative commissions (MVOTMA commissions) and private sector stakeholders (agricultural and livestock farmers, forestry companies, dairy farms.)

Establishing clear deadlines for decision taking about PA affected by administrative circuits and political decisions such as Santa Lucia, considering times to develop PA replacements in annual operational plans. It is also worth mentioning the decision taking regarding the management plans approvals with the aim of speeding up the implementation of conservation plans.

To analyze whether fund transfers to the Protected Area Fund could have been considered an obstacle or a risk, defining whether they can be implemented. Universities or research teams could operate as articulators, making projects with potential donors, obtaining authorization from the Ministry of Economy (according to the criterion of donations that was incorporated in 79bis of Law 18,083). Thus, even without incorporating the Protected Areas Fund to the recipients, a mechanism could be developed with academic institutions and companies that support work with PAs through university projects (research or implementation of strategies on territory).

Recommendations

Recommendations for provincial governments and municipalities: Institutionalization at provincial government and municipality levels requires an in-depth analysis about decentralized roles in the PAs where all participation mechanisms at a decentralized level should be available. Inter-institutional coordination with areas where incentives to producers who settle in PAs are being discussed and with rural development projects, should be considered crucial and all institutions related to the project should compromise their effort to give the topic an increasing importance for the interlocutors (i.e. to have a discussion forum about PAs at meetings for rural development).

There are several undergoing projects at the MGAP that would contribute to the strengthening of the NPAS and actions in the territory, among them: (a) the project through the Fund for Adaptation to Climate Change in two landscape units and (ii) the climate change adaptation program (World Bank), this represents a favorable scenario to intensify the joint work carried out. Articulation with local events should be strengthened, i.e. through an office that centralizes information, tools and staff within each territory that complement SISNAP tasks with decentralized management activities.

Provincial governments should define their PAs development strategies together with the national government, including implementation schedules and budget resources to be allotted. This interinstitutional space represents a challenge and an opportunity based on an already existing regulatory framework, such as instruments established in the Territorial Planning and Sustainable Development Act. This will allow for the development of protection actions that require more urgent measures. Coordination of actions with what is established in the NPAS Act and other environmental policies regulations is suggested, also the possibility of having technical and financial resources to provide support to PA producers.

To prioritize PA regulation and structure in terms of their effective performance, consequences on the territory, access to areas, AP use protocols, and their relationship with provincial governments and managers (that will enforce the regulation/ mode of operation/ disposal for its use) including provincial governments stakeholders in the debate.

Recommendations for the international cooperation that has been involved in the NPAS process and could be related to in the future: The analysis enriched by international Best Practices (BP) could improve its quality by the joint contribution of the international cooperation that has been linked to the

project UNDP/GEF, AECID/ OTC/, Administration of parks in Spain, French Cooperation/ FFEM/ Federation of Regional Natural Parks. The cooperation would also work as a neutral moderator which is crucial in political contexts close to elections.

The Project also had the contribution of the “decentralized cooperation”: Spanish municipality of Huelva and with the Italian region of Liguria. Currently, there is progress in cooperation processes with other regions in France: Provence-Aples-Côte d’Azur and Rhône Alpes. It is advisable to strengthen these bonds and to take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen process and capacities at a local/provincial level.

It is recommended to analyze environmental calls from the European Union that could contribute with efforts developed by other cooperation agencies as well as CAF, World Bank, and IADB. In protected areas that limit with other countries, the IADB’s initiative Regional Public Goods could be explored, since a project with Birds of Uruguay has already been developed.

In matters related to governance, the role of cooperation is *important*, for example, the Project AECID with the Congress of Mayors or giving priority to the UNPD, and the French Cooperation in decentralization, can make different projects interact, thus improving the current institutional quality at PAs level.

It is suggested to prioritize the new initiative that is under preparation to present a project before GEF that includes, apart from the proposed innovative aspects, the consolidation of PAs incorporated to the NPAS and their insertion in broader spaces and a careful incorporation of new areas considering the availability of resources for sustainability as well as new ways of integration which depend on the institutionalization that the NPAS and each of the PAs will adopt. It is recommended to revise intermediate modes of protection (at different provincial government levels) that could cooperate during the transition of a territory into a PA (such as protective measures).

Analyze the synergy with other cooperation projects in each of the territories, establishing work experiences where equipment and human resources can be shared. Regarding GEF, it is important to consider the strengthening of current agreements with other projects from Mercosur members, other countries in the region, and the South-South cooperation, taking advantage from the recently created AUCI and its explicit support to several initiatives promoted by the NPAS. It is also suggested to work jointly with other GEF initiatives, related to PAs that have similar tools that can be assimilated. Defining main characteristics of a cooperation model where Uruguay can offer tested tools regarding opportunities of a new PA system in a relatively small country, with a system that works on private lands since implementation, with relevant occupation and human activity¹³.

The international cooperation could provide technical assistance in many key aspects, but especially regarding PA financing, systems institutionalization, planning methodologies, development of value chains on lands of high financial and environmental value. This would not imply mobilizing specific financial resources, stimulating debate through videoconferences or taking advantage from other seminars or international workshops aiming to contribute in this stage of institutional analysis to the generation of a critical mass of funding strategies that could provide elements for the debate on the institutional framework.

Recommendations for civil society stakeholders: The organizations of the civil society should establish priorities when negotiating with international cooperation including the NPAS as well as the PAs. Since NPAS is perceived as a referent, as a tool to give value to APs biodiversity/landscapes before academic, community and business stakeholders, it can be considered as a strategic partner before potential donors.

¹³Continuing with existing South-South agreements or those in process (Chile, Colombia, Argentina) and under preparation with Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

It is necessary to intensify actions to raise awareness among PAs' population about the need for a change to improve life quality of inhabitants and the importance of income to sustain the PAs. Also, it is important to raise awareness among the private sector regarding the value of conservation.

Key local stakeholders should be identified and incorporated when establishing a PA before incorporating the area to the NPAS, informing and raising awareness about implications among the local community.

To consider the use of participation and inter-institutional coordination events at the PAs aiming to listen to the "silent majority."

It is suggested to prioritize the consolidation in the future of OSCs participation in PAs incorporated to the NPAS, to develop maps of key civil society stakeholders before incorporating new PAs.

It is suggested to explore the incorporation of OSCs in roles traditionally assumed by the public sector. Other GEF projects can be reviewed on this matter regarding the OSCs' managing role (such as the case of natural Patagonia in Argentina), a central role in PAs administration (as it happens in the management of the ecological reserve in Buenos Aires) or individual (such as NGOs in Costa Rica and Peru.)

The OSCs could, in agreement with the NPAS and provincial governments, improve provision of services in the PAs, such as support for tourist circuits, set up of interpretation centers, teaching of artisan jobs such as knitted fabrics and fishing, sale of crafts made in PAs, and gastronomic services.

High-technical-level OSCs and NGO networks with expertise should provide support to base organizations by defining strategies promoting participation in the territory and by creating discussion forums that allow those citizens not familiar with environmental issues, better understand OT and management plans.

To define spaces together with research centers and universities to raise awareness, to warn about critical processes and/or about opportunities in the territory.

Organizations from the civil society, specialized in gender issues, Afro-descendants, rural poverty could focus their efforts on establishing mechanisms to strengthen the population in PAs and define a monitoring role from the perspective of the society regarding both, public and private conservation initiatives.

Organizations from the rural sector, workers and farm owners could work jointly with the NPAS in the design of strategies of different levels of involvement at a local and national level, especially in the previous phases of inclusion to new PAs.

Recommendations to GEF Project: We propose a series of suggestions for the evaluated project. It is recommended, with previous agreement with MVOTMA and UNDP/GEF, to extend the implementation of the project for some months during 2014 to ensure an adequate transition between the current structure and the new structure of the ministry which has been recently approved.¹⁴ It is pertinent to complete and promote the approval of general NPAS planning and management guidelines, such as those regarding incorporation of new areas, design of management plans, and tourism development in Protected Areas. Also, to complete and promote the approval of management plans of areas where significant progress has been made and to support the initial implementation of management plans and/or operational plans. Likewise, to complete the setting up of SISNAP.

Regarding indicators and information analysis, it is recommended to incorporate, as one of the NPAS procedures, the comparison of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) with information

¹⁴It is important to highlight that these modifications have been confirmed by the Presidency of the Republic and their validation is to be approved by Parliament.

about governance models, so as to detect different levels of achievement depending on each model, advantages and disadvantages of each management model and their impact on management effectiveness.

Achievements are highlighted taking into account there was not a national system of protected areas in Uruguay before its implementation. The development of a new project strengthens commitment entered into by involved stakeholders, actions started and their sustainability. In this new stage, it is recommended to prioritize conservation objectives over management objectives without leaving aside the strengthening of the new management structure.

The Project has actively contributed to the development and strengthening of national, provincial, and local institutional capacities. In order to ensure sustainability, it is recommended to develop plans to strengthen institutional capacities for the formulation and approval of management plans, participative events, application of tools regarding PA management effectiveness and financial sustainability at a central and provincial level.

To generate biological corridors with more surface and protected biodiversity, the NPAS should make an additional effort to integrate public and private stakeholders, as well as those already articulated and those who have not had any previous participation yet along the corridors.

VI. LEARNED LESSONS

Institutions that are sound and consolidated within public areas, that enjoy credibility before the civil society, define sustainable management techniques regardless of institutional changes since they define an institutional tradition (this includes agencies that are relatively new, less than a year in existence) that enables them to absorb impact from changes in leadership and follow working guidelines beyond political preferences of those in charge.

Adaptive management of the system and areas suggesting solutions to challenges in each territory, with creative and inclusive solutions with the private sector, define a replicable parameter. Regarding governance, flexibility of models applied by the Project shows that the NPAS was opened to experimentation.

Role of Pilot Areas: Selection criteria for those areas to be included in national programs should be systematized taking into account assessment of pilot experiences defining how to implement replicability guidelines.

Role of decentralized governments (local or provincial) and decentralized national teams is key to achieve results. When starting work at a PA, contributions and potential roles of other institutions working in the territory should be considered, defining alliances to improve management plans. Projects with a national scope improve their capacity to meet goals when governmental stakeholders at regional level establish cooperation mechanisms at territorial level. When this cooperation is not possible, it implies a loss of technical capacities at local level and a loss of functions at central level.

The key role of the private sector as mentioned in EI: “Any Project that aims to work with biodiversity issues in a territory where 95% of land is in private hands needs to have local coordination instances that need to be supported, and have discussion forums to contribute to the project’s implementation.”

Institutions involved in environmental issues require a special political influence due to the type of interests they face and to the fact they are relatively new in the institutional stage to promote a new national political culture. Only with the support of the highest authorities (Ministers and Presidents) will they complete high-level negotiations with the private sector.

Training as part of investment: The strengthening of organizations’ capacities that articulate and add interests to the planning, management, and participation in the dialogue with the government in each

PA, allows for the generation of leaders trained in the language of projects and conservation principles aligned with production criteria. This promotes qualified participation in the design of strategies, and advice to implementers in each part of the project's cycle.

Adoption of project's outputs at different government levels: Once tools developed by a program are accepted and internalized by national and provincial authorities, project sustainability is in part ensured; however, its use in the long term can be later revised.

Length of processes in PA should be controlled so as to avoid mistrust in stakeholders involved, confirming a point that appeared as LA in the EI, this ET considers a key lesson the fact that management plans for a protected area should be immediately completed after registration of the area in the national system to avoid compromising credibility at regional and local level; this can be solved with the creation and approval of operational plans to be implemented during preparation of management plans.

Multi-stakeholder national counseling institutions, (e.g.: CAN) should be defined by regular criteria, and should have feedback from the different parties.

Mass social communication should be at the service of a project that generates a new institutional framework to generate at least basic understanding in all interested parties of a project that generates new patterns of behavior at different levels of the government and the civil society.

The highest decision-making level must react quickly in situations of conflict in PAs so that they do not extend over time and create the idea that PAs mean conflict between stakeholders at territorial level.

Educational centers involved in biodiversity projects ensure changes in awareness in young people, and impact on family context.

One of the lessons learned was that key local stakeholders should be identified before establishing PAs and incorporating them to the NPAS.

The creation of a PA is practically irreversible. A territorial process is consolidated although it sometimes cannot be sustained financially.

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