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**Final Evaluation of the Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational  
Protected Area Project**  
Final Report

Prepared for:  
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)  
Global Environmental Facility (GEF)

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## ACRONYMS

ATRIDEST	Trifinio Associations for Sustainable Development
CATIE	Tropical Agronomy Center for Research and Teaching <i>Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza</i>
CEL	Lempa River Executive Hydroelectric Commission
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CONAP	<i>Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas</i> – Guatemala (CONAP)
CPAL	Trinational Committee for Local Participation (for its Spanish acronym)
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTAP	Trinational Committee for Protected Areas (for its Spanish acronym)
CTPT	Trinational Commission for the Trifinio Plan (for its Spanish acronym)
DEN	National Executive Director (for its Spanish acronym)
EAT	Technical assistance Management (for its Spanish acronym)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for the Latin America and the Caribbean
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRITO	<i>Grupo de Integración Trinacional Operativo</i>
ICF	<i>Instituto Nacional de Conservación y Desarrollo Forestal</i> - Honduras
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMP	Integrated Management Plan (of the MTPA)
KfW	<i>Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau</i> (German Development Bank)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBC	Mesoamerican Biological Corridor
MAB	UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program
MARN	<i>Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales</i> – El Salvador (MARN)
MBC	Mesoamerican Biological Corridor
MTPA	Montecristo Trinational Protected Area
MTE	Midterm evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PA	Protected area
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PROTCAFE	Coffee Project ( <i>Proyecto Trinacional de Café Especial Sostenible</i> )
PT-CARL	Trinational Sustainable Development Program for the Upper Lempa River Basin
RIC	Cadastral Information Register - <i>Registro de Información Catastral</i> (Guatemala)
SE-CONAP	Executive Secretariat of the National Council on Protected Areas (Guatemala)
SET	Trinational Executive Secretariat (for its Spanish acronym)
SMART	Simple, Manageable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely
TORs	Terms of Reference
TT	Tracking Tool
UAT	Trinational Administrative Unit (for its Spanish acronym)
UMT	Trinational Management Unit (for its Spanish acronym)
UNESCO	United-Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UTT	Trinational Technical Unit (for its Spanish acronym)





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in the context of the final evaluation of the Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area (MTPA) Project. This evaluation is being carried out by Evan Green with the participation of Alexandre Daoust from Le Groupe-conseil baastel ltée.

### II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Integrated Management of the MTPA Project, was implemented by the IDB and financed at 39% by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), 32% by national entities and 22% by the IDB, and was designed in 2005-2006 as a four year project, and it was granted a one year extension. The project closed by the end of 2011. The lead project executing agency is the Trinational Executive Secretariat of the Trinational Commission for the Trifinio Plan (*Comisión Trinacional del Plan Trifinio CTPT/ Secretaría Ejecutiva Trinacional (SET)*). The project was to support the establishment and operation of the Trinational Management Unit (UMT), which was created within the CTPT to manage the MTPA. The Trinational Committee for Protected Areas (CTAP) was established in 2003. This committee was to be strengthened by the project as a technical advisory body to the CTPT. The Technical Assistance Management (EAT), a private firm hired specifically for the project, was to *support* the UMT.

The **global objective (or goal)** of the project is *to contribute to the protection and conservation of globally important biodiversity, natural processes, and environmental services of the MTPA in the Trifinio Region in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, and to contribute to the implementation of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC) in benefit of population of the MTPA and its buffer zone.*

The **development objective (or purpose)** is *to support the initial implementation of the Integrated Management Plan of the MTPA in the Trifinio Region of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, through a trinational institutional framework operating in a participatory, integrated and effective manner.*

### III. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The main objective of the evaluation is to analyze the project implementation process and its products and determine if the global environmental, developmental and project objectives have been reached (**effectiveness**). Thus, the analysis in this evaluation focuses on **outcomes and outputs and realization of activities**, and establishes which factors affected the implementation of the project, whether they contributed to its success or hindered the achievement of its objectives. In addition, this final evaluation attempts to:

- Report on the **relevance** of the project with regards to GEF objectives and national priorities.
- Evaluate the **design of the project**, as well as the **monitoring and evaluation** (M&E) system.
- Assess the quality of **adaptive management** planning and implementation, based on pre-identified risks and MTE results (**efficiency**).
- Evaluate the **performance of institutions** involved in implementing the project.
- A modest **financial analysis** that reviews project budget allocations according to their outputs and outcomes.
- Evaluate the **sustainability** of the project.
- The evaluation will assign the corresponding scores on the scale used by the GEF.

The evaluation process did not include the collection of new biological data in the field and has utilized, analyzed and compiled existing biological data through secondary sources, where available and relevant. **The full scope of the evaluation was determined by the final work plan and evaluation matrix presented to and accepted by the IDB in January 2012.**

## **IV. EVALUATION APPROACH**

Overall, a collaborative approach was followed, integrating observations, opinions, suggestions, lessons learned and recommendations from as many stakeholders as possible, within the limits of time and budget. The three main data gathering and analysis methods, or lines of inquiry for the evaluation are: document review, interviews with key stakeholders and field mission. The document review was the first step in the mandate after the approval of the final work plan and allowed the consultant to prepare for interviews and the field visit. Much further documentation was also then collected in the field. As agreed with the IDB, the capitals of the three countries and five municipalities and three MTPA core zone areas<sup>1</sup> were visited during a two-week field mission in February. Time has been spent in and around the protected area (PA) to visit both PA staff and relevant communities and local partners to complement the interviews with officials in capitals, which formed the basis for analysis and the Draft Evaluation Report. After a Draft Report was submitted, a participatory workshop took place on March 20<sup>th</sup>, with all key stakeholders. Comments were gathered which have been integrated into this Final Report, now being circulated for comments.

## **V. BRIEF CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Brief Summary Conclusions**

A very brief summary of some of the key findings and conclusions related to Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability are presented below. Many nuances are presented in the core of the text which are not fully reflected in the present summary.

It is also important to reiterate the fact that the MTPA Project was a complex and wide scoping initiative that had ambitious objectives in terms of regional institutional structure strengthening. The political and diplomatic issues involved in the implementation of the Project are quite extensive taking into consideration the fact that such an initiative – managing a PA trinationally – is unique. Supporting the development of a regional management body involving three countries each with their interests and political agendas was ambitious, but at the same it was an endeavor that has borne fruit and is noteworthy.

The project is considered quite **relevant** and aligned with the countries' environmental and biodiversity conservation policies and priorities and both the GEF's and the IDB's policies and priorities in the region. The project sought to address an issue of concern and importance to all countries involved, and their partners. However, the project design was too ambitious and lacked sufficient risk analysis and related planning and could have included local stakeholders to a greater extent.

In terms of project **effectiveness**, data collected suggests that results are mixed.

### ***Related to Specific Objective 1. Legal, territorial and institutional consolidation of the MTPA:***

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<sup>1</sup> Esquipulas, Santa Fe, Ocotepeque, Santa Rosa de Copan and Metapan and three areas, one in each country.



- Although data collected confirmed that the *legal and territorial consolidation of the MTPA* has encountered challenges during project implementation, these expected results were considered overambitious. For the rest of the MTPA, other than El Salvador, a land “census” was conducted given the obstacles related to achieving the original expected result. Geodesic redelimitation was carried out to some extent, though not all stakeholders view it as complete or successful.
- While successes related to *trinational institutional framework consolidation* cannot be minimized, data collected suggests some challenges were encountered. The fact that the three countries are working together trinationally— that *Instituto Nacional de Conservación y Desarrollo Forestal* - Honduras (ICF), *Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* – El Salvador (MARN) and *Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas* – Guatemala (CONAP) are working together in the CTAP – is considered among the key successes achieved by the project.
- Data suggests that the trinational management concept has experienced ebbs and flows, though in general, progress has been made and opportunities exist to further the process of regionalization and there is a good basis upon which to build that the project helped to strengthen.
- Although realized late in the project implementation, the outline and options for a special *trust fund* were developed through a Technical assistance Management (EAT) consultancy, though it is not evident that it has been agreed upon. Since 2010, many stakeholders noted that the idea of establishing such a fund through this project was ambitious.
- The Trifinio region was recently named by United-Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the “Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve” and was added as a Biosphere Reserve in UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme; the project has contributed to this achievement. This new context has had a positive impact on the image of the MTPA and presents opportunities for continued trinational coordination and management.

***Related to Specific Objective 2. Integrated management of the MTPA for the conservation of biodiversity:***

- An MTPA *land-use plan* was developed late in the project but not implemented, according to data collected.
- Strategically located *infrastructure* has been built to augment institutional conservation in the MTPA. Visitor centers and bridges have been built on the Honduran and Guatemalan sides of the MTPA and roads were improved on all three sides.
- Data suggests that the project supported the implementation of the Association of Private Natural Reserves (the *Association*), and the institutionalization of the *Allianza*, a cluster of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) from the three countries, the Trinational *Mancomunidad (Manco)*, regrouping municipalities from the three countries, and the *Cámara de Turismo Sostenible*, a trinational tourism institution.
  - *Allianza* was involved in the biological corridors’ pilot project, *Manco* developed three environmental policies, financed MTPA river water quality monitoring activities, and developed a vigilance plan for the MPTA core zone, and the *Association* supported land census activities.
- Though no *natural resources management program* was developed, four *management plans for private natural reserves* have been developed with the support of the *Association*.

***Related to Specific Objective 3. Sustainable use of natural resources and environmental management in buffer zone and biological corridors:***

- Data suggests that although progress was made in terms of involving *farmers in clean production*, the agro-forestry component encountered some issues. Further incentive mechanisms need to be pursued.
- Capacity building pertaining *coffee production and the coffee industry* in the region, *environmental awareness enhancement* and the development and use of *environmental education material* in schools are among the most significant results of the project, according to data collected from various sources.
  - *Proyecto Trinacional de Café Especial Sostenible (PROTCAFE)*: The project promoted sustainable high quality coffee production and marketing linked to environmentally responsible practices, social equity and economic efficiency. 180 families and 10 coffee production organizations benefitted, as did 3 coffee processing industries.
- Some *small-scale sanitation projects* are also noteworthy. Evidence suggests that in *Metapan*, El Salvador. Latrines and water tanks were built for the municipality. However, the community was not fully satisfied with the infrastructure. *Environmental sanitation campaigns* were also implemented in 24 communities, according to data collected, including cleanups and initiatives focused on solid waste recycling processes.
- Although *biological corridors* were discussed in a participatory process with communities through community leaders and NGOs in Honduras, it is not possible to delineate three stand-alone pilot or demonstration projects per se based on data available. However, data suggests that initiatives formed a good basis for such projects and the *Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza* (CATIE), *Allianza* and *Manco* all participated in these and are still working with the counterparts. During the project, four workshops for technical assistance for the corridors were organized and 10 ha. of reforestation per country were designated. In addition, other projects (such as *Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau* (German Development Bank) KfW) offer opportunities to build on that progress made.

***Related to Specific Objective 4. Monitoring and investigation of ecological and socioeconomic conditions in the MTPA and its buffer zone:***

- There is no functioning *monitoring system* per se. The baseline required for project monitoring was only developed in 2011, near the project's end. Its contents have not yet been fully approved. However, the baseline does comprise a significant amount of data to potentially be used and build upon in the future.
- Data demonstrates that the MTPA's *research program* was formulated in consultation with the scientific society of the three countries (60 representatives) and that 300 copies of the program's document were printed. Strategic research priorities were established and a call for co-financed research topics was launched. Of the 15 proposals received, 3 are being financed.
- According to data collected, relevant information is being shared in terms of project information. The web site [www.aguasinfronteras.net](http://www.aguasinfronteras.net) includes some key information about the MTPA.
- Key *transboundary information exchanges* were completed, including the First Boundary Protected Areas Congress at the Copan Ruins, Honduras from June 29th to June 30th, 2011.

In terms of ***efficiency***, findings were mixed: During the last years of the project, the acceleration of the project's execution was made possible by flexible and adaptive management and improvements in resource management and allocation, as well as key staff changes. However, the earlier years of the project did not experience strong implementation or disbursement. In addition, throughout the project, co-financing was not clearly reported on as such information was not demanded. Finally, one of the strengths of the project was its ability to coordinate and create synergies with other projects in the region.

Despite the foundation in place, which has been strengthened by the project, some issues threaten the medium and long term ***sustainability*** of the trinational management of the MTPA and hence the conservation of some parts of

the latter, including the core zone. These include lack of adequate funding, institutional presence at the operational level of all needed stakeholders, and some aspects of required capacity such as for the UMT. While the trinational institutional structure and framework is in place, prospects for furthering its sustainability come at present mainly from forms of external stimulus, such as other donor projects, and less so from the countries themselves.

Overall, despite the challenges experienced it can be stated that a key aspect of the purpose of the project was realized in the furthering of trinational coordination and management of the MTPA, despite not achieving key indicators associated with this result level and the goal level and the risks to the sustainability of progress made.

The Global GEF Rating for the Project is Moderately Satisfactory (**MS**). This rating is based on the quantitative analysis of the ratings given to the project's activities and the qualitative assessment of all aspects.

## Key Lessons Learned

Some of the *key lessons learned* emerging from the final evaluation analysis include the following. Please note that in the report, contextual information is provided for each lesson learned, which are not presented in the executive summary. In addition, in the list below are only some examples of lessons learned.

- From outset of project design and sustained throughout project implementation, the active pursuit of local participation and buy-in greatly affects project successes and sustainability. Projects that seek to work with and through local communities need to target this aspect in an even stronger manner to try and affect project success.
- For complex PA management projects, especially those that attempt to work across borders, it can be useful to pursue more focused objectives that have narrower scope and are designed to build on successes. Not all projects need to attempt to address all aspects of PA management or to 'be all things to all stakeholders'.
- When more complex and challenging expected results are integrated in project design or when specific interests are directly at stakes in particular circumstances, it can be very helpful for a certain degree of flexibility to be integrated into project design, to catalyze adaptive management through the recognition of failures and the freedom to change course midstream with a view to achieving results and efficient resource use. This requires project management procedures that lend to flexibility and adaptation throughout project implementation.
- When the collection of baseline data as part of the development of a robust M&E framework and system takes place near the beginning of projects as they should, this allows for real performance measurement throughout project implementation and more opportunities for learning and adjusting as needed midstream. All stakeholders of such projects need to be sensitized to the importance of monitoring needs and results.
- Though it is not a new lesson, one key to sustainability is ensuring that the main institutions responsible for continuing project results into the future are directly targeted by capacity building activities. When external consultants or firms are the center of such initiatives, built capacity can often leave once projects end.

## Key Recommendations

In brief, *some* of the key recommendations emerging from the final evaluation analysis are presented below and are focused on future projects in the Trifinio area. The report contains further discussion on each recommendation.

In terms of project design:

- ***It is recommended that steps be taken to ensure that local actors, including communities and municipalities, are strongly involved in the project design process, in order to help ensure that design is more realistic and adapted to the local reality and to help foster buy-in from the outset, while ensuring local actors are well-informed throughout.***

- *It is recommended that future projects concentrate on fewer objectives, focusing on building on successes and a feasible set of expected results. A balance between theoretical objectives (studies and researches) and practical objectives (capacity building and infrastructure development) should be sought.*

In terms of project management and monitoring:

- *It is recommended that it become a firm requirement of all GEF and IDB projects (or that the existing requirement be fully enforced) to establish a full M&E system and a completed baseline within the first year of project implementation.*
- *It is recommended a review of GEF and IDB project management/implementation procedures take place to identify areas for improvement in terms of management flexibility and the facilitation of adaptive management.*
- *It is recommended that communication between project authorities and the affected population and all involved institutions be made a greater priority throughout project in order to further local participation and thereby enhance prospects for result achievement and buy-in at the local level.*

In terms of MTPA management:

- *It is recommended that discussions on the developed options for the Trust Fund be re-started and that the involvement of the private sector be considered.*
- *It is recommended that environmental education be made a priority in future projects in the region.*
- *After 25 years of existence, it is recommended that the Plan Trifinio institutions and the overarching institutional framework and structure undergo a wide-scoping and in-depth evaluation in order to identify the areas of strength as well as the challenges that exist so that issues can be addressed.*
- *It is recommended that the GEF and IDB consider another project in the MTPA region, in order to further trinational coordination and management of the MTPA and build on progress made, but with a view to applying lessons learned and following other recommendations listed.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report is prepared for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in the context of the final evaluation of the Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area (MTPA) Project. This evaluation is being carried out by Evan Green from Le Groupe-conseil baastel ltée with the participation of Alexandre Daoust.

The report's first section depicts the project in terms of general background information and project objectives. Sections two and three respectively describe the evaluation objectives, questions as well as approach and methodology. Section four addresses the evaluation findings and section five summarizes the conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The evaluation matrix is presented in Appendix one. Annex one depicts the project's logframe and Annexes two and three respectively contain the list of persons met and the bibliography.

It is important to note that in the text of the evaluation report, when sentences and expressions are written in *italic*, either they are in another language or *they represent an important statement for the section and sub-section they are embedded in*; when in a footnote, the italic text represents the title of a document.

### 1.1 Project Overview

#### *The MTPA*

The MTPA was established in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador in 1987. In terms of hectareage, according to the Integrated Management Plan<sup>2</sup> (IMP), in 2010, the MTPA represented 42,276.92 hectares (ha) including the buffer zone (13,923.86 ha of protected area (PA) and 28,353.06 of buffer zone). The area contains one of the largest and least disturbed areas of cloud forest (6,650 ha<sup>3</sup>) in Central America.

Country	MTPA (ha)	Buffer zone (ha)	Total
El Salvador	4,791.07	6,926.78	11,717.85
Guatemala	4,677.21	17,674.64	22,351.85
Honduras	4,455.58	3,751.64	8,207.22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,923.86</b>	<b>28,353.06</b>	<b>42,276.92</b>

The project's midterm evaluation (MTE) and other documents suggest that in 2010-2011, the MTPA represents 52,548.63 hectares including the buffer zone (of which 5,996.3 ha. is PA and 46,552.36 ha.<sup>4</sup>). This information has been confirmed by many interviews. Figure 2 below represents the map of the MTPA. According to a pre-cadastre made in 1995, there are 121 owners with an extension of 5,807 ha. of lands, or almost 42% of the territory proposed for the MTPA, including significant extensions of healthy cloud forest and transitional forest. The respective territories of the Montecristo Massif are: in El Salvador the Montecristo National Park; in Guatemala *La Fraternidad* Biosphere Reserve; and in Honduras the Montecristo-Trifinio Biosphere Massif Reserve and National Montecristo Park.

According to project documents<sup>5</sup>, anthropogenic pressure from the surrounding areas (many interviews and field visits points to agriculture and coffee production as the main source of such pressure), forest fires, and illegal hunting

<sup>2</sup> BANCO INTERAMERICANO DE DESARROLLO, COMISIÓN TRINACIONAL DEL PLAN TRIFINIO.2005. *Plan de Manejo Integrado del Área Protegida Trinacional Montecristo*. p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> TRINATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTED AREAS. 2006. *Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area*. RS-X1016. Project document non reimbursable operation financed with GEF resources. 36 P. According to data for 2002 (GIS PT-CARL).

<sup>4</sup> TRACKING TOOL, 2010, p.1

<sup>5</sup> For example, TRINATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTED AREAS. 2006. *Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area*. RS-X1016. Project document non reimbursable operation financed with GEF resources. 36 P.

and collection of animals are the main threats to the area. The MTPA was created as a response to these pressures and its objectives are:

- 1) To protect and conserve the biodiversity and natural processes of the area in an integrated, participatory and trilateral manner; and
- 2) To sustain the environmental benefits in the region and contribute to the sustainable development of the local population.

It is estimated in project documents that the population indirectly affected by the Project, living in the Upper Lempa River basin, is comprised of 314,000 inhabitants, distributed throughout 20 municipalities in five departments, eight of which belong to El Salvador, seven to Guatemala and five to Honduras. Of the entire population, 39% is in El Salvador, 49% in Guatemala and 12% in Honduras.

The MTPA functions with a US\$140,000 annual budget<sup>6</sup> (US\$100,000 in El Salvador, US\$20,000 in Guatemala and US\$20,000 in Honduras) and is operated by 50 permanent staff (40 in El Salvador, 5 in Guatemala and 5 in Honduras) and 5 temporary staff (3 guards in Honduras and 2 guards in Guatemala<sup>7</sup>).

### **The Project**

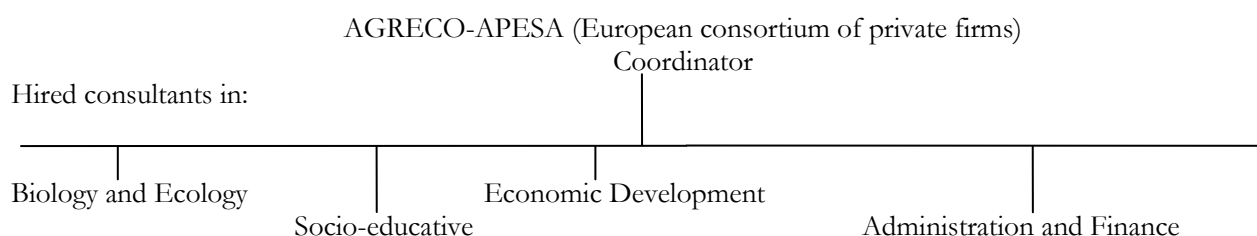
The Integrated Management of the MTPA Project (herein referred to as the MTPA Project or the Project), implemented by the IDB and financed at 39% by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), 32% by national entities and 22% by the IDB (see table 1 below for more financial information) was designed in 2005-2006 as a four year project. In 2010, the project was granted a year extension to finalize its implementation. The timeline of the project is as follows:

Agency Approval Date: 08/03/2006  
Effectiveness (Start) Date: 03/16/2006  
Original Closing Date: 08/16/2010  
Expected Closing Date: 12/14/2011  
Mid-term Evaluation Date: August-October 2010  
Terminal Evaluation Date: January – April 2012.

The lead project executing agency is the Trinational Executive Secretariat of the Trinational Commission for the Trifinio Plan (*Comisión Trinacional del Plan Trifinio CTPT/ Secretaría Ejecutiva Trinacional (SET)*). The project was to support the establishment and operation of the Trinational Management Unit (UMT), which was created within the CTPT to manage the MTPA. The Trinational Committee for Protected Areas (CTAP) was established in 2003. This committee was to be strengthened by the project as Technical advisory body to the CTPT. The Technical Assistance Management entity (EAT), a private European company hired specifically for the project was to *support* the UMT.

The EAT was structured in the following manner:

**Figure 1 – Institutional Framework of the EAT**



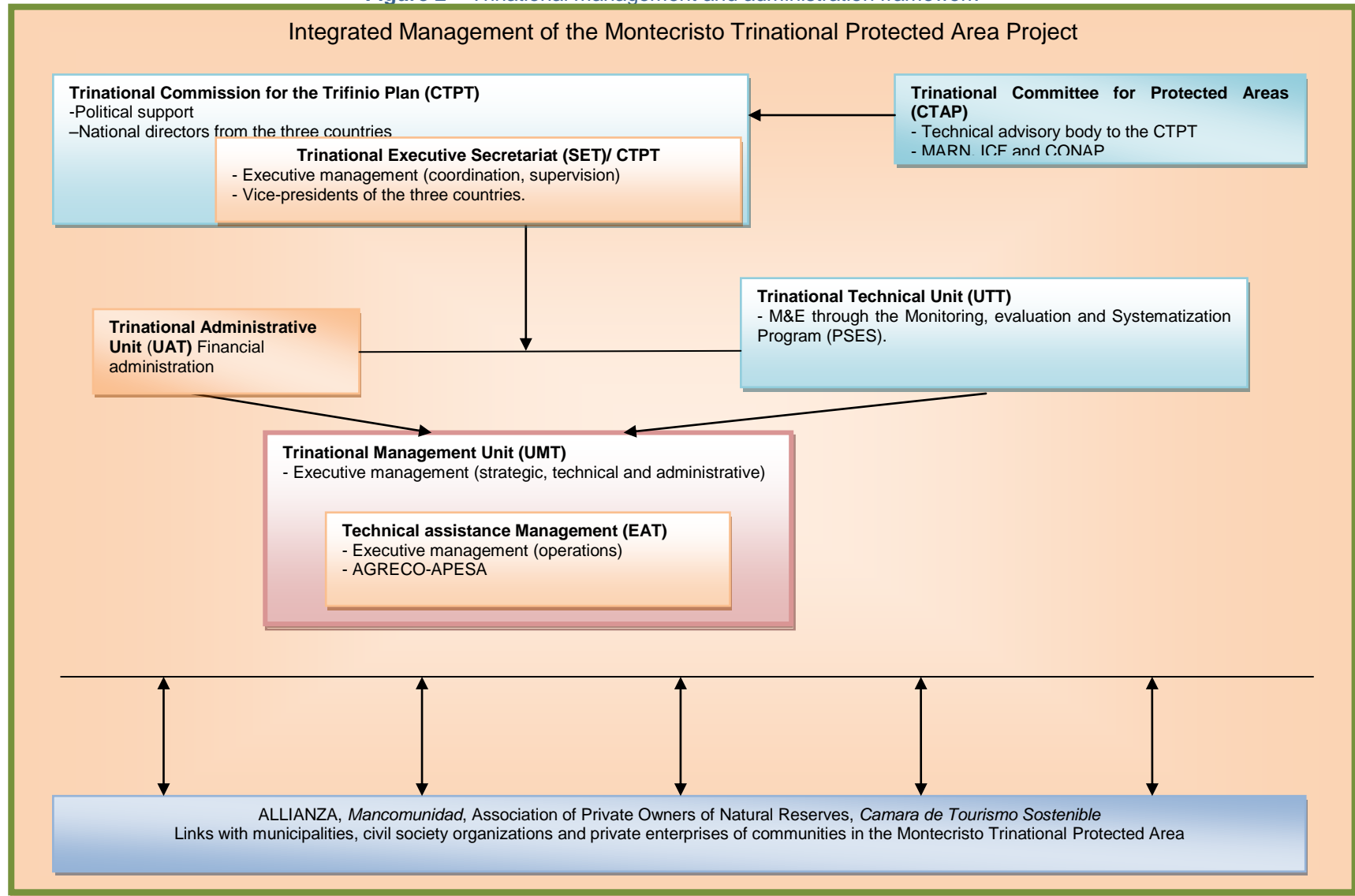
<sup>6</sup> These numbers come from the 2011 MTPA annual budget.

<sup>7</sup> TRACKING TOOL, 2010, p.3



The following figure depicts in detail the Trinational management and administrative framework.

**Figure 2 – Trinational management and administration framework**







The following table depicts the project's funding by funding institution.

**Table 1 – Finance (in USD\$ thousands)**

Funding Source	Initial amount (Pro. Doc.)
GEF	3,500 (39%)
Governments and CTPT	1,167 (13%)
European Union	475 (5%)
Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)	130 (1%)
Program for Sustainable Development, Environment and Water Resources in the Upper Lempa River Basin (OIEA)	95 (1%)
IDB	1,954 (22%)
Local actors (Municipalities, private property owners, NGO's...)	1,669 (19%)
Total	8,990 (100%)

## 1.2 Project Objectives

*(Picture below: A sign presents the visitors center in the MTPA in Honduras)*

### Global objective

The **global objective** of the project is to contribute to the protection and conservation of globally important biodiversity, natural processes, and environmental services of the MTPA in the Trifinio Region in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, and to contribute to the implementation of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC) in benefit of population of the MTPA and its buffer zone.

### Development objective (purpose)

The **development objective** is to support the initial implementation of the IMP of the MTPA in the Trifinio Region of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, through a trinational institutional framework operating in a participatory, integrated and effective manner.

### Expected Results

The expected results of the project include the following<sup>8</sup>:



#### Specific Objective 1: Legal, Territorial and Institutional Consolidation of the MTPA

- Activity 1.a: Regularization of land ownership and the re-delimitation and demarcation of boundaries of the MTPA;
- Activity 1.b: Consolidation and implementation of the trinational legal and institutional framework for participatory management of the MTPA;
- Activity 1.c: Promotion of sustainable financing of the management of the MTPA.

#### Specific Objective 2: Integrated Management of the MTPA for the Conservation of Biodiversity

- Activity 2.a: Consolidation of functional land-use plan and zoning scheme for MTPA;
- Activity 2.b: Establishment and maintenance of the management, protection and visitor/public use infrastructure in the MTPA;
- Activity 2.c: Natural resources management and conservation in private lands in the MTPA.

<sup>8</sup> Please see Annex 1 for the full Project logframe.

**Specific Objective 3: Sustainable use of Natural Resources and Environmental Management in Buffer Zone and Biological Corridors**

- Activity 3.a: Promotion of environmentally sustainable agriculture, agro-forestry, agro-industry and tourism in the MTPA and its buffer zone;
- Activity 3.b: Constitution of biological corridors interconnected with the MTPA.
- Activity 3.c: Promotion of environmental awareness among the local population in the MTPA and its buffer zone.

**Specific Objective 4: Monitoring and Research of Ecological and Socioeconomic Conditions in the MTPA and its Buffer Zone**

- Activity 4a: Monitoring and evaluation system.
- Activity 4b: Research program to support the management of the MTPA
- Activity 4c: Project information system

The following section addresses the context of the evaluation and details all aspects of the evaluation process.

## 2. OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

The MTE was conducted when close to half of the GEF funding was spent (46.8% or US\$1.640 million out of US\$3.500 million). This respected the clause 3.06 a) of the Non-Reimbursable Financial Convention of the project. To respect this same clause in terms of the final evaluation, the latter was to be conducted when 90% of the funds would have been spent. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011, US\$2.538 million had been spent representing 72.5% of the US\$3.5 million. However, US\$820.600 was committed to infrastructure construction, which brought the total amount spent *and* committed to 95.96% of the full US\$3.5 million of GEF funding, representing the amount required to move forward with the final evaluation. (Picture above: A sign in Guatemala informs visitors they are entering the MTPA's buffer zone).



The following two sub-sections describe the evaluations questions, the general and specific objectives of the evaluation and its scope.

### 2.1 Evaluation questions

The main evaluation questions are based on four general criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Efficiency<sup>9</sup>. The evaluation questions presented in the present sub-section are key elements of the overarching evaluation framework. They represent among the common evaluation criteria for the GEF, the IDB and the majority of donor and development partners worldwide. A general introduction to each of these and some sample core questions are presented below:

- 1) **Relevance:** Are the project's objectives relevant to beneficiaries and development partners? Do they address key needs and priorities? Do the design of the project and its content take into consideration the stakeholders priorities?
- 2) **Effectiveness:** Have the activities and initiatives undertaken during the project lead to the expected results? Have expected short, medium and longer term results been achieved – both in terms of environmental objectives and development objectives? What progress has been made? What changes are visible or measurable? Where results have not been achieved, what challenges were experienced?
- 3) **Sustainability:** Will project progress and achieved results be sustained after the project has ended? Have the necessary steps been taken during the project to ensure buy-in from stakeholders and beneficiaries? What has been done to ensure long term financial sustainability and to address longer-term institutional viability? Have capacities been sufficiently built?
- 4) **Efficiency:** Have the financial resources granted to implement the project been sufficient and were they managed appropriately, cost-effectively, and as planned? Did project management adapt to an evolving context adequately? Was the timeline respected?

These criteria are fleshed out into key sub-questions and indicators and are discussed in further detail in the Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 1.

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<sup>9</sup> These are the GEF evaluation criteria: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY, Evaluation Office. 2008. *Guidelines for GEF Agencies Conducting Terminal Evaluations. Evaluation Document No. 3*. Washington. p. 7 - 10. Please see section 3.2 for more information on how these criteria will be analyzed using the GEF evaluation scale.

## 2.2 General & Specific objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation has the following objectives, as written in the TORs: The main objective of the evaluation is to analyze the project implementation process and its products and determine if the global environmental, developmental and project objectives have been reached, as reflected in the documents approved by the Executive Director of the GEF<sup>10</sup> (**effectiveness**). Thus, the analysis in this evaluation focuses on **outcomes and outputs** (and to a lesser extent, *impacts*), and establishes which factors affected the implementation of the project, whether they contributed to its success or hindered the achievement of its objectives. The evaluation also investigates some of the limits and advantages of the chosen project execution mechanisms for the delivery of outputs and outcomes. In addition, the advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing and hiring a firm for technical assistance for implementation are considered.

Also, this final evaluation attempts to undertake the following evaluative aspects:

- Report on the **relevance** of the results of project with regard to the GEF objectives and national priorities.
- Evaluate the **design of the project**, as well as the **monitoring and evaluation** (M&E) system (are indicators SMART?).
- Assess the quality of adaptive **management** planning and implementation, based on pre-identified risks and on the results from the MTE, taking into account the differences between institutions from the three beneficiary countries involved (**efficiency**). This means assessing qualitatively and quantitatively the technical, administrative, financial and institutional issues and identifying lessons learned all the while considering the reality and context of project implementation. The analysis also includes, to the extent possible, the identification of potential indirect positive and negative impacts resulting from project activities that were not originally intended for inclusion in the assessment of overall impact, particularly considering the most sensitive natural resources.
- Evaluate the performance of all institutions involved in implementing the project and providing support and supervision from the IDB in its capacity as implementing agency of GEF.
- The **financial analysis** reviews the project budget allocations according to their outputs and outcomes: the percentage distributed for technology transfer, development of baseline studies and strengthening of local capacities. It assesses to the extent possible whether the project had the necessary financial management and follow-up procedures (planning and resource justification) to take sound financial decisions. It reviews and quantifies, again, to the extent possible, the co-financing funds committed at the time of project approval and reviews whether there was proper fund management and timely submission of financial statements.
- Evaluate the **sustainability** of the project and its components in terms of institutional, financial, environmental and socio-political criteria (as well as the degree of ownership of its users / target groups through a retrospective analysis of stakeholder involvement related to the project). The level of participation and ownership of many of the various stakeholders is assessed as well as the commitments made to the projects by some of the partners and local partners.
- Provide feedback on issues that are recurrent in the GEF portfolio in terms of strategic objectives for the funding of biodiversity projects, such as financial sustainability of protected areas.
- In addition to an in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis overall, the evaluation will assign the corresponding scores on the scale used by the GEF.

The evaluation also includes a systematization of relevant lessons learned in order to improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF-funded activities, particularly in transborder protected areas support projects or other interventions of the IDB in the Trifinio region. All findings and lessons learned were presented through a consultation process, during an event organized for the occasion in March 20<sup>th</sup> 2012, in Esquipulas, Guatemala. This event permitted the integration of comments from key project stakeholders.

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<sup>10</sup> GEF CEO Endorsement

## **2.3 Scope and Coverage**

The scope of the evaluation is mainly determined by the Project's objectives and expected results. The degree to which any results at the project Goal level (or impact level) can be assessed is limited as it depended on data available. This is the case in particular as it should be noted that the evaluation process did not include the collection of new biological data in the field and has utilized, analyzed and compiled existing biological data through secondary sources (final studies (products) of the project). In addition, it is important to understand that the level of effort and the budget of the evaluation did not permit the in-depth analysis of these final studies that would have been needed to judge their overall quality. Hence, a regular document review and comments made on the studies by stakeholders were used to evaluate their value for the project.

All aspects of the Project objectives and expected results are covered by the evaluation through document review, interviews with key stakeholders and a field visit in the three (3) countries.

***The full scope of the evaluation was determined by the final work plan presented to and accepted by the IDB in January 2012.***

In terms of field visits, as previously agreed with the client, the capitals of the three (3) countries (San Salvador, El Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and Guatemala City, Guatemala), five (5) municipalities in the region and the MTPA core zone <sup>11</sup> have been visited during an 11 day field mission in February. The full mandate began at the beginning of January 2012 and is expected to be complete by April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012. A second one (1) day visit to San Salvador has taken place in mid-March to present the preliminary and discuss findings in a one day workshop with key project stakeholders, who provided their feedback.

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<sup>11</sup> Esquipulas, Santa Fe, Ocotepeque, Santa Rosa de Copan and Metapan and the core zone through three different pathways, one in each country.



### 3. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Approach

In terms of approach, in addition to being pre-defined as an “external” evaluation, the latter combines the goal based, collaborative and theory based approaches<sup>12</sup>. As the logframe of the project encapsulates all activities and expected results, it is evident that focusing on the elements pre-defined in this document is very important.

In final evaluations such as the present one, it is considered relevant to adopt a collaborative approach to integrate observations, opinions, suggestions, lessons learned and recommendations from as many stakeholders as possible, within the mandate limitations of time and budget. Hence, in addition to the circulation of the work plan to the IDB for approval in January, the transmission of the present draft evaluation report to a work group comprised of key stakeholders from the relevant institutions involved in management of the Trinational area, the IDB, local and GEF staff (as well as other stakeholders deemed relevant by the client) for comments, corrections and questions, allows for an extensive feedback into the evaluation and its findings. Furthermore, this builds upon the in-depth sharing of the preliminary findings which took place during a one day workshop in which approximately 45 stakeholders participated, representing all countries and institutions involved in the project. It is evident therefore that the evaluation was conducted following both a participatory and iterative approach. However, significant budget and time constraints limit to what the evaluation process can both cover and deliver (please see sub-section 4.4 for more information on evaluation constraints and limits).

The following list presents the major steps of the evaluation, highlighting the participative and iterative process:

- Submission of the draft work plan;
  - Comments, observations, opinions, suggestions from client evaluation work group on the draft work plan;
- Submission of the final work plan integrating relevant comments, corrections and suggestions;
- Mission planning in coordination with all relevant stakeholders (for meeting organization with potential interviewees);
- Interviews with all stakeholders considered relevant through an agreement between consultant and client (evaluation work group) before field visit and face to face during field visit;
- 11 day mission to Central America;
- Data analysis;
- Submission of a draft summary of the evaluation report and the Power Point presentation for the workshop;
  - General comments, observations, opinions, suggestions from client evaluation work group on the draft evaluation report;
- One Day workshop to present and discuss preliminary evaluation findings;
- *Submission of Final Evaluation Report in draft form integrating relevant detailed comments, corrections and suggestions collected during one day workshop*<sup>13</sup>; and,
- Final revision of Final Report based on comments received.

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<sup>12</sup> See KAHAN, Barbara. *Excerpts from Review of Evaluation Frameworks*, Saskatchewan, Ministry of Education, 2008, 67 pages. Barbara Kahan had, in this review of evaluation approaches, identified at least ten approaches: *Goals Based* (focused on expected results), *Goal Free* (exploring expected and unexpected results), *Theory Based* (based on a pre-defined logic model), *Utilization* (oriented towards future general utilization or evaluation users), *Collaborative* (fostering large participation), *Balanced Scoreboard* (linking finance, beneficiaries, process and learning), *External* (independent), *Kirkpatrick* (four levels – reaction, learning, transfer and results – mostly used for education/training), *CIPP for Context-Input-Process-Product* (holistic approach).

<sup>13</sup> The submission of present report refers to this step.

## 3.2 Methodology

The two main elements guiding the evaluation methodology are the evaluation matrix presented in Appendix 1 and the GEF terminal evaluation guide and qualification system based on the pre-defined rating.

The evaluation matrix links detailed evaluation questions and sub-questions, distilled from the Project's logframe, information from the TORs and the four GEF criteria mentioned above, to performance indicators, each measured through the different data gathering and analysis methods presented in the following sub-section. This exercise then supports the scoring chosen using the GEF rating procedures and provides the consultant with the qualitative and quantitative data needed to produce the evaluation report.

The GEF rating is presented as follows in the document Guidelines for GEF Agencies Conducting Terminal Evaluations: "Since projects have different objectives, assessed results are not comparable and cannot be aggregated. Results will be rated as follows for relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency:

- a. Highly satisfactory (HS).** The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- b. Satisfactory (S).** The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- c. Moderately satisfactory (MS).** The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- d. Moderately unsatisfactory (MU).** The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- e. Unsatisfactory (U).** The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- f. Highly unsatisfactory (HU).** The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency."

For sustainability (Financial risks, Socio-political risks, Institutional framework and governance risks, and Environmental risks), the following rating will be used:

- a. Likely (L).** There are no or negligible risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
- b. Moderately likely (ML).** There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability. Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations 11
- c. Moderately unlikely (MU).** There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.
- d. Unlikely (U).** There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

These ratings are systematically used for each *Logframe indicator* in the matrix through the Final Evaluation Report, with supporting qualitative and quantitative justification deriving from the analysis of all data collected. Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations are also presented in the present report.

## 3.3 Data Gathering and Analysis Methods

The three main data gathering and analysis methods, or lines of inquiry for the evaluation are: document review, interviews with key stakeholders and field mission (field visit).

### **Document review**

Annex 3 details all documents relevant to the project sent by stakeholders. The following categorizes the major type of reports reviewed:

- N° GRT/FM-9945-RS.
- GEF M&E Policy
- GEF's Final Evaluation Preparation Guides

- PIRs between 2009 and 2011
- The project's Tracking Tools from 2005 to 2011
- Project Design Documents presented at the GEF and approved by the CEO
- RS-X1016 project documents
- The Project's Operations Rules
- The Project's Annual Operations Planning documents
- Mid-Term Evaluation Report
- Final Report from the Technical Assistance Consortium AGRECO/APESA.
- The Project's CTAP Meeting Minutes
- IDB's General, Administration and Supervision's Quick Reference Missions Tool (*Aide Memoires*)
- 2007-2011 Projects Financial Reports
- The Project's Annual Work Plans from 2007 to 2011.
- The Project's Quarterly Implementation Reports
- All Project's Consultancies Final Reports
- Infrastructure Execution Progress Reports
- Reports on the internet
- Management of the Establishment of Biological Corridors in the Trifinio Region
- Other studies and documents produced through technical co-operations used in the context of the project

This list is quite comprehensive but it is to be noted that during the document review and/or interview processes, in particular in the field, the consultant requested further documentation. The consultant has received the majority of requested documents through the IDB and its partners.

The document review has been the first step in the mandate after the approval of the final work plan and allowed the consultant to prepare for interviews and the field visit.

### **Interviews**

Actors interviewed (face-to-face or through telephone interviews) were selected from a list presented in the final work plan. This list was developed by the consultant on the basis of information presented in the TORs and compiled during the preliminary document review with the support from involved stakeholders. It was submitted to the IDB in Annex to the preliminary work plan to shortlist the *key stakeholders* to be interviewed and determine which of the selected potential interviewees could be met on the field and which could be interviewed through telephone discussions.

The main categories of key stakeholders to be interviewed as mentioned in the TORs are:

- a. IDB staff responsible for technical supervision of the project on behalf of Honduras
- b. IDB staff responsible for fiduciary oversight of the project on behalf of El Salvador
- c. Trinational Executive Secretary (SET) and the National Executive Director (DEN) of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
- d. Trinational Technical Unit Staff (UTT)
- e. Trinational Management Unit Staff (UMT)
- f. Technical assistance Management (EAT) (as available)
- g. Focal points of protected areas that make up the Trinational Protected Areas Committee (CTAP)
- h. GEF Operational Focal Point in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.
- i. Association Lempa River Tri-Border staff
- j. The Alliance for the Conservation of the Trifinio region
- k. Private Reserves Network and NGOs involved in the project
- l. Actors involved in the establishment of biological corridors
- m. Representatives from local community groups



n. Other programs and cooperative entities related to the MTPA

The IDB representatives endorsed the idea that the consultant could contact some respondents during the following week of the submission of the draft work plan. These pre-mission interviews helped in further defining key aspects of the evaluation to consider during the field visit, so as to use the limited time in the field more effectively.

In the “Findings” section of the present document, section 5, it is to be noted that when the presented information is providing from interviews, the following interview reporting methods are used to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees:

- No names are used, and to the extent possible, no contextual information that could reveal interviewees<sup>14</sup> identity is presented in the text.
- When a certain opinion on a subject is expressed by one or two respondents, the determinants "a", "some" or "few" are used to designate these respondents.
- When a certain opinion on a subject is expressed by about half of the respondents, the determinants "the", "a certain amount of" or "about half" are used to designate these respondents.
- When the majority of respondents express a certain opinion on a subject, the determinants "most" or “the majority” are used to designate these respondents.
- When close to all, or all respondents express a certain opinion on a subject, the determinants "vast majority" or “almost all” are used to designate these respondents.

It is to be noted that although it was not planned in the work plan, a focus group was organized ad hoc during the field mission. Information from this data collection activity feeds into some sub-sections of the report.

### **Field visits**

As mentioned above, on-site visits to the three (3) capitals, five (5) municipalities and three (3) MTPA core zone areas were carried-out to complement and validate the secondary sources of information and to conduct interviews with field staff. Over the course of a two-week mission in the region, significant time has been spent in and around the PA to visit both PA staff and relevant communities and local partners to complement to interviews with officials in capitals.

### **Mission itinerary proposal**

The following mission itinerary details on a day by day basis all activities that have taken place during the field visit:

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Day 1  | (February 6 <sup>th</sup> 2012) Arrival in Guatemala City   |
| Day 2  | Guatemala City: Interviews with authorities   |
| Day 3  | Guatemala City: Interviews with authorities. Trip to Esquipulas   |
| Day 4  | Esquipulas, Santa Fe & Ocotepeque: Interviews – Trifinio project and national authorities                   |
| Day 5  | Esquipulas & Santa Rosa de Copan: Interviews – Trifinio project and national authorities                    |
| Day 6  | Visit to the Guatemalan zone & the Honduran zone of MTPA  |
| Day 7  | Visit to the El Salvadorian zone of the MTPA, including core zone. Trip to San Salvador                     |
| Day 8  | San Salvador: Interviews with the Trinational Executive Secretariat and the Trinational Administrative Unit |
| Day 9  | San Salvador: Interviews with national authorities and IDB staff. Trip to Tegucigalpa.                      |
| Day 10 | Tegucigalpa: Interviews with national authorities and   |
| Day 11 | Tegucigalpa: Interviews with IDB staff  |
| Day 12 | Return to Canada.   |

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<sup>14</sup> When referring to the persons interviewed, the term “interviewee” or “respondent” are used.

Due to time constraints and transport factors, the following municipalities, areas and biological corridors have *not* been visited: Concepción las Minas (GUA), Volcán Quetzaltepeque (GUA), Bosque San Diego La Barra (ES) and El Pital (HON).

### **Triangulation**

No one source of information has been utilized to assess or analyze any aspect of the Integrated Management of the MTPA Project. In order to ensure that information was collected and crosschecked by a variety of informants, data triangulation (i.e. confirmation from multiple sources) has served as a key tool to verify and confirm the information on hand. The various data collection methods are used in a complementary manner during the analysis and reporting phase that followed the February mission to the field.

## **3.4 Evaluation Constraints & Limits**

As stated above, the methodological coverage of the evaluation – in terms of assessing biological data and changes – is limited to secondary sources and comments made by respondents. The consultant has not undertaken new scientific observation in the field<sup>15</sup>. Along similar lines, the assessment of any impacts of the project has been limited; as such changes are expected to be observable some time after the end of the project, which has not yet emerged in the present case (the project ended December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011). This means that Goal-level indicators are not assessed in depth. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that this evaluation is not a financial audit. Therefore, only a limited assessment of cost-effectiveness is undertaken.

The main evaluation limits come from time and budget constraints. The Integrated Management of the MTPA Project is comprised of many components and although it was a relatively short project in time, it was built and developed on the basis of many expected results. It is a complex, multi-actor and time-consuming project to evaluate in a short period of time and with the limited financial resources.

This is why the work plan submitted to and approved by the IDB clearly defined the scope of the evaluation to render the process realistic and feasible. As mentioned in the approved work plan itself, it has become the road map for the mandate and the consultant has followed it rigorously. The constraints described in the work plan affected the different lines of inquiry. For example, the list of documents to be reviewed presented in the work plan has guided the document review but time and budget allocated to this task has not permitted the in-depth assessment of all listed documents. Such was the case for the final studies conducted through consultation processes during the projects, some of which yielded documents of more than a 1500 pages. Such documents were reviewed but not analyzed in depth.

The same can be said about the list of persons to interview, which was presented suggestively. However, mission planning and time maximization during the field visit has permitted quite good coverage of the work plan list. With such a limited timeframe, the consultant was dependent on the assistance of key locally-based stakeholders for arrangement of interviews for the field mission. This support has been provided and was efficient. Also, some follow up telephone or Skype interviews were conducted after the mission to make sure as many interviews were conducted as possible.

In addition, the normal evaluation constraints have remained: stakeholders' willingness to provide relevant and honest information is an assumption and can limit effective evaluation. Triangulation can mitigate this aspect but not remove it. The consultant endeavored to generate buy-in from involved stakeholders to participate in the interview processes.

The GEF based rating of the project is a requirement of the TORs. To the extent that data are available for each of criteria described in the work plan, all aspects of the Project have been assessed against the criteria using the proposed

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<sup>15</sup> Scientific observation and monitoring activities are some of the main objectives of the Project. The consultant was not mandated to conduct such activities.

scale. This process has led to subjective judgment and was highly dependent on the availability, quality and validity of the secondary data collected and triangulated.

The following section presents the findings of the final evaluation.

## 4. Findings

Before starting this main section of the evaluation report, it is important to reiterate the fact that the MTPA Project was a complex and wide scoping initiative that had ambitious objectives in terms of regional institutional structure strengthening. The political and diplomatic issues involved in the implementation of the Project are quite extensive taking into consideration the fact that such an initiative – managing a PA trinationally – is unique. Supporting the development of a regional management body involving three countries each with their interests and political agendas was ambitious, but at the same it was an endeavor that has borne fruit and is noteworthy.

### 4.1 Relevance

Relevance is linked to the alignment of the project *design* with the regional, national and local realities in addition to being closely linked to the funder's and executor's policies and priorities.

#### 4.1.1 Project Design's Alignment with Countries' Environmental and Biodiversity Conservation Policies and Priorities

In general terms, the project *is* aligned with countries' environmental and biodiversity conservation policies and priorities.

Data shows that the project is clearly embedded in the protected area's trinational history. Among other documents, the project document and the MTE both mention that in 1987, an agreement was signed between the three countries (through each country's vice-president) to create the MTPA and that in addition to the signing of the Treaty for the Execution of the Trifinio Plan, the three Central American Presidents agreed to promote the construction of the MBC by interconnecting the protected natural areas of each country to conserve biological diversity as a basic and strategic element for maintaining sustainable production on a regional scale. Working trinationally around environmental issues was considered a way to pacify the region. Hence, national environmental and resource management policies are linked to the themes of the project for historical reasons.

In environmental terms, the PA is an important source of water for the three countries. About half of respondents interviewed mentioned that this is all the more true for El Salvador. According to the project document<sup>16</sup>, in addition to providing the needed hydro power to generate hydro-electricity for the para-public enterprises in El Salvador, the country's capital, San Salvador, is provided with 174 million cubic meters of fresh water by the Montecristo's rivers for the population's annual consumption. Other environmental services are provided by the MTPA to all three countries, such as natural disaster vulnerability reduction (because of the MTPA intact forest cover). These are some of the many examples of the environmental services the MTPA brings to the surrounding population which links the project's design to the involved countries priorities.

#### 4.1.2 Local Stakeholder Involvement

The majority of *institutional* interviewees mentioned having been involved in the project design activities (information verified with document and agreement review) and being satisfied with their participation. However, almost all interviewees pointed to the fact that the *communities* were not consulted in the project design phase which made the latter less adapted to the PA surrounding municipal economic and political realities. However, many representatives from the community groups had participated in the development of the IMP.

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<sup>16</sup> TRINATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTED AREAS. 2006. *Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area*. RS-X1016. Project document non reimbursable operation financed with GEF resources. P.3

Also, communities, municipalities and NGOs were not, *at first*<sup>17</sup>, represented in the institutional infrastructure of the project. All activities relied on the national institutional infrastructures combined into the trinational one. In agreement with the content of the MTE, this led many respondents to state that the project design was much too ambitious and to some extent unrealistic considering the trinational political context of the project – although the majority had mentioned having being involved in the project design phase.

Information collected through all lines of inquiry demonstrates that more than the lack of participation of local communities in the design process and implementation of the Project, the main challenge was the population's sensitization to the importance of the Project. Even basic explanations on the Project's components and objectives have been considered minimal. This was regarded by many respondents as one of the main issue in terms of local stakeholder involvement, e.g.: stimulate buy-in in the Project.

A final remark concerns indigenous participation in the Project design and implementation: data shows that in the region, there are no indigenous *movements*. Although people might be of native roots, they do not consider themselves indigenous (it is not well seen to do so), and hence, there were no indigenous components in the project. This information is confirmed by the project document.

#### **4.1.3 Project Design Alignment with GEF's Policies and Priorities in the Region**

Many sources of information, including interviews and the agreement signed between Project stakeholders and the IDB point to the fact that the Project's design is aligned with the GEF's policies and priorities in the region, in particular, the strategic priority BD-1: Catalyzing the Sustainability of Protected Areas<sup>18</sup>. The project was designed to contribute to:

- (i) strengthen capacities for managing a trinational protected area;
- (ii) promote formal involvement of local communities;
- (iii) reduce the threats to the biodiversity;
- (iv) develop and implement innovative sustainable financing mechanisms; and
- (v) foster participation of private landowners<sup>19</sup>.

These five ways of contributing to the biodiversity and other components of the project's design (fund establishment) are linked to three of the main GEF prioritized activities in the strategic priority 1:

- 1) Improve Sustainable Financing of Protected Area Systems;
- 2) Expand Marine and Terrestrial Ecosystem Representation; and
- 3) Improve Management Effectiveness of Existing Protected Areas<sup>20</sup>.

#### **4.1.4 Project Design Alignment with IDB's Policies and Priorities in the Region**

Interviews, document review and the agreement signed between all stakeholders (including the IDB) show that the project design is aligned with the IDB's policies and priorities in the region. The IDB's objectives in the region are to

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<sup>17</sup> Please see sub-section 5.2 on effectiveness, activity 1. b. for information on integration of new actors from the community level and local governments and their importance in the project's implementation.

<sup>18</sup> GEF. *GEF Biodiversity Strategy*. <http://www.thegef.org/gef/BIO-strategy>.

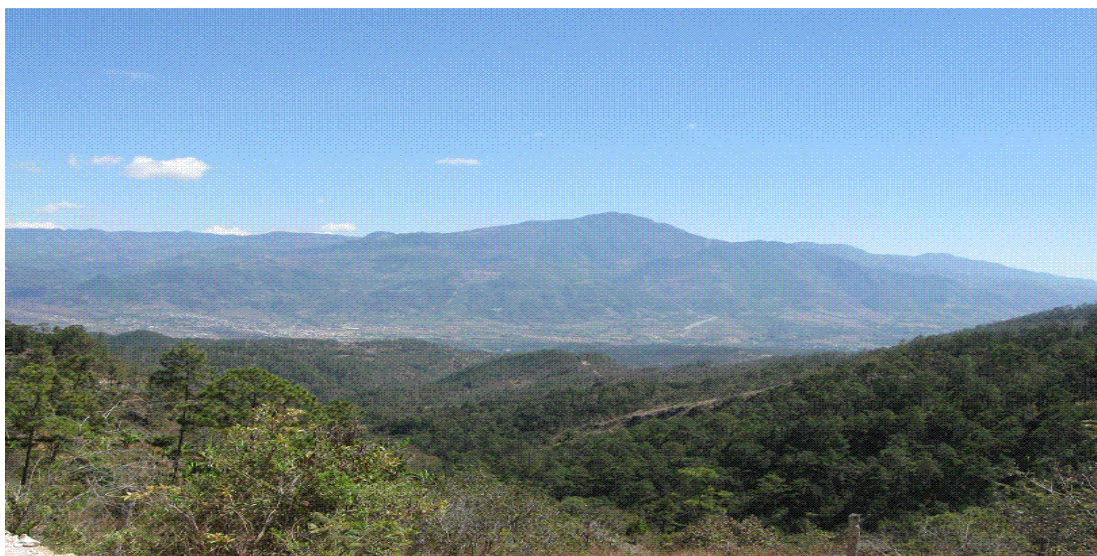
It is important to reiterate the fact that what is being referred to in the present section is the project design. For discussion on the project's sustainability, please see sub-sections below.

<sup>19</sup> TRINATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTED AREAS. 2006. *Integrated Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area*. RS-X1016. Project document non reimbursable operation financed with GEF resources. P.2

<sup>20</sup> GEF. *GEF Biodiversity Strategy*. <http://www.thegef.org/gef/BIO-strategy>.



strengthen regional environmental institutions and harmonize regulatory frameworks. In addition, promoting the sustainable management of regional public environmental goods and services is a priority. This links to the project's structure and this alignment is confirmed by many interviewees.



*(Picture above: A view from the core zone of the MTPA, Honduras)*

#### **4.1.5 Project Design Contribution to the Achievement of the Development Outcomes**

As mentioned, the project's objective was considered much too ambitious by many, if not all respondents. In addition, the logframe indicators were not regarded as Simple, Manageable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART). Technically speaking they are not simple because they are closer to a mix of targets and deliverables dates than real M&E indicators. They were considered unachievable by many. To give a concrete meaningful example, because of factual misunderstanding that occurred at the very beginning concerning the geographic size of the core zone of the MTPA, the idea of amplifying or even maintaining the PA to the estimated 2006 size (13,923.86 ha) is now considered unachievable because its size is presently 5,996.3 ha. One respondent even defined this as being an irresponsible and dangerous target to set considering the trinational political context.

In addition, the fact that after the MTE, seven indicators were modified and four deleted – this meaning all relevant stakeholders agreed with the proposed changes<sup>21</sup> – also points out to the fact that there were some challenges with the original logframe. *It is to be noted that in the present final evaluation, the modified indicators from the 2011 PIR, derived from the suggestions made by the MTE are used.*

It was also noticed by some respondents that the logframe's outcome indicators were not well articulated with the goal indicators. The latter are not considered impact results indicators but rather the expected products the consultancies were to develop which were to eventually become the baseline and monitoring tools for the project and the management of the MTPA.

Still concerning M&E methodology, it is to be noted that the indicators in the EAT report are different than the ones in the project's logframe although specific objectives and activities are the same—which permits the use of the information in the document in the present report. This situation is the results of changes made to the EAT's plan of action in 2008. These changes were approved to specifically follow the EAT's activities.

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<sup>21</sup> Although, a part from a quick reference document concerning the MTE general recommendations and the 2011 PIR which uses the new modified indicators and leaves out the deleted, no document exists proving that these changes were officially approved.

As a final point to this sub-section, it is considered by almost all respondents that during the design phase, not enough risk analysis and assessment were conducted. The main and not the least meaningful example explaining this position taken by respondents concerns the political crisis in Honduras in 2009: no one institution was prepared for such an event. The political instability risk was not mentioned in the project document, the project's executive summary or in any other project design document as a risk and hence, no mitigation strategies were designed for such risks. All stakeholders agree that this was one of the greatest challenges to the project. Communications between involved institutions were reduced to a minimum during the political crisis, including from the desk of the IDB.

## **4.2 Effectiveness**

### ***Preliminary notes***

Because of the time proximity of the MTE with the present final evaluation, many issues have already been dealt with in the former but are mentioned again in the latter. Efforts have been made to focus on new factors and changes that occurred since the MTE but it was sometimes inevitable to discuss certain issues already mentioned in the MTE as the final evaluation is to cover the whole project and not only the last years of its implementation.

The effectiveness sub-section includes GEF scoring since it is mainly comprised of the indicators from the logframe of which it is required to use the GEF scale. Thus, for every activity, a table recapitulating GEF scores for each indicator from the MTE, PIR<sup>22</sup> 2010 and 2011 and the final evaluation presents the evolution of the scores of the project.

This sub-section builds on the analysis of the logframe from the ground up, meaning it starts with the assessment of the activities to culminate into the assessment of the goal and purpose. This report structure was chosen because it simplifies the understanding of the evaluation analysis process.

### **Case study box 1** **An Unexpected Result: UNESCO MAB**

#### **UNESCO MAB**

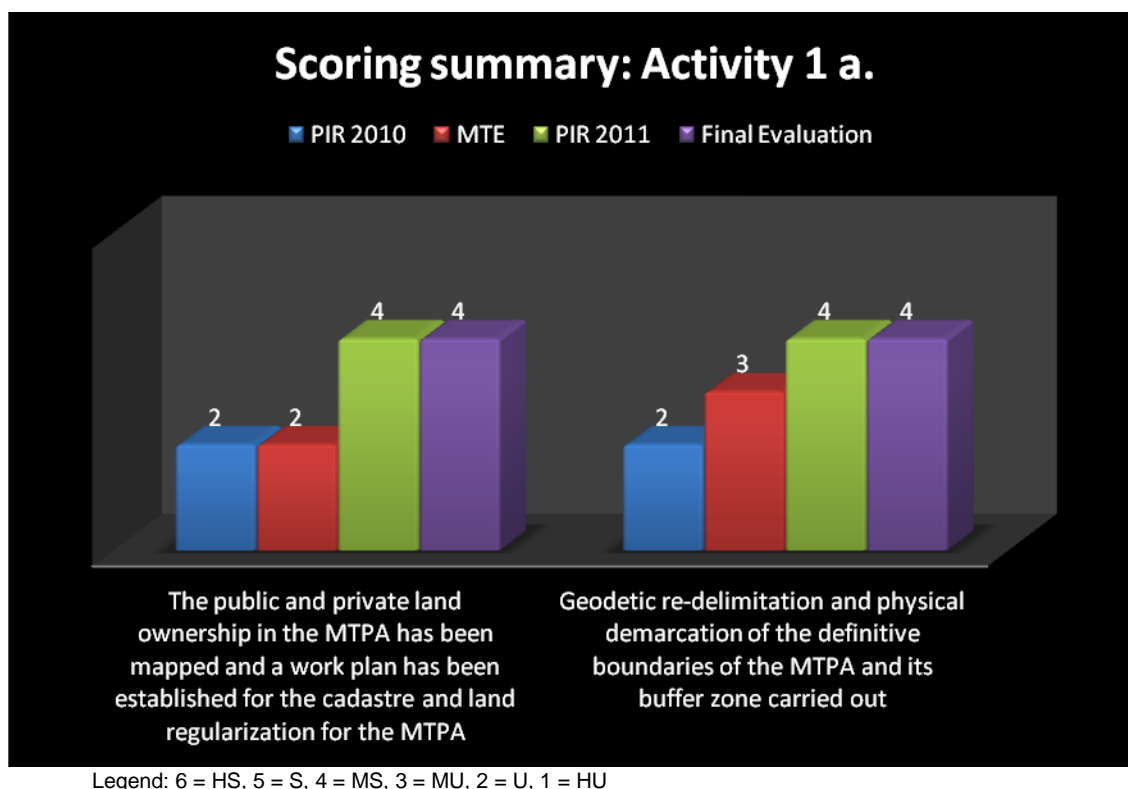
Before presenting findings on each activity, it is relevant to discuss an unexpected result the MTPA project has contributed to: The Trifinio region being named by UNESCO "Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve." This new context had a positive impact on the image the MTPA projected. The idea of having the MTPA added as a Biosphere Reserves in the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme had been circulating since the 1990's. Data shows that the project was a good context to elaborate the proposal and to provide evidence that a good foundation was being laid, which positively affected its acceptance. This gives the three countries a common goal and gives them an incentive to collaborate and work trinationally.

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<sup>22</sup> It is to be noted that the PIRs were developed internally by the IDB with information and input from the project manager as well as the whole Trifinio team and only scored the activities and not each indicator. Also, the 2009 PIR did not score the any activity.

#### 4.2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: Legal, territorial and institutional consolidation of the MTPA<sup>23</sup>

Activity 1. a: Regularization of land ownership and the redelimitation and demarcation of boundaries of the MTPA



- *The public and private land ownership in the MTPA has been mapped and a work plan has been established for the cadastre and land regularization for the MTPA*

It should be noted that this first indicator has been modified after the MTE suggested changes. The original indicator stated: Public and private land ownership in the MTPA has been mapped by cadastre and regularized by the end of the Project. The main reason why the changes were proposed by the MTE and apparently accepted by all stakeholders was that the cadastre process was deemed impossible to achieve, mainly because it was too expensive. Also, information collected demonstrates that such a process should not be conducted through an international development project but by the countries themselves, through hard line political decisions. Indeed, concerning the issues around the implementation of a cadastre process in the MTPA project, many respondents support the following MTE findings and explanations:

- Relevant legal institutions that should have taken care of the cadastre were not involved (e.g.: the *Registro de Información Catastral* (RIC) for Guatemala was not involved because the MTPA is not a priority for them);
- Private owners do not all have legal proof that they own the lands they occupy (mostly in Guatemala and Honduras);

<sup>23</sup> In the report, indicator modifications and deletion proposed by the MTE and accepted by stakeholders are used instead of original version of the logframe.



- Prejudices about the cadastre work and what it represented in the owners mind: higher taxes, and eventually, expropriation; and
- Simple lack of funds and time.

Document review (PIRs, EAT final report, MTE) and interviews show that all these factors, coupled with a lack of sensitization of the population of what the cadastre process was about, created resistance from the local population in terms of the completion of a legally enforced full cadastre of the MTPA. El Salvador already had its part of the MTPA mapped by cadastre. For the rest of the MTPA, a land “census” has been conducted.

The EAT final report specifies that the proposal for the MTPA core zone legal perimeter and zoning, achieved through a land census of the area and not a cadastre, was agreed upon and that a consensus was reached concerning the document among the territorial coordinators. However, the document still needs to be approved by the CTAP and the legal version of the document is still pending. Some respondents mentioned they did not fully agree with the content of the report. According to the final EAT report, the land census covers 6,773.21 ha in Guatemala and Honduras (in both core and buffer zones). The 2011 PIR mentions that the EAT and UMT’s efforts have been concentrated on the core zone of the MTPA. The land census was developed based on amongst other sources, satellite pictures obtained through a Panamanian company. *No work plan has been established for the cadastre and land regularization for the MTPA.*

### Case study box 2

#### The Mesoamerican Network of the Associations of Private Natural Reserves

##### The Mesoamerican Network of the Associations of Private Natural Reserves

The association existed before the project but its organization around the MTPA has been put together with the impulse of the MTPA project. It now regroups 32 natural reserves in the trinational region. A natural reserve mapping process of private lands was put together in the context of the project to support the activities. During the process – comprised of workshops, sensitization initiatives, and data collection procedures – the association established with the participating private owners how many hectares they had in terms of natural reserves 3,141.96 ha. Of these lands represented natural reserves. With this mapping process were developed 4 master plans for the owners.

From the core and buffer zones not distinguished, the 121 private owners that participated represented 5,807 ha.:

- Guatemala, 44 owners, 1 972.3 ha.;
- El Salvador, 55 owners, 2 006.6 ha.,
- Honduras, 22 owners, 1 828.5 ha.

- *Geodetic redelimitation and physical demarcation of the definitive boundaries of the MTPA and its buffer zone carried out by the end of the Project.*

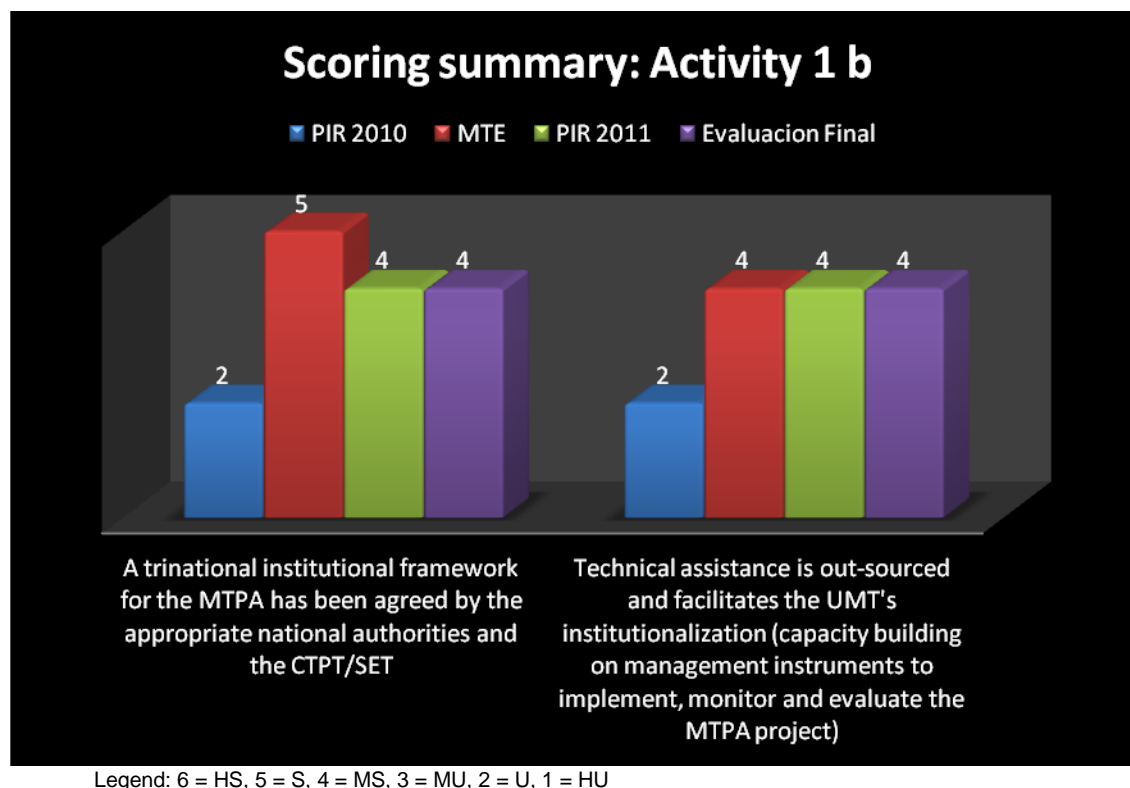
Geodesic redelimitation has been carried out. However, a few respondents mentioned it was not a full success. Concerning the physical demarcation of the definitive boundaries of the MTPA core zone, in Guatemala and Honduras, similar challenges as the ones encountered with the activities of the first indicator have been noted, that is, resistance from the population to mark the limits on their lands. To avoid the problem, signs have been put in place to delimit the core zone (*see picture on the right*).

As for the buffer zone, the UMT and the SET have generated proposals that have been submitted to each national authority (National Forrestral and PA Conservation and Development Institute - *Instituto Nacional de Conservación y Desarrollo Forestal, Áreas Protegidas y Vida Silvestre* (ICF) and



National Council for Protected Areas - *Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegida* CONAP for Honduras and Guatemala, respectively) for its approval.

**Activity 1. b: Consolidation and implementation of the trinational legal and institutional framework for participatory management of the MTPA.**



- *A trinational institutional framework for the MTPA has been agreed by the appropriate national authorities and the CTPT/SET*

*This indicator is one of the most important of the project. The analysis below stresses the important qualitative findings and nuances the evaluation has led to develop.*

Before starting this analysis, it is important to understand what is meant by the term ‘institutional framework’ in the context of this evaluation. Using the IMP as a basis and elements from a GEF document (International Water: Review of Legal and Institutional Frameworks<sup>24</sup>) which defines what institutional framework, the present report utilizes the concept in the following manner; as being composed of trinationally defined:

- Legal Basis (i.e. is it based on a Treaty, Memorandum of Understanding etc.);
- Member States (what states are parties to the agreement, are there observer states or groups);
- Geographical Scope (what is covered within the framework);
- Legal Personality (what is the body that implements the framework);
- Functions (what does the framework seek to do);
- Organizational Structure (what are the institutional designs and how do they interact);
- Decision Making (how are decisions within the institution made);

<sup>24</sup> UNDP – GEF. April 5th 2011. *International Water: Review of Legal and Institutional Frameworks*. 309 p.

- Data Information Sharing, Exchange, and Harmonization (how do the countries share and exchange data with respect to the shared waters);
- Funding and Financing (how are operational costs paid for in both the long and short term);
- Benefit Sharing (how are the benefits of the framework distributed among members); and
- Participation and the Role of Multiple Stakeholders (how are civil society, youth and private sector groups engaged).

### **Institutions (including the EAT)**

As already mentioned, the sole fact that the three countries are collaborating extensively in the management of the MTPA is a structure institutional framework is result that all respondents recognize. However, the MTE mentions, the trinational institutional framework of the MTPA existed before the project started. According to the 2011 PIR, interviews and field observation, in terms of framework, things have remained similar to what they were at the beginning of the project. Many respondents have pointed to the fact that the institutional framework of the MTPA is quite heavy. It is important to consider that some of the issues identified by the MTE concerning overlap of responsibilities and roles of some institutions have been partly resolved since the first evaluation exercise. For example, all sources of data show that because of the many changes that occurred after the MTE – amongst others, changes in personnel – the majority of conflicts between the EAT and the UMT have been settled. Some of these changes, notably the changes of the TORs of the EAT, mentioned above, have created confusion amongst a few involved stakeholders. Lack in clear role and responsibility definition for every institution concerned has been pointed to by many respondents as an obstacle to good and efficient management of the project.

Some respondents have mentioned that the CTPT/SET still lacks the needed institutionalization to give the right impulse to the full Plan Trifinio structure. Data shows that the sustainability of the latter depends on the CTPT/SET's strategic guidance and on the operative coordination of the UMT. However, although there exists a solid institutional framework, field mission observation and interviews confirm that officially, the UMT is presently comprised of one individual. Also, some respondents would have liked for the CTPT/SET to have been more active during the project implementation.

The idea of contracting a private company to act as the EAT was regarded as a positive management decision by about half of the respondents. The latter consider that the UMT, the CTPT/SET and the CTAP are and always will be under the influence of political powers. For the execution of the MTPA project, the involvement of an objective private company was seen as a counter-balance to the complex trinational political context.

For the other half, either they disprove having international firms playing the role the EAT did in the project – the region has sufficient capacity to provide this type of services and international firms do not understand well the regional political context – either the whole idea of involving a private entity in the project is rejected. Indeed, for a few respondents, the conflicts raised by the MTE were partly caused by the presence of the EAT. Others mention that the institutional knowledge was lost once the private firm ended its contract because it was its representatives who gained much of the knowledge and developed much of the key products and not the trinational stakeholders.

Some respondents would have preferred to have worked with the UMT and/or the CTPT/SET but instead have dealt invariably with the EAT. However, many, if not all interviewees describe staff turnover and personal conflicts as the main cause of some institutional challenges during the project implementation and not only the presence of a private entity in the structure – this information is supported by the MTE and other documents such as the PIRs.

### **Decentralization**

Some new actors have started to emerge as part of the institutional structure that is bringing some management aspects closer to the ground. This can be seen with the materialization of the Association of Private Natural Reserves (herein referred to as the Association; as described in the case study box 2 above) and other such institutions. It is evident that the idea of decentralizing the regional management of the MTPA is evolving. Key sources make the case for the use of the appropriate authorities in each particular context. Decentralization should hence become a big issue

and a successful institutional framework would also include the municipalities and the NGO alliances. The UMT's links with the communities is also working through these local organized institutions.

At the beginning of the project, a National Stakeholder Committee was to be created to facilitate local level participation in the project implementation. As the 2011 PIR mentions: "...the National Stakeholder Committee ha[s] not been functional<sup>25</sup>..." However, a complementary solution was chosen to replace the National Stakeholder Committee: in addition to supporting the implementation of the Association, the project backed the institutionalization of the *Allianza*, a cluster of NGOs from the three countries, the Trinational *Mancomunidad* (herein referred to as the *Manco*), regrouping municipalities from the three countries, and the *Camera de Turismo Sostenible*, trinational sustainable tourism linked institution. A succinct description of the two first institutions is presented below:

- The *Allianza*: 3 NGOs in El Salvador, 5 NGOs in Guatemala and 2 NGOs in Honduras.
- The *Manco* regrouping municipalities<sup>26</sup> from: Noriente, Copan Chorti and Lago Guija in Guatemala; Amvas in Honduras; and Trifinio and Cayacuanca in El Salvador. It was established through the Plan Trifinio between 2004-2007 (with the PT-CARL project and the MTPA project). In 2008, it implemented its first project.

Respondents from these institutions have noted their desire to build links with one another and with the UMT. The *Manco* aims to involve one of their representatives directly in the UMT and bring some project activities to the municipal level.

### **Successes and perceived fluctuations in trinational coordination and collaboration**

The vast majority of respondents stated and the evaluation consultant would agree that the fact that the three countries are working trinationally is a significant result of the project. The fact that ICF, MARN and CONAP are working together in the CTAP is strength of the Project and cannot be minimized.

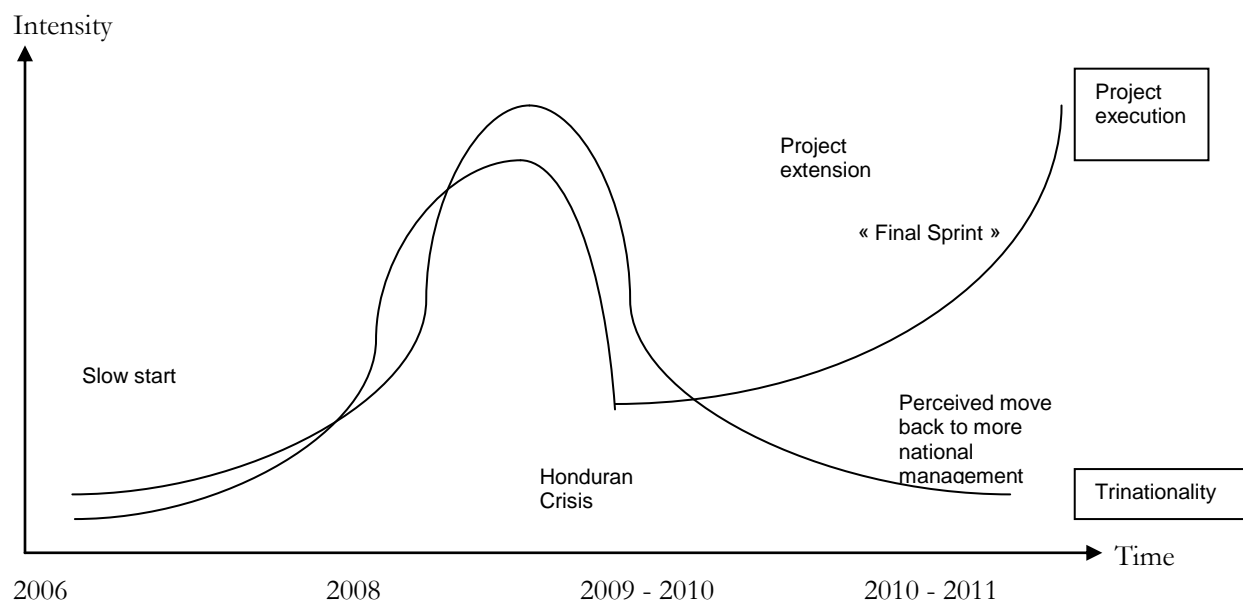
However, during many interviews and through document review, it has been noted that in the last two years, the regional management idea has shifted. As the 2011 PIR notes: "The [three countries] continue to work in a coordinated trinational manner but visualize [the MTPA] as 3 different protected areas, subject to each nation's laws." Although the three countries are sometimes referred to as the "northern cone", a respondent mentions that nationalism is in the way of regionalization. Another goes further in that direction saying each country will continue to manage its own section of the MTPA. The idea of managing regionally the MTPA came from the IDB. It was never the countries' desire to work this way. Only consulting comities would be accepted. This is more of a radical view and is not shared by many respondents but it shows the issues at hand and states what some have defined in other words. Data suggests that the trinational management concept has experienced ebbs and flows. At different times, certain countries were more or less involved in trinational coordination in the project. After a slow start to project execution, evidence suggests that the trinationality of MTPA management took shape, culminating just before the Honduran political crisis. However, just as regionalization was perhaps starting to concretize, stakeholders note that political and economic interests were factors in moves towards nationalism. Even as implementation activities accelerated in the project last year, data suggests that execution was in fact national rather than trinational. It should be noted though that outside impetus, such as the fact that the area is now a UNESCO MAB site, as well as other ongoing projects in the region, serve to facilitate continued trinational coordination. The following figure attempts to demonstrate this perceived fluctuation.

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<sup>25</sup> BID /GEF. *Project Implementation report*, 2011, p. 5

<sup>26</sup> It is to be noted that during the focus group, two participants out of the seven present knew about the *Manco*.

**Figure 4**  
The bell shaped project execution process



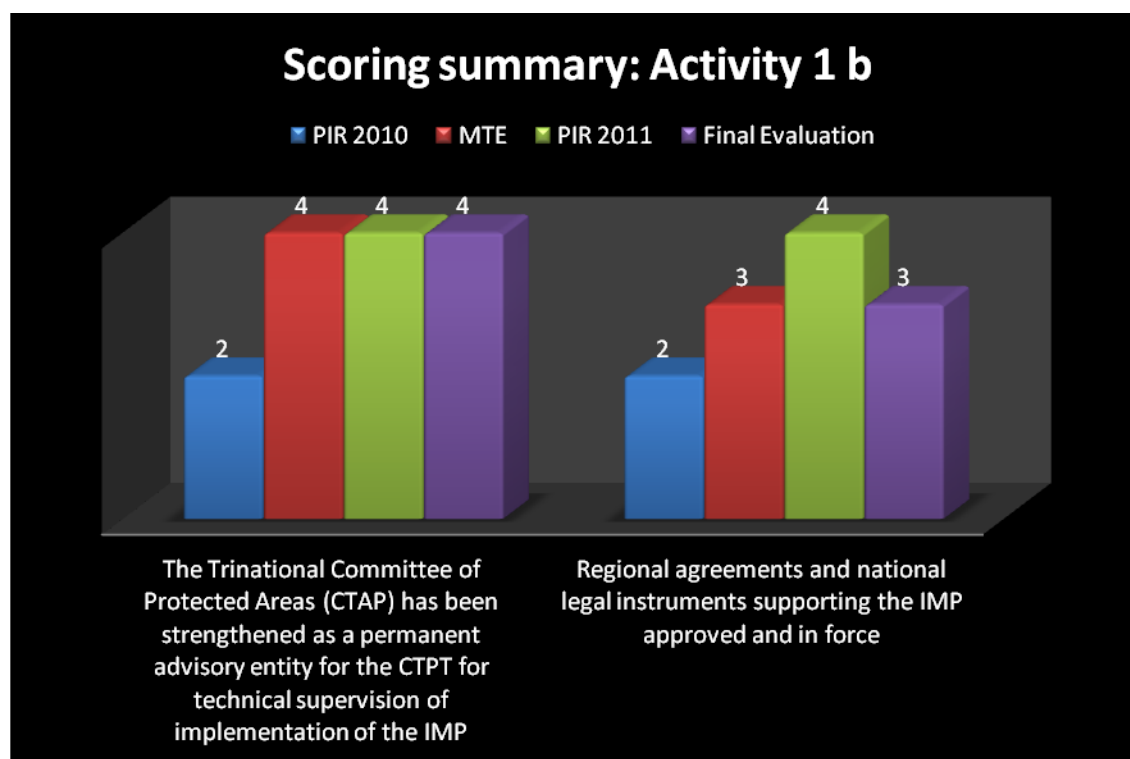
- *Technical assistance is out-sourced and facilitates the UMT's institutionalization (capacity building on management instruments to implement, monitor and evaluate the MTPA project)*

It is important to note that this indicator was changed in response to suggestions made by the MTE. The initial indicator read: "The co-management contract for the Trinational Management Unit fully operational." In reference to this indicator, data shows that the agreement signed by one of the three countries was a coordination and not co-management agreement. This affected the whole concept of regional management of the MTPA and illustrates the reticence of some stakeholders involved to fully participate in the project as it was originally designed, e.g. managing the PA trinationally. It also explains why changes were made to the indicator.

Considering the adjustments made to the indicators, as mentioned above, the out-sourcing of the technical assistance to support the institutionalization of the UMT was at certain times during project implementation not well received by stakeholders. This created a context of frustration and conflicts between the two entities. After the adjustments made to ease tensions between UMT and EAT (in 2010-2011) were completed, the UMT remained an important institutional player in the project execution. As the 2010 PIR clearly states, the UMT: "...basically functions as a coordination and oversight office to the activities being carried out in the MTPA<sup>27</sup>." However, again, the UMT is at the present time represented by one person and information collected demonstrates that although the capacity to implement the *MTPA project* was quite good, its capacity to monitor and evaluate the project faced and still faces many challenges (please see analysis of activity 4 a. below). Again, the basis for further strengthening and continued functioning of the UMT is in place, and the project contributed to this. It is worth noting that the UMT has renewed its co-management agreements with the ICF in Honduras and CONAP in Guatemala in 2011.

<sup>27</sup> BID /GEF. *Project implementation report*, 2011, p. 7





Legend: 6 = HS, 5 = S, 4 = MS, 3 = MU, 2 = U, 1 = HU

- *CTAP has been strengthened as a permanent advisory entity for the CTPT for technical supervision of implementation of the IMP*

Data shows CTAP's members meet and then coordinate national technical activities under UMT's leadership. Although CTAP is considered as apolitical, the committee is a place where divergence between the three countries' visions can be most observed. With the support of the EAT, Annual Operative Plans have been prepared and negotiated directly with CTAP.

Evidence collected points to the fact that at the beginning of the project, the CTAP's procedures were complicated and not efficient. Amending and approving documents was very time consuming and did not yield many results.

It is worth noting that the unexpected result of the Trifinio region named by UNESCO "Trifinio Fraternidad Biosphere Reserve - UNESCO" is putting pressure on the countries to organize things trinationally. Thus CTAP is moving forward to search for new projects and members are putting aside political and economic differences and trying to manage the PA regionally, to the extent possible. However, political pressure is also coming from traditional national political institutions: for example, in August 2010, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Guatemala wrote an official letter to the Guatemalan representative of the MTPA project to explain that some of the project activities were trespassing the sovereignty limits the country was willing to legally convey to international cooperation. Themes related to water and linked to international borders were not negotiable in the context of projects such as the MTPA and were to stay national competencies<sup>28</sup>. This situation counters efforts made by the CTAP and can work counter to productive trinational coordination.

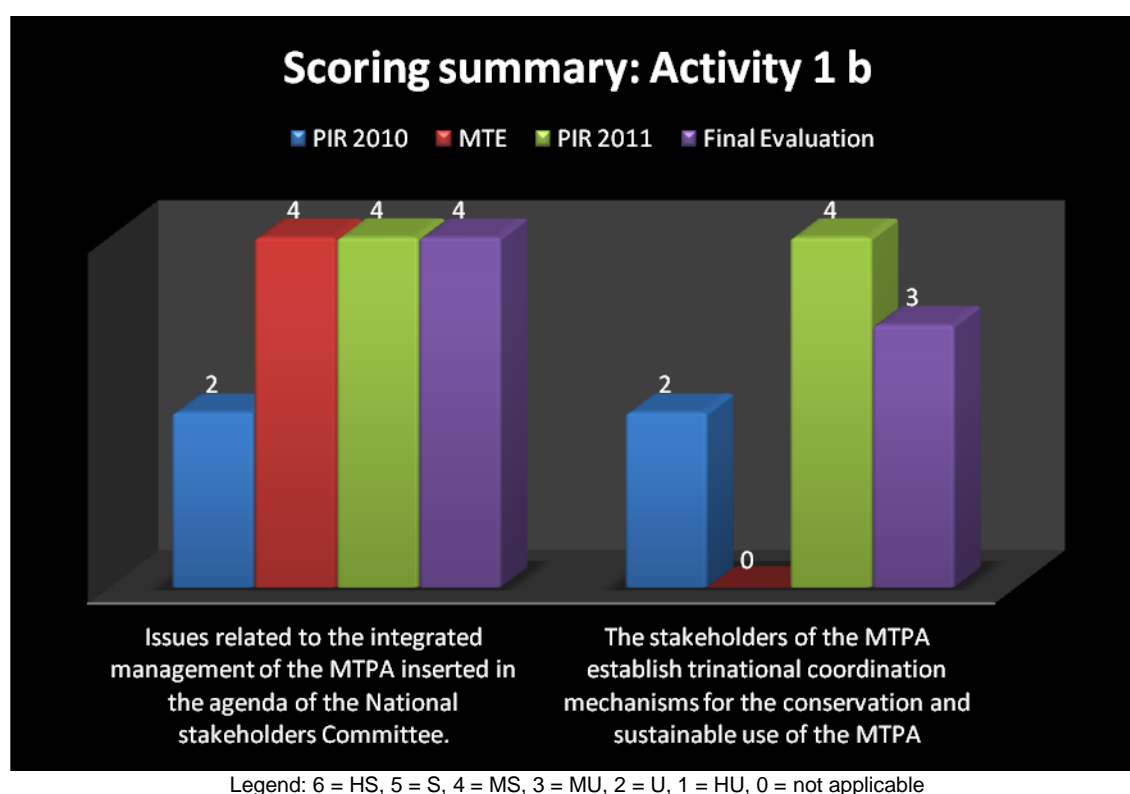
- *Regional agreements and national legal instruments supporting the IMP approved and in force*

This indicator is linked to the proceeding ones. The coordination and co-management agreements signed by the three countries directly and indirectly support the IMP implementation. However, as the MTE shows, the resolutions No.

<sup>28</sup> MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES, GUATEMALA, C. A. August 26th 2010. DIGRIB/SUAN – 14700032110. 2p.

TR 2-2004 and TR 4-2005 considered regional agreements – they delegate the CTAP as the MTPA’s project implementation institution – pre-existed the project.

As for legal issues concerning national judicial support of the IMP, evidence points to the fact that this was one of the biggest challenges in the project. Although there was a shift from the original idea of encouraging the adoption of one legal tool for the region to promoting harmonization of national legal instruments, the expected result has not been reached. Data shows that the national operative plans developed through the project do not legally connect well with the IMP.



- *Issues related to the integrated management of the MTPA inserted in the agenda of the National Stakeholders Committees.*

A National Stakeholder Committee was to be created to facilitate local level participation in project implementation. As the 2011 PIR mentions: “...the National Stakeholder Committee ha[s] not been functional<sup>29</sup>...” According to the IMP, the committee was to regroup in one instance, representatives from:

- Municipalities involved in the project;
- Organized civil society;
- Private owners;
- Educational institutions;
- PA managers from each States that would preside and organize the committee<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> BID / GEF. *Project implementation report*, 2011, p. 5

<sup>30</sup> COMISION PLAN TRIFINIO Y BANCO INTER-AMERICANO DE DESARROLLO. August 2005. *Plan de manejo integrado del área protegida trinacional Montecristo*. p. 193

However, in addition to supporting the implementation of the *Association*, the project backed the institutionalization of the *Allianza*, the Manco and the *Cámara de Turismo Sostenible*. All sources of data show that the NGO Alliance was involved in the biological corridors development pilot project (sensitization activities); the Manco, amongst other activities and products, built three environmental related policies, financed monitoring activities for water quality in the MTPA rivers, signed an agreement with a Salvadorian *Mancomunidad*, and developed a vigilance plan for the core zone of the MTPA; and the Association supported some land census activities as mentioned above.

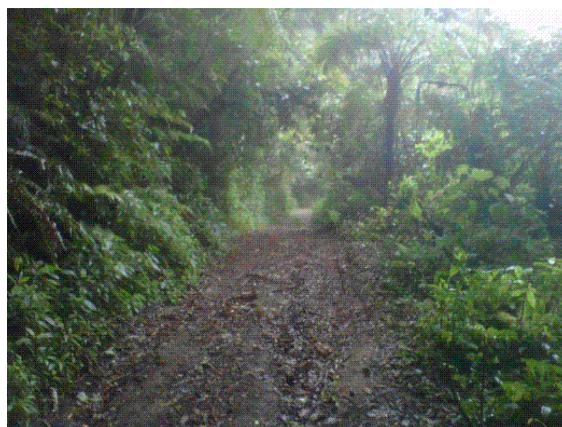
- *The stakeholders of the MTPA establish trinational coordination mechanisms for the conservation and sustainable use of the MTPA.*

This indicator is another that has been changed in response to suggestions made by the MTE. The initial indicator read: “The national stakeholders committees carry out a trinational meeting related to MTPA at least on an annual basis.” The MTE noted that there was only one local institution involved in the project at the time, the Association, which had met once. Thus, the suggestion was made to change the indicator to what it is now. In the present indicator, the words “trinational coordination mechanisms” are specified. According to Sherry Heileman & Leslie Walling, involved in the GEF project *Integrated Watershed & Coastal Areas Management in Caribbean SIDS*, a regional coordination mechanism:

- is supported by regional agreements and institutes;
- establishes an inclusive and representative regional partnership forum which meets on regular basis and provides positive recommendations which are put into action.;
- supports regional strategy development; and
- stimulates effective regional cooperation and sharing of information and lessons<sup>31</sup>.

Data suggests that based on the criteria outlined above, key aspects of the current trinational institutional structure can be considered as functioning in some capacity as coordination mechanisms, such as through the SET and CTAP. Many agree that key improvements could be brought to these trinational coordination mechanisms to enhance management of the shared area into the future. Although there are now at least 4 institutions at the local level involved in the Plan Trifinio, evidence suggests that no sustained trinational coordination mechanism *amongst* stakeholders has been established. There is will to do so among many of them, but they have only existed for short period of time and have not yet had the time to organize themselves.

In addition, in the new indicator, the words “conservation and sustainable use of the MTPA” are mentioned. In the context of the MTPA project, conservation activities are complicated by the fact that, among other challenges, some lands in the core and buffer zones are privately owned. In addition, financial and human resources are lacking to enforce conservation practices in the PA. The new actors that have emerged in the trinational institutional coordination of the MTPA, as the Association and the Manco for example, are active in implementing conservation practices, but the repercussions of their actions is still quite limited and they too lack human and financial resources. Therefore, overall, data suggests that a basis exists but challenges remain.

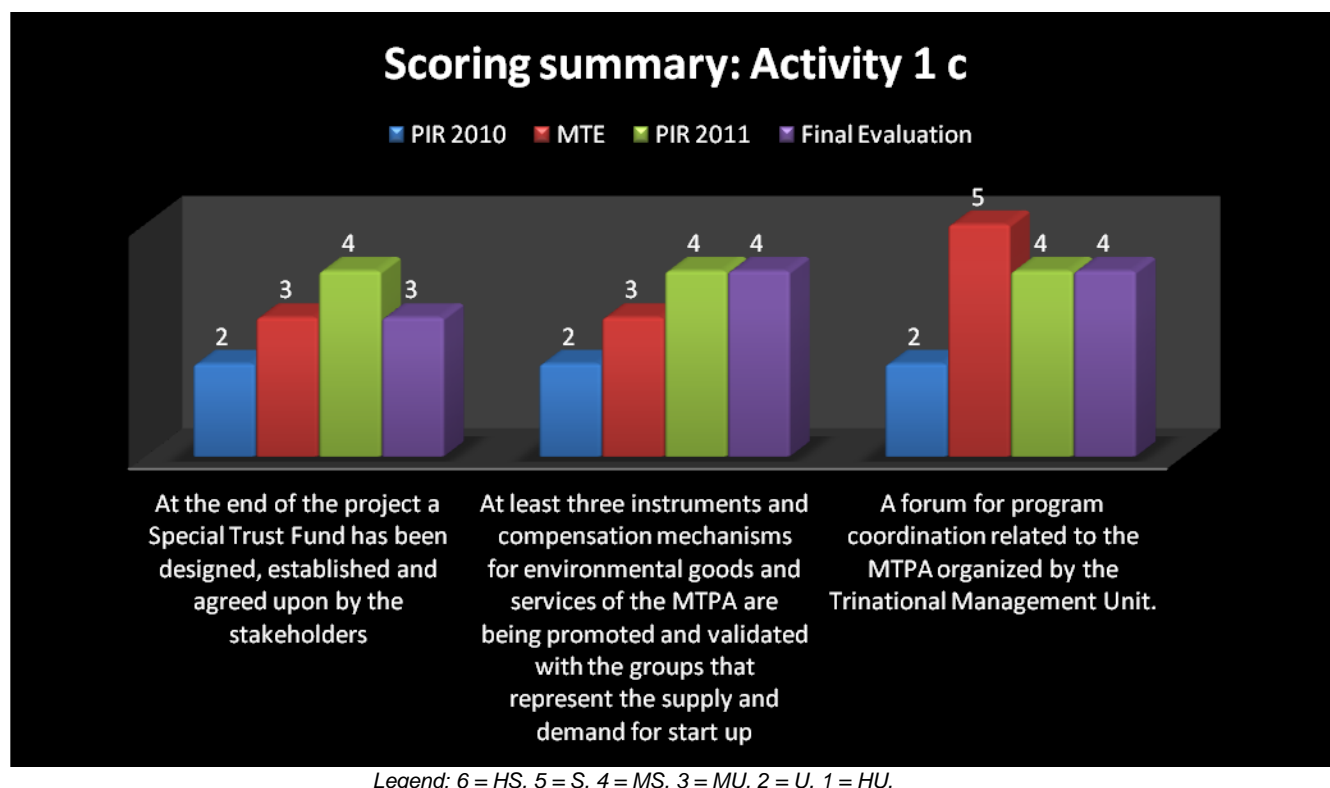


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<sup>31</sup> GEF, SHERRY HEILEMAN & LESLIE WALLING. March 2008. *Integrated Watershed & Coastal Areas Management In Caribbean SIDS Indicators Template*. Jamaica. Power Point Presentation. Slide 8.



Activity 1.c: Promotion of sustainable financing of the management of the MTPA.



The first two indicators were changed in response to the suggestions made in the MTE. Respectively, the initial indicators read: “*At the end of the second year*, a special Trust Fund is designed and established” and “Instruments and mechanisms analyzed, selected and put in place for the payment of environmental services provided by the MTPA in order to finance the recurrent operating costs of the integrated management activities, and the contributions deposited in the Special Trust Fund.”

- *At the end of the project, a Special Trust Fund has been designed, established and agreed upon by the stakeholders*

Although realized late in the project implementation, the outline and options for such a trust fund were developed through an EAT consultancy, though it is not evident that it has been agreed upon. Since 2010, many representatives from the involved institutions have pointed to the fact that the idea of establishing such a fund through the project was ambitious and not realistic. The fact that three countries are involved and that each of them have different economic interests and capacities renders the issue all the more challenging. For example, hydro-electric power is produced on the Lempa River and there is agricultural and coffee production in the buffer zone – and even in the core zone – of the MTPA, which serve to create diverging opinions on both ‘how’ and ‘by whom’ the fund should be financed.

- *At least three instruments and compensation mechanisms for environmental goods and services of the MTPA are being promoted and validated with the groups that represent the supply and demand for start up*

Evidence suggests that through the development of a strategy, compensation mechanisms for MTPA environmental goods and services were proposed to and adopted by the CTAP (and the SET, with the support from Economic Commission for the Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)). However, no mechanisms per se had been chosen at the time of the evaluation. It could be noted here that the *Manco*

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*Final Report*

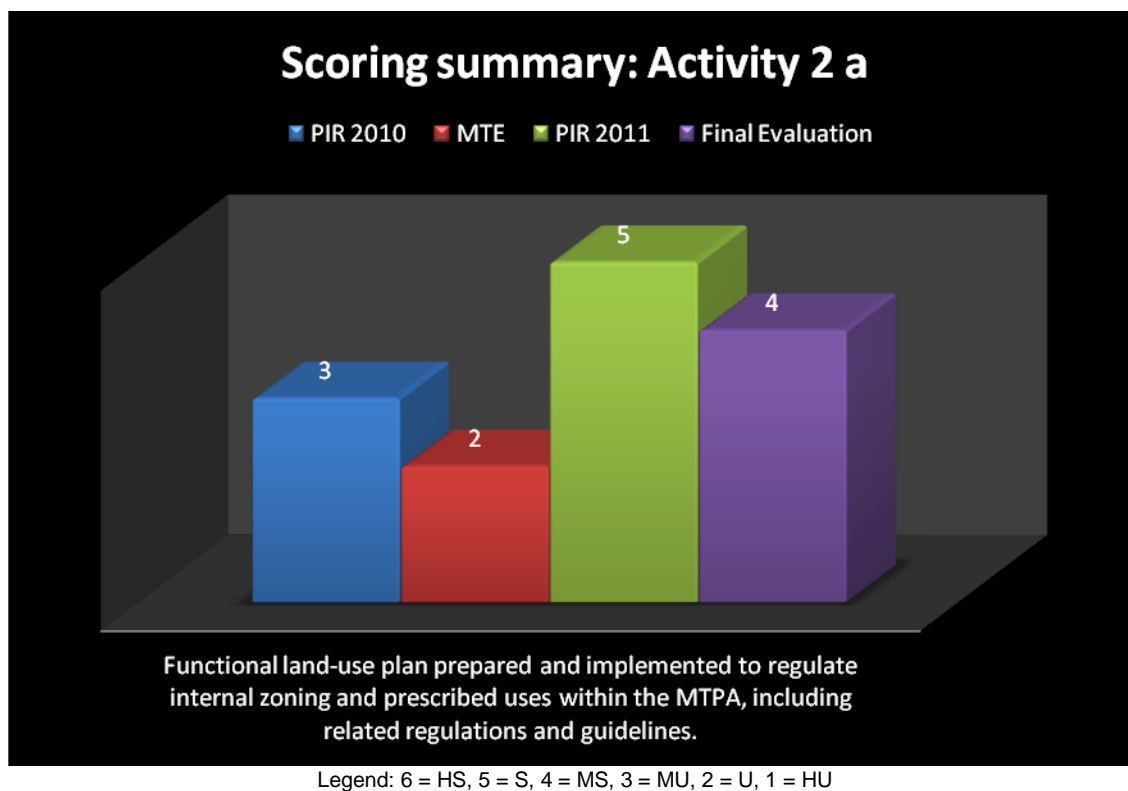
agreement with the Salvadorian *Mancomunidad* contains the initial basis of a fund which would be financed by municipal budgets.

- *A forum for program coordination related to the MTPA organized by the Trinational Management Unit.*

Data collected points to the fact that the Trinational Operative Integration Group (*Grupo de Integración Trinacional Operativo* GRITO), led by the UTT, met periodically. These forums were organized to coordinate efforts from different projects operating in the region; however, there is little evidence of any results emanating from these forums. The traditional institutional infrastructure (CTAP) is at the present time the closest to a forum that can be found for the coordination of the MTPA activities.

#### 4.2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: Integrated management of the MTPA for the conservation of biodiversity

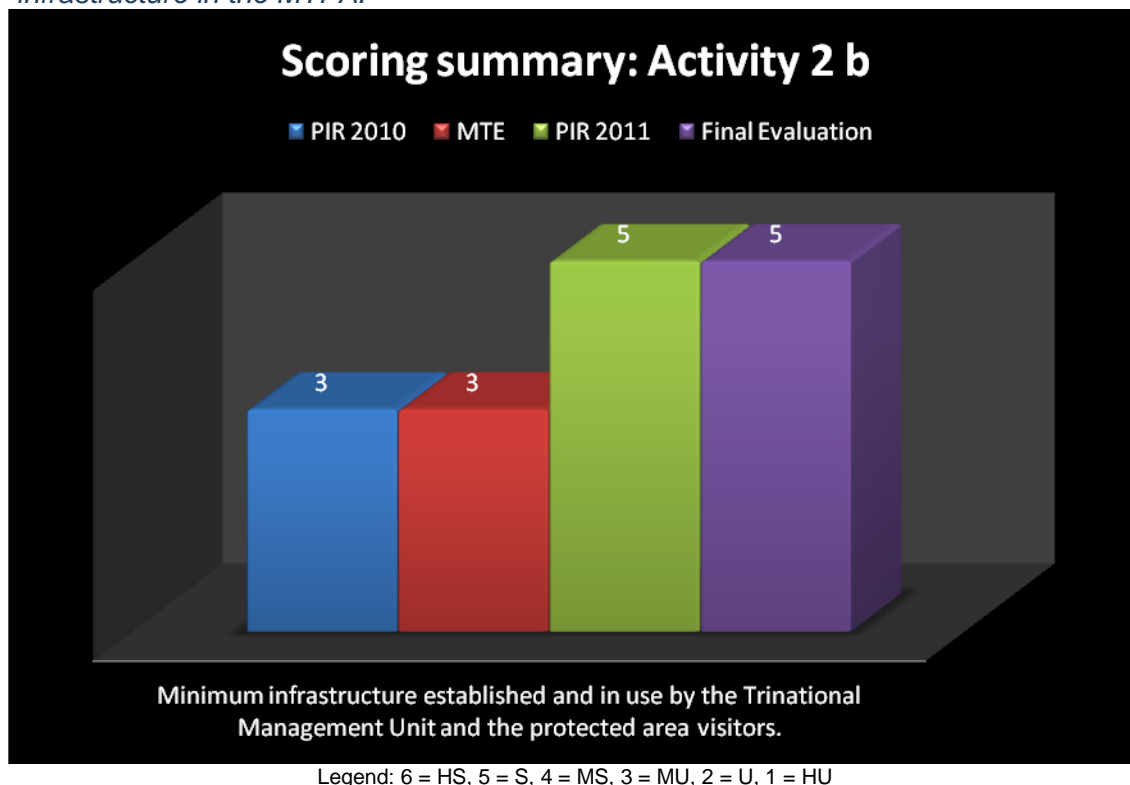
Activity 2.a: Consolidation of functional land-use plan and zoning scheme for MTPA.



- Functional land-use plan prepared and implemented to regulate internal zoning and prescribed uses within the MTPA, including related regulations and guidelines.

*The land-use plan has been developed but not implemented.* Its production was delayed because it was to be prepared with data and information from the zoning and mapping consultancy which was itself delayed.

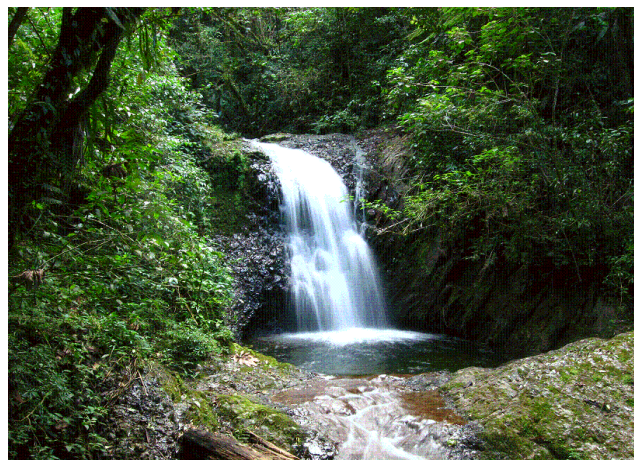
*Activity 2.b: Establishment and maintenance of the management, protection and visitor/public use infrastructure in the MTPA.*



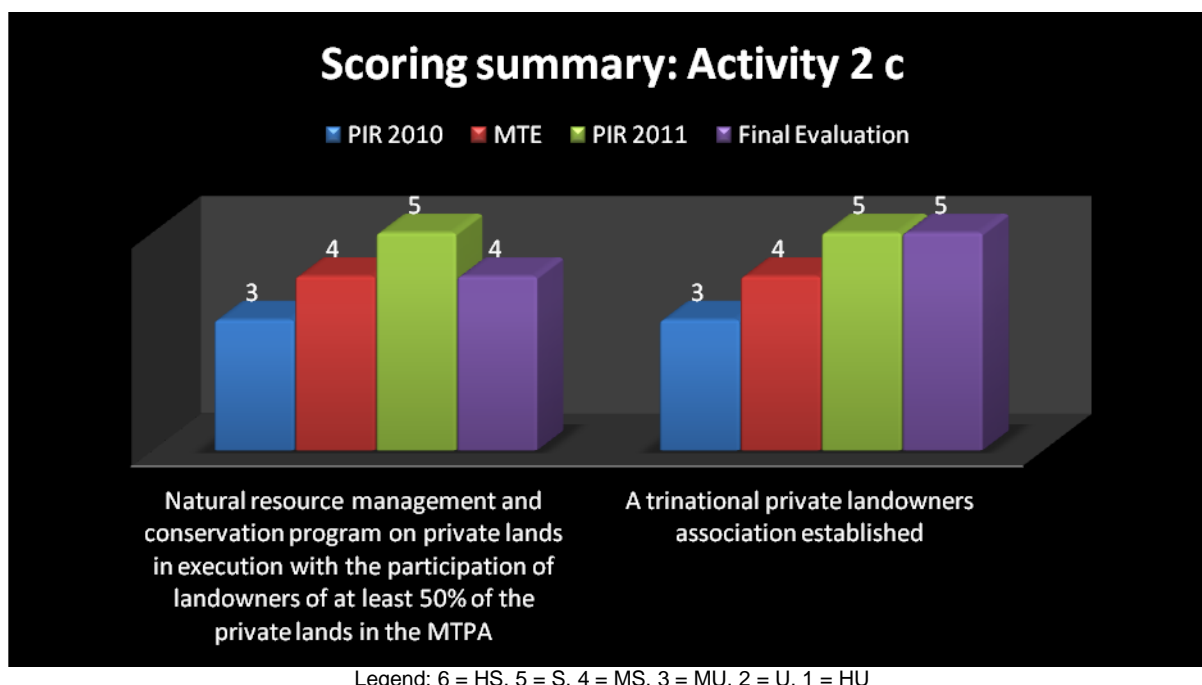
- *Minimum infrastructure established and in use by the Trinational Management Unit and the protected area visitors.*

Document review, interviews and site visits confirm that visitor centers and bridges have been built on the Honduran and Guatemalan sides of the MTPA and roads have been improved on all three sides. In Honduras and Guatemala, the idea of building the visitors' centers is to endorse the increase in institutional presence in the MTPA. In some regions of the MTPA, the institutional presence is reduced to its minimum.

It is noteworthy that the “*Presidentes Patronato Comunal*” (rural community leaders) were involved in deciding where the infrastructure would be built. Also, site visits and interviews confirm that land owners gave pieces of their land to the project to build the infrastructure. Infrastructure has been built in the last year and a half of the project and the centers were not yet furnished when visited during the evaluation. Notwithstanding the above, some representatives from the community would have appreciated tourism linked infrastructure. (Picture on the right: The core zone of the MTPA in a private natural reserve Guatemala)



Activity 2.c: Natural resources management and conservation in private lands in the MTPA



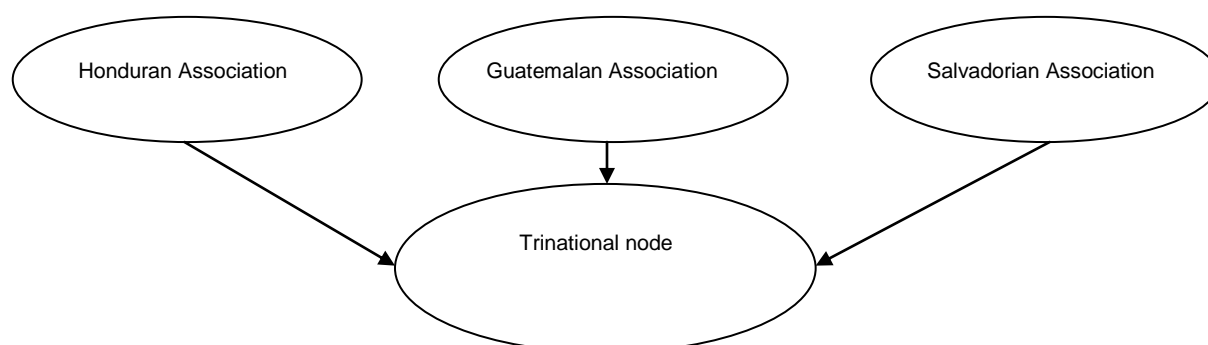
- *Natural resource management and conservation program on private lands in execution with the participation of landowners of at least 50% of the private lands in the MTPA*

Data collection substantiates that no program exists per se. However, as mentioned, four management plans for private natural reserves have been prepared with the support of the *Association*.

- *A trinational private landowners association established*

The Association has been established and it represents for the region 150 members and 160 natural reserves. The association is simply structured as demonstrated in the following figure:

**Figure 5**  
The Association's Institutional Structure

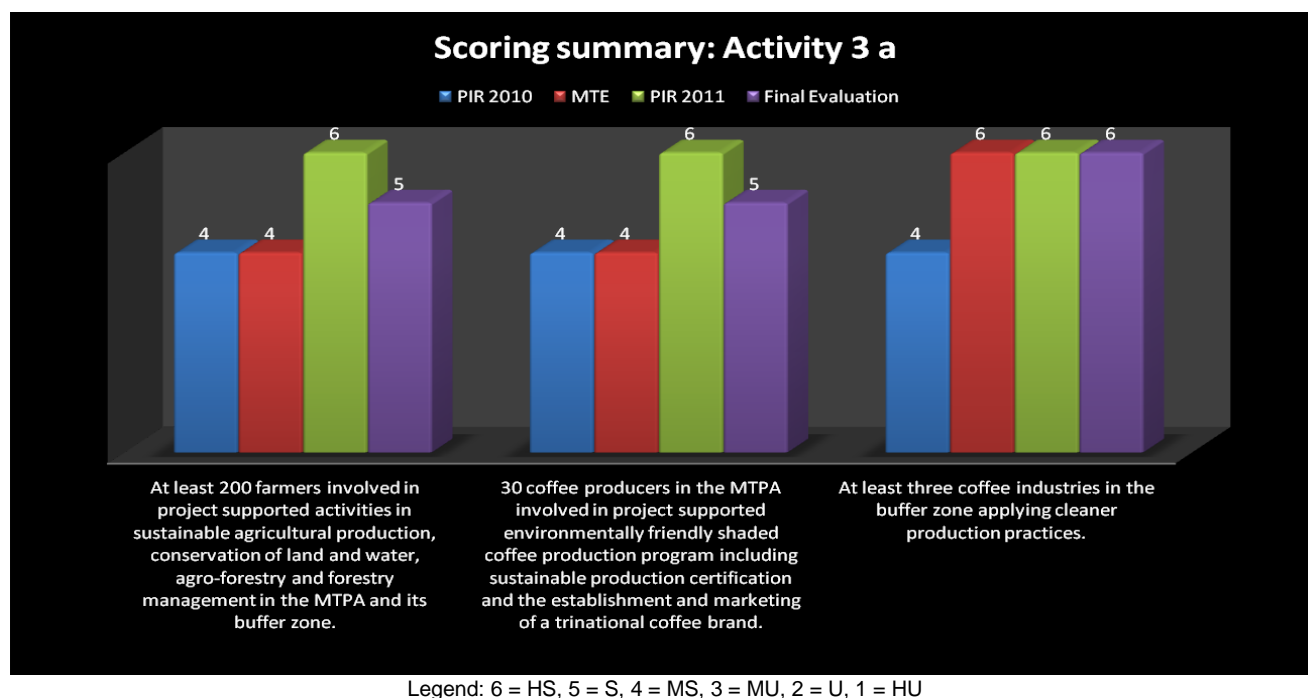


The node from the Association is well seen by members as it brings them environmental services. However, data shows that the Association is based on pre-existing organizations from across Latin-American. However, now, the three concerned countries' organizations work together.



### 4.2.3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Sustainable use of natural resources and environmental management in buffer zone and biological corridors

Activity 3.a: Promotion of environmentally sustainable agriculture, agro-forestry, agro-industry and tourism in the MTPA and its buffer zone.



- At least 200 farmers involved in project supported activities in sustainable agricultural production, conservation of land and water, agro-forestry and forestry management in the MTPA and its buffer zone.

Data suggests that little progress was made in terms of involving farmers in clean production in *agro-forestry* through the MTPA project. National forest institutions were also not very involved in the project. To avoid the forest from getting over exploited further incentive mechanisms need to be pursued. There is evidence that although capacity building and sensitization sessions are carried out on sustainable productive activities, when the price of coffee rises, coffee producers are tempted to augment the size of their fields and deforestation increases.

However, it is important to consider that sustainable agricultural production and conservation of land and water activities have been carried in association with efforts from the project *Promoci3n de Agua como bien public Regional e Cuenca Alta de Rio Lempa*. This project was implemented from 2006 to 2009 by CTPT/SET and financed by the IDB (US\$ 830.000 and local institutions, US\$ 110.100). Hence, much has been done in this context but not all aspects of the indicator have been met. Some respondents have even mentioned that in terms of agro-forestry, nothing has been done and that the relevant national forest institutions were not involved.

- A total of 30 coffee producers in the MTPA and its buffer zone involved in project supported environmentally friendly shaded coffee production program including sustainable production certification and the establishment and marketing of a trinational coffee brand.
- At least three coffee industries in the buffer zone applying cleaner production practices.

These two indicators can be analyzed together as they are quite close in their essence (both related to the clean coffee production). Data shows that PROTCAFE, a project integrated in the MTPA project as co-financing, has provided interesting results for the two indicators. *It should be noted that this project mainly operated in Honduras.*

**Case study box 3**  
**Proyecto Trinacional de Café Especial Sostenible (PROTCAFE)**

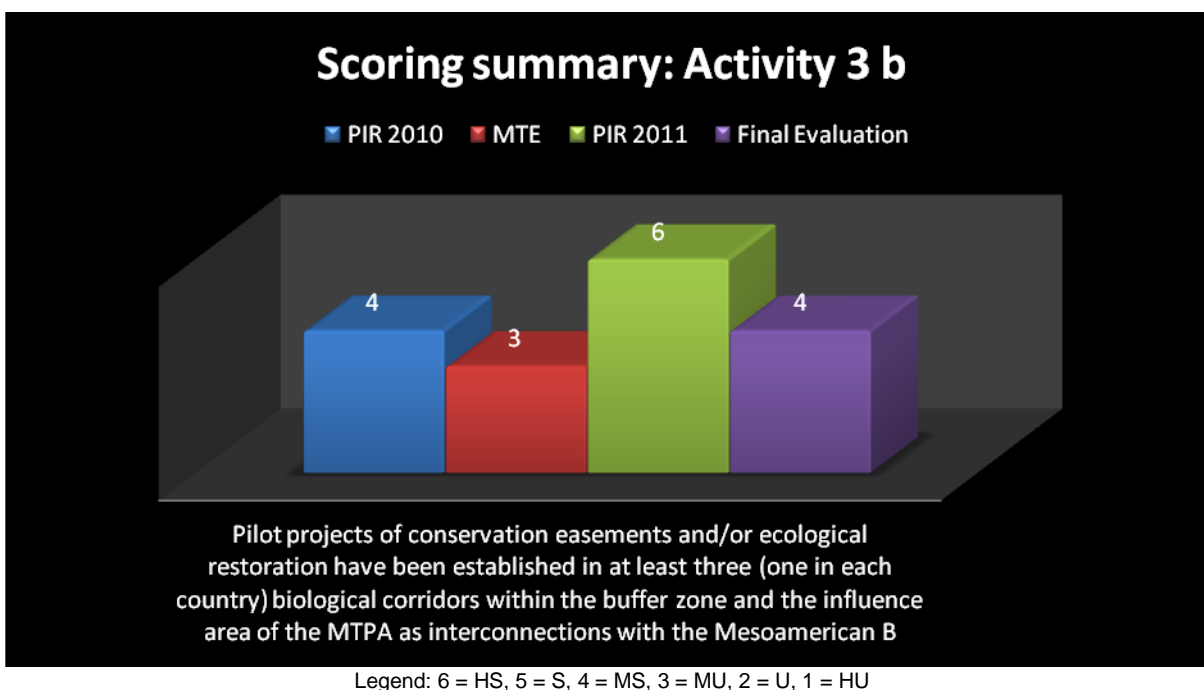
**Proyecto Trinacional de Café Especial Sostenible (PROTCAFE)**

The objective of the project is to contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic and environmental context of the high region of the Lempa River in the MTPA (Honduras), through the promotion of sustainable high quality coffee production and marketing linked to environmentally responsible practices, social equity and economic efficiency. 180 beneficiary families and 10 coffee production organizations have been affected by the project. Execution started July 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. The project has worked with 3 coffee processing industries in the San Jose Sacar community from El Salvador, the Mojanal community from Honduras and the Concepción and Las Minas communities from Guatemala.

External funds      US\$1,051,430.00  
National funds:    US\$ 105,143.00

Data triangulation confirms that this project helped to establish and commercialize a coffee brand owned by the Trifinio SERTINSA Company. Also, in Guatemala, as noted in the MTE, promotion and regulation of coffee production lowered water contamination through coffee processing for 100 beneficiaries in the buffer zone.

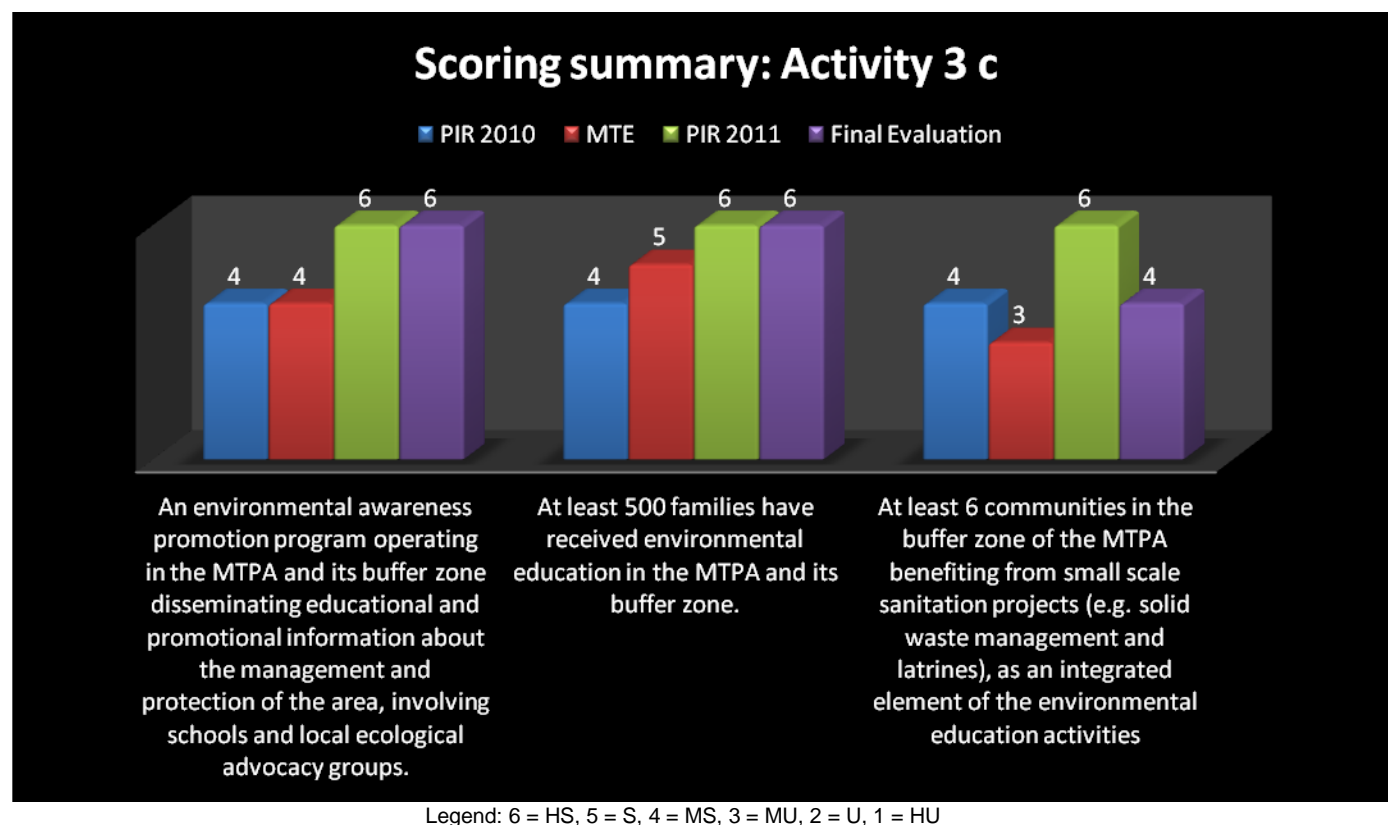
### Activity 3.b: Constitution of biological corridors interconnected with the MTPA



- *Pilot projects of conservation easements and/or ecological restoration have been established in at least three (one in each country) biological corridors within the buffer zone and the influence area of the MTPA as interconnections with the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor*

Evidence points to the fact that although biological corridors have been discussed in a participatory process with communities through community leaders and NGOs with three communities (mainly in Honduras), it is not possible to delineate three *stand-alone pilot projects*, as referred to in the 2011 PIR as “demonstration projects”. However, data suggests that initiatives formed the basis of the eventual biological corridor projects. The Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE), *Allianza* and *Manco* all participated in the organization of the pilot initiatives and are still working with the counterparts. During the project, four workshops for technical assistance for the corridors were organized and 10 ha. of reforestation per country were designated, helping to build links with other biological reserves. *Huisayote* (*Guísayote*) in Honduras is the best and most demonstrative example of biological reserves to be linked to the MTPA. Data suggests that a Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank - KfW) project has been working since 2010 towards the building of these corridors as well, building on the MTPA project.

Activity 3.c: Promotion of environmental awareness among the local population in the MTPA and its buffer zone.



- An environmental awareness promotion program operating in the MTPA and its buffer zone disseminating educational and promotional information about the management and protection of the area, involving schools and local ecological advocacy groups.
- At least 500 families have received environmental education in the MTPA and its buffer zone.

Again, these two indicators can be analyzed together as their subject is very similar on another. *Data collected demonstrates that progress made in relation to these indicators is among the biggest successes of the project.* The environmental awareness promotion program was developed and material – including 750 documents produced and printed – is complementary to the regular school curriculum. Activities – including congresses and workshops – were carried out to sensitize school teachers, students and parents in 67 educational institutions. *(Picture on the right: A view of the MTPA from a private natural reserve in Guatemala, including coffee production)*

- At least 6 communities in the buffer zone of the MTPA benefiting from small scale sanitation projects (e.g. solid waste management and latrines), as an integrated element of the environmental education activities

Evidence suggests that the main result for this indicator was in *Metapan*, El Salvador. Latrines and water tanks were built for the municipality. However, the *community was not satisfied with the infrastructure and conflicts between the municipality and project representatives caused by communication deficiencies* have affected the infrastructure building process negatively. It is noteworthy that

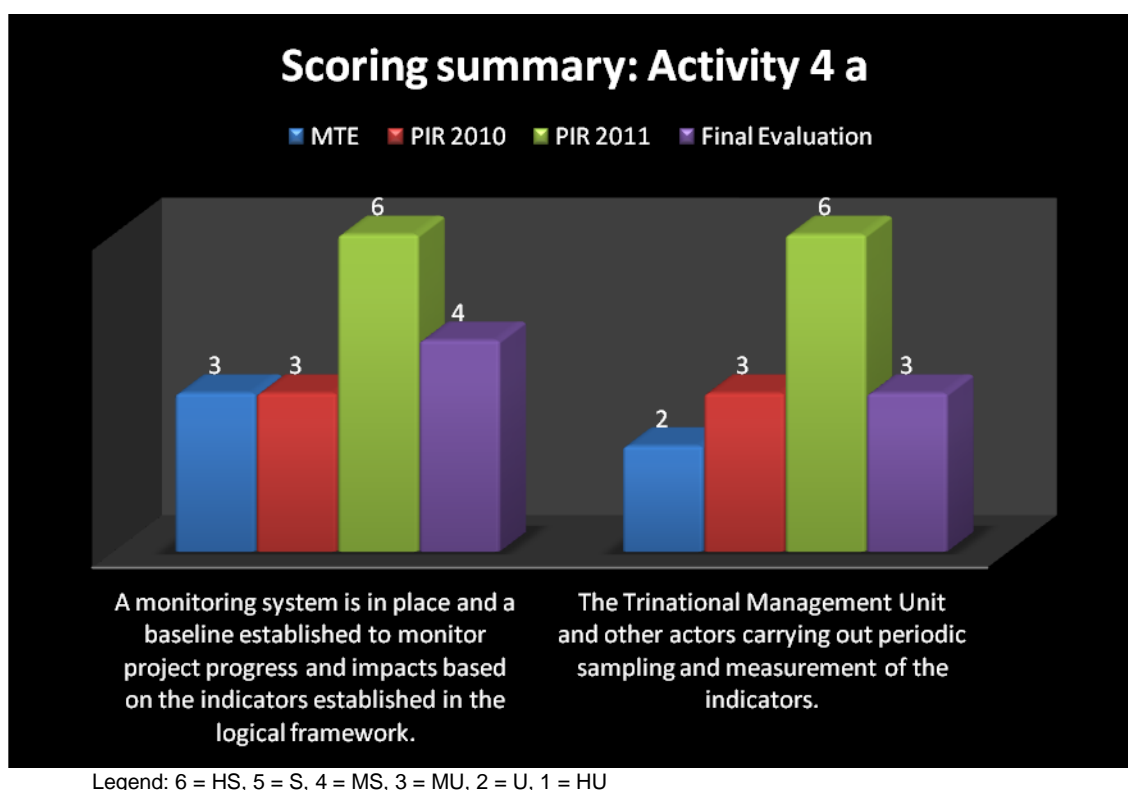


environmental sanitation campaigns in 24 communities (6 in Guatemala, 4 in Honduras and 14 in El Salvador), including cleanups and solid waste recycling processes, were also implemented.

#### **4.2.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4: Monitoring and investigation of ecological and socioeconomic conditions in the MTPA and its buffer zone**

Overall, the general GEF score given for the monitoring and evaluation is MU. The qualitative analysis below supports this rating.

*Activity 4a: Monitoring and evaluation system.*



- *A monitoring system is in place and a baseline established to monitor project progress and impacts based on the indicators established in the logical framework.*
- *The Trinational Management Unit and other actors carrying out periodic sampling and measurement of the indicators.*

These two indicators, linked to the monitoring of specific environmental issues and of the project itself can be analyzed together. It is important to start by differentiating two types of monitoring activities included in the project: first, there is the monitoring of the project's progress, in terms of ongoing measurement of the project's logframe indicators, and second; there is the monitoring of the indicators linked to the goal of the project, on which the baseline produced by the EAT is based and which includes the following:

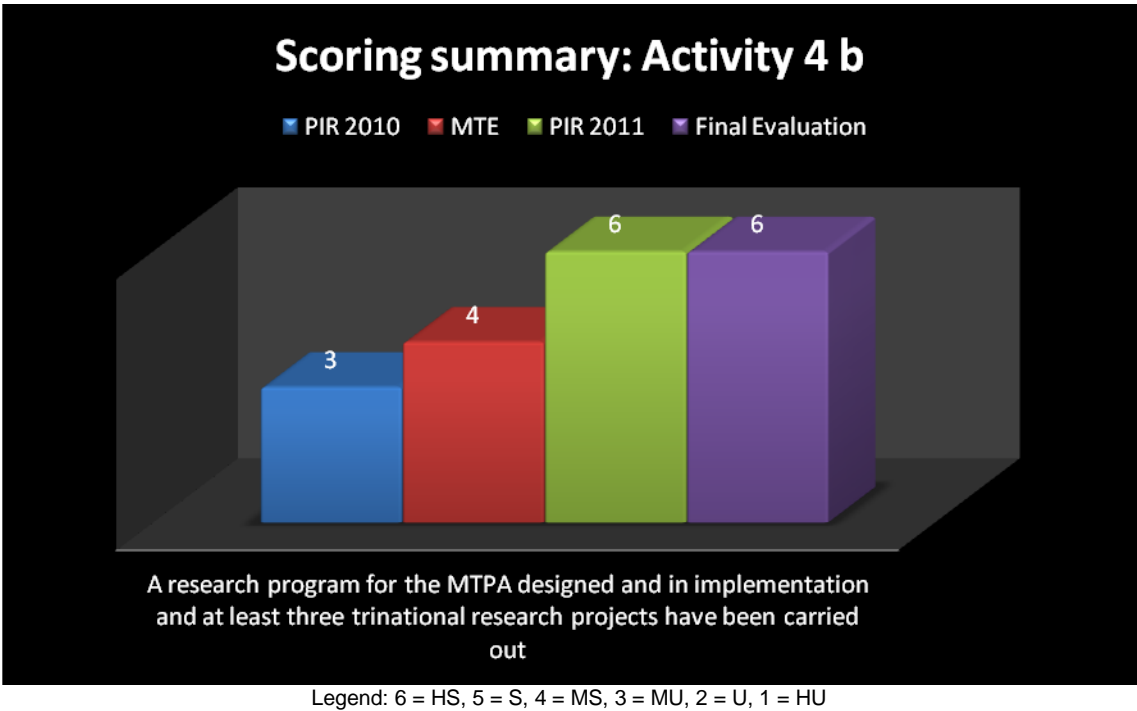
- a. The area of natural forest cover in the MTPA is the same or has expanded compared to the baseline level
- b. The sedimentation level in selected streams of the MTPA is maintained or reduced compared to the baseline level
- c. The abundance of benthic species as a bio-indicator for water quality in the creeks in the outer limits of the MTPA is the same or higher compared to the baseline level

- d. The rate of gastrointestinal diseases has been reduced by 20 % in the beneficiary population (defined as those receiving support for basic services from the Project) compared to the level at the beginning of the Project
- e. The number of economically active persons living in the project area that receive at least 35% of their income from environmentally sustainable productive activities (e.g. ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, non-extractive use of natural resources) has increased 10% compared to the baseline

The monitoring of the project’s progress is the focus of the first indicator. As for the monitoring of the above mentioned indicators, they are delineated as the project *impact* on which the baseline was built on. Keeping this in mind, data shows that no monitoring *system* exists per se. There are also varying understandings of what a monitoring system should be and who should take care of it. Some stakeholders noted that the ‘monitoring system’ is comprised of the monthly and bi-annual reports to the IDB only, which is not the case. Data also suggests that data was not collected in a regular manner by the UTT. One monitoring report developed on the basis of this understanding was produced by the UTT but it does not contain new data or information and only reports on activities.

Concerning the second component of the monitoring system, data collected confirms that the baseline study was finished only in 2011. *In addition, it should be noted that not all stakeholders agree on its contents.* In this context, it is understandable that not much monitoring has been done because there was no baseline. However, much relevant data has been collected, such as that found in documents produced by the *Manco* (which include water quality analysis, demonstrating periodic sampling) but indicators used are not the same as those in the baseline. It is also important to note that in the 2011 PIR, it is written: in May and June of 2011 there was a sampling of flora and fauna in the MTPA in coordination with University of Puebla.

Activity 4b: Research program to support the management of the MTPA



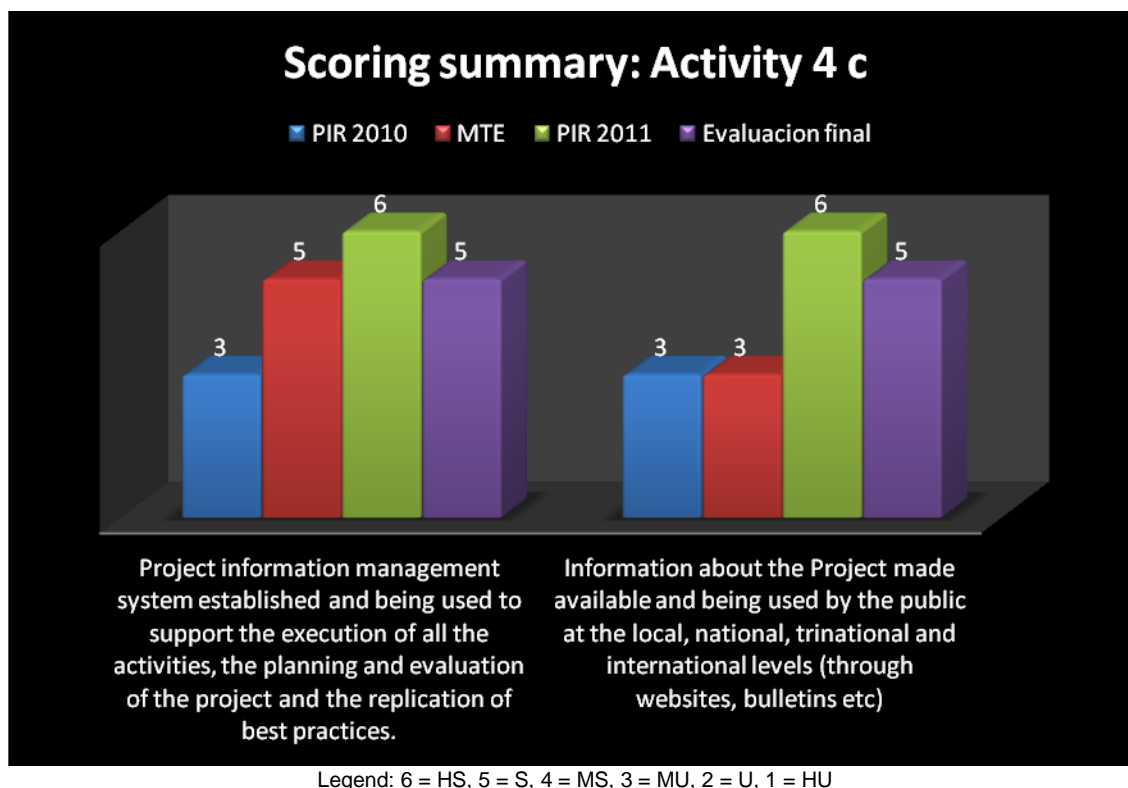
- A research program for the MTPA designed and in implementation and at least three trinational research projects have been carried out

Data demonstrates that the MTPA’s research program has been formulated in consultation with the scientific society of the three countries (60 representatives) and that 300 copies of the program’s document were printed. Strategic research priorities were established and a generalized call for co-financed research topics was launched. Of the 15



proposals received, 3 are being financed: State Wildlife & Flora/Universidad of Puebla; Climate Change/CATIE; Carbon Capture. The State Wildlife & Flora/Universidad of Puebla's report is due to be published during the month of May 2012.

#### *Activity 4c: Project information system*



- *Project information management system established and being used to support the execution of all the activities, the planning and evaluation of the project and the replication of best practices.*
- *Information about the Project made available and being used by the public at the local, national, trinational and international levels (through websites, bulletins etc.)*

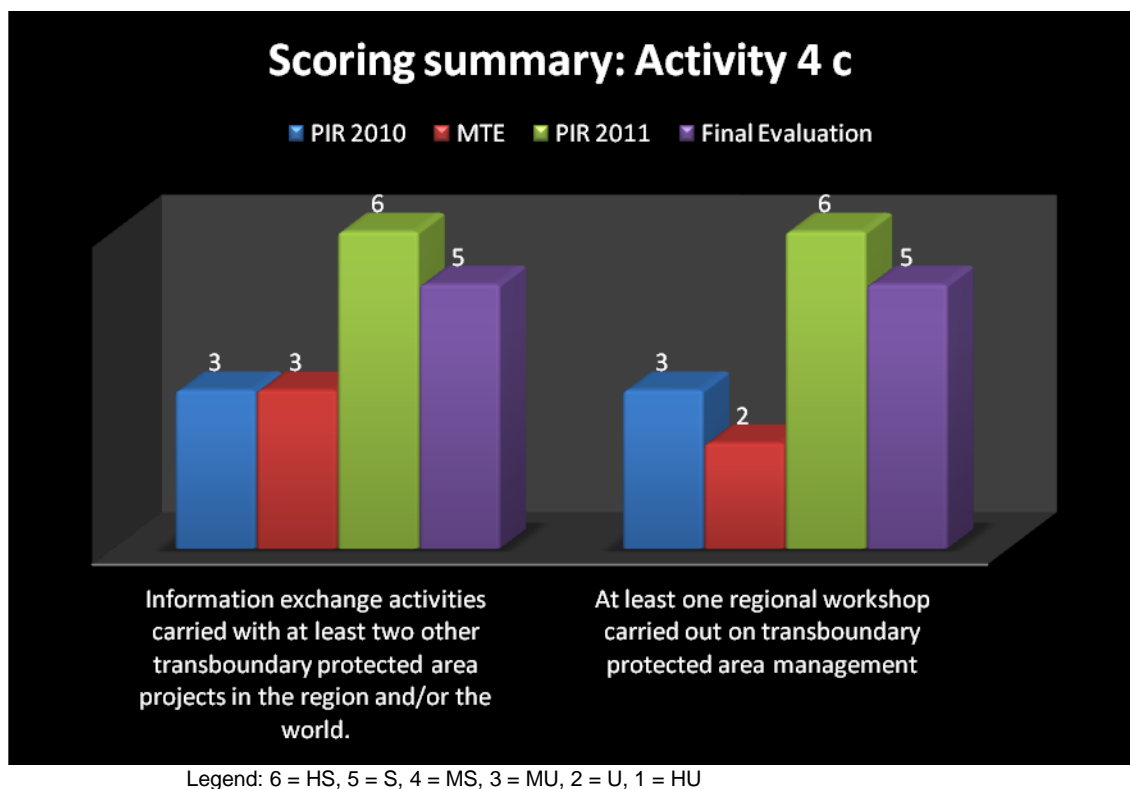
These two indicators are analyzed together. A GEF definition of a project information management system according to the UNDP-GEF's current Project Information Management System (PIMS) is: a "real-time", web-based database and tracking tool through which information on projects is available on-line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to any staff member with an Internet connection. Key information available through the system includes basic project information such as the country or countries involved, the GEF focal area, the type of project, a project summary description, objectives, funding, co-financing, and the like<sup>32</sup>.

According to data collected, a PIMS was established that fits closely to the definition above. Indeed, the web site [www.aguasinfronteras.net](http://www.aguasinfronteras.net) includes some key information about the MTPA that the local, national, regional and international internet users can access. Relevant information is being shared; however, *it is not known to what extent it is being used*. In addition, data shows that the project is not well presented to the public, which is part of the communication problem mentioned above. In January 2011, a document containing the most relevant experiences of the project was produced, however evidence suggests that there is little awareness of this information and no use in decision making and implementation. However, it is to be noted that those who knew about the PIMS were enthusiastic and were clearly interested in using it.

<sup>32</sup> UNDP-GEF. November 2004. *Knowledge Management in Support of the Global Environment: UNDP-GEF Initiatives*. p. 6

A good example of use of scientific information is the UNESCO case. To build the proposal, all available information on the PIMS was used.

Based on data collected, though there is will at the political level to use the PIMS, there is little evidence that data is being used and there is some resistance to sharing information at the technical level among key stakeholders. Also, many respondents mention that it is not clear who is responsible to manage this PIMS.



- *Information exchange activities carried with at least two other transboundary protected area projects in the region and/or the world.*

Evidence suggests that during the last two years of project implementation, 3 different information exchange activities were organized:

- 1) The GEF Funded *Selva Maya* Project in Guatemala visited Trifinio to understand the institutional framework developed to manage the MTPA;
- 2) Members of SET and CTAP traveled to Iguazu National Park in Argentina and learnt about cooperation agreements, particularly for park ranger training and specialization, and;
- 3) A virtual interexchange with the transboundary management initiative in the “*Gran Chaco Sud Americano*” also took place.

Some members of the Plan Trifinio also visited Germany in the context of an information exchange initiative.

- *At least one regional workshop carried out on transboundary protected area management*

Document review and interviews confirm that The First Boundary Protected Areas Congress was carried out in Copan Ruins, Honduras during June 29th and 30th, 2011. The Congress had a total of 90 participants from 11 different countries from 3 different continents. The Congress’s agenda comprised presentations from transboundary

or border protected areas in Latin America: Mexico / Guatemala, Guatemala / El Salvador / Honduras, Honduras / Nicaragua, Costa Rica / Panama, Bolivia / Peru, Argentina / Brazil, Russia / Finland / K (Oulanka-Paanajärvi) and WCPA Regional Vice Chair for Central America.

### 4.3 Goal & Purpose

As stated above, this report only touches on these aspects briefly. The **goal** of the project was: *To contribute to the protection and conservation of globally important biodiversity, the natural processes and the environmental services provided by the MTPA in the Trifinio Region of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, to benefit the local population and contribute to the implementation of the MBC.*

This report does not present definitive data or ratings for the goal's indicators. As stated, the baseline data related to the goal indicators was collected only in 2011. Furthermore, the main source of this baseline data is a report that has neither been circulated to all nor accepted by all as definitive or accurate. The challenge for the short and medium term is to first validate the baseline data and then to determine how the baseline will be used now that the project has ended with a view to monitoring changes related to these indicators into the future. As mentioned above, no *fund* is in place to maintain *integrated* trinational MTPA management and there is no M&E system per se in place that would ensure monitoring activities using the baseline.



(Picture above: The core zone of the MTPA in the Salvadorian National Park).

The baseline reports linked to the different goal indicators were developed by CATIE. Out of 13 performance indicators selected by the Plan Trifinio to assess CATIE's work, seven (7) were rated "satisfactory", six (6) "less than satisfactory" and none "more than satisfactory" by the project's managers.

The following lists the goal's indicators which are dealt with in the baseline reports. Some information is provided assessing some very general aspects of the reports<sup>33</sup>:

- *The area of natural forest cover in the MTPA is the same or has expanded compared to the baseline level*
- *The sedimentation level in selected streams of the MTPA is maintained or reduced compared to the baseline level*
- *The abundance of benthic species as a bio-indicator for water quality in the creeks in the outer limits of the MTPA is the same or higher compared to the baseline level*

As already mentioned, the first indicator has been difficult to measure and no CATIE study is presented in the consolidated CATIE final report. In the EAT report on the extension of the project, information is presented concerning the forestry coverage in the MTPA. Again, it is not possible for the evaluation team to assess the quality or validity of this information.

A study on the quality of the water in the MTPA was conducted by CATIE and finished in May 2011. This 178 pages document seems thorough, transparent and detailed. The methodology is well explained and the results of the study are supported by strong arguments. The same can be said about the study on vertebrate fauna in the MTPA.

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<sup>33</sup> As already explained above and in the mandate's approved work plan, due to time and budget constraints, the evaluation team did not focused on assessing the quality and correctness of these reports as it is the work of the Plan Trifinio team to do so and approve or improve their content.

It is to be noticed that two of the five design phase indicators at the goal level were eliminated after the MTE consultants suggested doing so. However, studies have been conducted and completed concerning these indicators.

- *The rate of gastrointestinal diseases has been reduced by 20 % in the beneficiary population (defined as those receiving support for basic services from the Project) compared to the level at the beginning of the Project*
- *The number of economically active persons living in the project area that receive at least 35% of their income from environmentally sustainable productive activities (e.g. ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, non-extractive use of natural resources) has increased 10% compared to the baseline*

The study on the health sector of the MTPA seems a little less robust and less detailed. The methodology is defined in two paragraphs and the full document is about 50 pages. However, some more detailed information is available on the municipalities *Concepción las Minas* and *Esquipulas* provided by the municipalities themselves and the Ministry of Health.

The last study concerns socioeconomic indicators of the MTPA region. Again, the methodology seems somewhat less thorough. However, much relevant basic socioeconomic information is presented in the document.

In terms of the utility of the information provided by these studies listed above as already mentioned, it is still quite early to judge and the specific data has not been verified by stakeholders themselves or the evaluation team. However, as mentioned, there is ample data now available to form a baseline for the future and to inform future monitoring activities in the MTPA.

*N.B.: During the presentation of the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations of the present final evaluation of the MTPA project in March 2012, participants were motivated to use the studies and committed to their review. First the idea was to approve and/or improve the studies and then use them as they were determined to be used, a baseline. This may be interpreted to mean that they want to go on using the goal indicators to build a monitoring system for the MTPA.*

The **purpose** of the project was: *To support the initial implementation of the IMP of the MTPA under a trinational institutional framework operating in a participatory, integrated and efficient manner.* It can be reiterated here that the essence of the project was to develop the trinational management process. As stated, key positive contributions were made by the project. Nonetheless, there are specific indicators associated with the purpose level and some are assessed briefly below.

- *100 % of the basic MTPA management activities are performed in a trinational and integrated manner through operational plans implemented by the Trinational Management Unit of the MTPA with the necessary local, national and regional participation*

Information collected from various sources points to the fact that this indicator was not reached. However, much has been done to further the process of trinational and regional management. Please see discussion under Activity 1a-c.

- *At least three biological corridors interconnecting with the MTPA have been established, linking the MTPA with the nearby protected areas of San Diego La Barra, Volcán Quetzaltepque, El Ptal and Guisayote and thus contributing to consolidating the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor*

Data triangulation shows only basic or preliminary biological corridor connection activities have been carried-out with the communities (e.g. sensitization). Please see discussion at Activity 3b.

- *The management decision-making is based on scientific information systematized in the Project's information system*

Scientific information was developed only late in the project (2011) and evidence suggests that no information system has been officially established or fully utilized. However, many key stakeholders noted that the information will be utilized in the future. Please see discussion at Activity 4c.

- *50% of the annual recurrent operational costs of the MTPA are met with resources of the Special Trust Fund*

All sources of information confirm that this result has not been reached. Please see discussion at Activity 1c.

- *50% of the private land area in the MTPA is managed in line with the objectives of the IMP*

Data triangulation confirms that this result has not been reached. However, as noted, some progress has been made. Please see discussion at Activity 2c.

## 4.4 Sustainability

Data collected shows that by the nature of its design, the project stimulated the participation of national institutions and organizations. Indeed, the main concept on which the project was built was that the MTPA should be managed by regional institutions comprised of the three countries' institutions (Plan Trifinio, CONAP, ICF, MARN, and CTPT/SET). As stated, the project served to further trilateral coordination and management. All trilateral institutions are still standing and involved in active work to continue deepening the roots of trilateral management of the MTPA. Key building blocks of the whole trilateral concept – both in terms of institutions and process – have been strengthened during the project. Some recurring funds from the three countries support the continuous existence of the Plan Trifinio and ongoing trilateral coordination into the future.

However, much data collected suggests that there are some challenges in sustaining collaboration, notwithstanding the opportunities presented by other projects that have begun (e.g. KfW, UNESCO MAB). Many stakeholders point to the fact that the capacity of some institutions was not sufficiently enhanced to be able to adequately manage the MTPA itself into the future. Linked to this is the nature of the EAT (AGRECO-APESA). As already mentioned above, data collected through the evaluation suggests that the choice of outsourcing a private international firm to establish and comprise one of the key project (and longer-term MTPA management) institutions (i.e. the UMT) had some advantages but also some key disadvantages. The development (or furthering) of a trilateral management process in the complex political context of Central America is a delicate task and having an independent firm to play a central role seemed desirable in the sense that the EAT could remain apolitical. At the same time, it also meant that no one national institution or any trilaterally-based institution was itself being directly strengthened. In addition, some stakeholders point to the problems caused by having an 'outside' institution at the heart of the UMT and therefore also in the center of an 'internal' diplomatic set of issues, which were exacerbated by having roles and responsibilities not clearly defined. Overall, this implementation choice has effects on the sustainability of the institutional structure of the MTPA management; Evidence collected reveals that the role the EAT played is perceived as an obstacle to sustainability as the firm, and not the key national or trilateral institution, gained both capacity and institutional memory.

Now that the project has terminated, the sustainability of the Plan Trifinio structure – hence the regional management of the MTPA – depends on the CTPT/SET's strategic guidance and on the operative coordination of the UMT. However, data collected confirms that officially, although the UMT has renewed its co-management agreements with the ICF in Honduras and CONAP in Guatemala in 2011, it may not have adequate capacity.

Hence, in terms of the GEF ratings for sustainability, based on the information presented above and throughout the report, the following scores are attributed to the project:

- Financial risk: MU (specifically based on qualitative information presented on p. 35 and 36)
- Socio-political risks: MU
- Institutional framework and governance risks: ML (specifically based on the information above)
- Environmental risks: ML



## **4.5 Efficiency**

### **4.5.1 Resource allocation<sup>34</sup>**

At the end of the project all funds had been spent, despite the low disbursement rate observed at the time of the MTE. It is noteworthy that financial reporting on the GEF USD \$3.5M funding was clear and thorough and appreciated by all respondents.

In terms of project implementation, the speed at which the project implemented in the final year is significant. Staff restructuring (newly appointed SET and IDB coordinator, new members in CTAP and UMT) created a context in which project and fund execution accelerated. Additional data suggests that staff turnover was also a challenge to efficient management of resources. Nonetheless, many of the efficiency issues raised in the MTE remained relevant at project closure, according to data collected.

Among the financial management challenges is the follow-up and tracking of co-financing. Again, the USD \$3.5M of GEF financing and the USD \$1.16M of IDB co-financing was well monitored and accounted for. Nevertheless the remainder of the USD \$8.99 M (USD \$4.33M) from co-financing coming from other projects and national institutions, including “in-kind” contributions, was less so. Documents do however exist but it is not required that project managers and finance administrators deliver them per se.

### **4.5.2 Risk analysis, critical assumptions & mitigation strategies**

As mentioned above, risk analysis during project design was limited and two examples are worth mentioning: First, the lack of mitigation strategies developed to address important political complications, such as those that emerged during the Honduran crisis, and; risk analysis and mitigation planning concerning the reaction of private owners to the idea of undertaking cadastres, land censuses or any other type of MTPA mapping or zoning, was also deemed inadequate.

### **4.5.3 Management flexibility and general adaptation**

Document review and interviews confirm the demonstrated management flexibility after the MTE and during the project extension. The acceptance of changes made to project *logframe* indicators also demonstrates the acceptance of stakeholders and managers to adapt the project’s design to the contextual reality, the time constraints and institutional capacities. It is worth noting again the quick and efficient way the project was executed during the last year and half in comparison to the first 3-4 years of the project, which also demonstrates flexibility and adaptive management.

## **4.6 Management principles**

### **4.6.1 Regional control of strategies, management and execution of the project**

Data collected suggests a mixed perception of IDB’s involvement in the project. Some stakeholders felt the IDB was quite absent from the project in most ways, while others felt they were very involved. The idea behind this project was for the three countries to take control of the project management. Hence, this it is normal that such issues come up. Data confirms that this also depended on the period of project implementation. IDB’s (relatively new) project implementation policies should be noted; these state that upon project approval, local stakeholders (in this case, UMT) manage the project quite directly. Notwithstanding general ‘space’ provided for UMT and its partners to make execution decisions, key stakeholders felt that IDB involvement steered the project in key instances, with varying results. As examples, some pointing to the finalization of revised indicators, while others noted the rules and

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<sup>34</sup> Please see annex 4 for more information on resource allocation.



procedures concerning disbursement and procurement, which limited the control and flexibility that the trinational institutions had in strategically implementing their activities and initiatives.

#### 4.6.2 Concerted mechanisms with other donors in the region

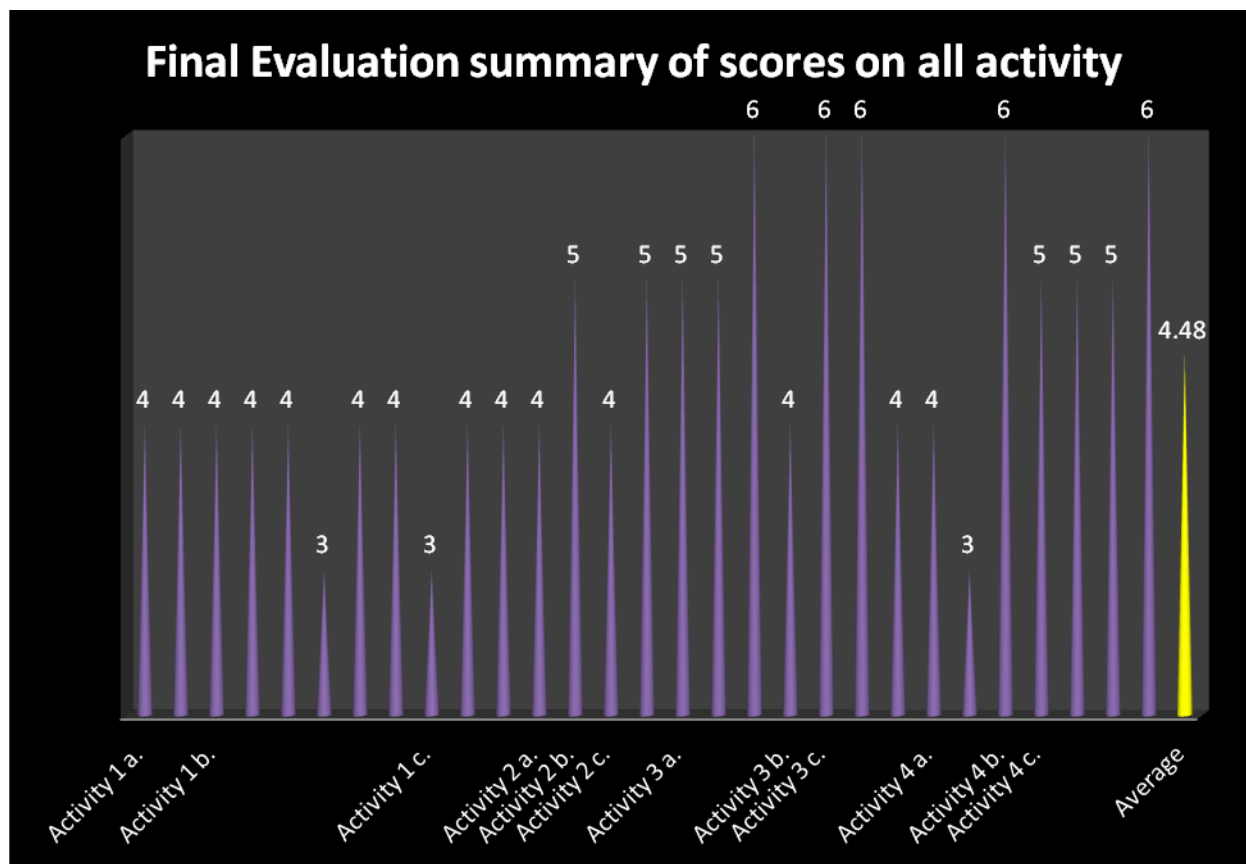
There is significant evidence to suggest that there was important coordination between this project and other initiatives in the region. This can be considered among the strengths of the project and it is evident that some projects such as KfW (*Bosques y Cuenca* – working on corridors and continuing work at the community level) are building upon and learning from this project. During design phase, other projects were factored in as ‘co-financing’ but it should be noted that the institutional structure facilitated proximity and synergies with these, such as CATIE, an important partner undertaking complementary efforts in the region. The project was also based on the grounds of preceding projects such as *Promoción de Agua* and the IDB Regional Public Good: *Cuenca Alta de Rio Lempa*. In addition, as noted, the project had strong synergies with other projects including: *Proyecto Trinacional de Café Especial Sostenible* (PROTCAFE – Newman foundation<sup>35</sup>), PROTOUR (an IDB sustainable tourism project), GTZ *Bosques y agua*, Finnfor/CATIE, Mesoterra/CATIE, and Innovacion/CATIE.

#### 4.7 Global GEF Rating for the Project

The Global GEF Rating for the Project through the final evaluation is **MS**. As all ratings in the present report, this general rating is given for the project on the basis of a mix of quantitative analysis and qualitative assessment of the project’s execution. The process takes into account the complexity of the project and the unique political context in which the project is implemented. It also evaluates the entire time line of the project and not only the years after the MTE. The following table demonstrates the average of all ratings of all activities. Each rating is considered having the same effect on the final average although in terms of budget, the first specific objective (activity 1 a, b and c) represents almost half of the GEF funds allocated to the project. ***Nevertheless, the consultant recognizes the less tangible results that have been reached by the project through the many efforts of stakeholders that believe in the MTPA and its management at the Trinational level.***

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<sup>35</sup> <http://newmansownfoundation.org/>



## 5. BRIEF CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Brief Conclusions

The project is considered quite **relevant**: it was aligned with the countries' environmental and biodiversity conservation policies and priorities and both the GEF's and the IDB's policies and priorities in the region. The project sought to address an issue of concern and importance to all countries involved, and their partners. However, the project design was too ambitious and lacked sufficient risk analysis and related planning and could have included local stakeholders to a greater extent.

In terms of project **effectiveness**, results are mixed. Although the legal and territorial consolidation of the MTPA has encountered challenges during project implementation, these expected results were overambitious. While successes related to trinational institutional framework consolidation cannot be minimized, challenges were encountered and there is room for improvement moving forward. During the last two years of the project, new decentralized local institutions have also had a balancing effect to some of trinational management setbacks. In addition, other projects provide the opportunity for furthering progress made.

Strategically located infrastructure has been built to augment institutional conservation in the MTPA and the *Association* and *Manco* were created in the region. In addition, management plans for private natural reserves have been developed. However, infrastructure is not all fully ready to be occupied and no conservation program on private lands is in execution. While no trust fund is currently in place, options have been developed for future consideration.

Capacity building pertaining coffee production and the coffee industry in the region, environmental awareness enhancement and the development and use of environmental education material in schools are among the most significant results of the project. Some small-scale sanitation projects are also noteworthy. While the constitution of biological corridors interconnected with (and within) the MTPA is only in initial stages, the project contributed to progress. In addition, other projects (such as KfW) offer opportunities to build on that progress made.

There is no functioning monitoring system or project information system per se and the baseline required for project monitoring was only developed in 2011, near the project's end. However, although not yet agreed to by all, the baseline does comprise a significant amount of data to potentially be used and build upon in the future. In addition, the research program was designed and has already generated some studies. Furthermore, key transboundary information exchanges were completed.

In terms of **efficiency**, findings were also mixed: During the last years of the project, the acceleration of the project's execution was made possible by flexible and adaptive management and improvements in resource management and allocation. However, the earlier years of the project did not experience strong implementation or disbursement and there were a number of management changes. In addition, throughout the project, co-financing was not clearly reported on as such information was not demanded. Finally, one of the key strengths of the project was its ability to coordinate and create synergies with other projects in the region.

Despite the foundation in place, which has been strengthened by the project, some issues threaten the medium and long term **sustainability** of the trinational management of the MTPA and hence the conservation of some parts of the latter, including the core zone. These include lack of adequate funding, institutional presence at the operational level of all needed stakeholders, and some aspects of required capacity such as for the UMT. While the trinational institutional structure and framework is in place, prospects for furthering its sustainability come at present mainly from forms of external stimulus, such as other donor projects, and less so from the countries themselves.

Overall, despite the challenges experienced it can be stated that a key aspect of the purpose of the project was realized in the furthering of trinational coordination and management of the MTPA, despite not achieving key indicators associated with this result level and the goal level and the risks to the sustainability of progress made.

## **5.2 Key Lessons Learned**

There are some key lessons learned emerging from the final evaluation analysis that are worth bringing forward, even though not all are innovative or new:

Future instable political contexts are always difficult to foresee and when they do occur, it is difficult to mitigate their effects on any project, including PA management projects. Nonetheless, risk planning and the development of a risk management strategy can to a certain extent improve quality and timeliness of responses to such dire situations. The effects the 2009 Honduran political crisis on the MTPA project implementation are well known to all stakeholders involved. They were all the more dramatic in the particular context of this trinational project. It is clear that it was impossible to know how long it would last but some mitigating decisions were taken that helped diminish the consequences it could have had. For example, some of the activities planned were able to be implemented even during the crisis because of other means of financing were used.

- It is hence evident that such projects require strong risk planning and management. An exercise that helps to identify the potential risks to project success, whether likely or unlikely, needs to take place as it can serve to strengthen project design and heighten project management readiness to adapt to and manage a complex and changing environment. When coupled with strong mitigation strategy development, projects are more 'ready' to handle and address these occurrences, when they arise. The 2009 political crisis can now be used for future project design phases for other projects or eventually a second phase of the MTPA project.

Although during the design phase of the IMP, there were some local institutions representatives participating in the process, data points to the fact that there was a lack of local participation during the design phase of the project. On the other hand, it has been noticed that in the last two years of the project, new local institutions played an increasingly important role in MTPA project implementation and supported the efficient execution of the end of the project.

- From outset of project design and sustained throughout project implementation, the active pursuit of local participation and buy-in greatly affects project successes and sustainability. Projects that seek to work with and through local communities need to target this aspect in an even stronger manner to try and affect project success.

All data shows that this project was built on a highly complex logframe: four specific objectives, 12 activities and close to 40 indicators, some of which changed during the project. The project aimed at addressing many of the components PA management normally encompasses, but it became evident that many of the project's objectives were quite ambitious. However, some parts of the project have yielded better results than other, and data showed that the project would have benefitted from further focus and targeting of activities.

- For complex PA management projects, especially those that attempt to work across borders, it can be useful to pursue more focused objectives that have narrower scope and are designed to build on successes. Not all projects need to attempt to address all aspects of PA management or to 'be all things to all stakeholders'.

When it was flagged by the MTE in late 2010 that some expected results and indicators were considered by many stakeholders too ambitious, changes to the logical logframe were accepted, thanks in part to flexible management decisions. Similar flexible management combined with more comprehensive and pro-active communication strategies could have eased escalating tensions when issues emerged during the building of the sanitation infrastructure in *Metapan*, El Salvador.

- When more complex and challenging expected results are integrated in project design or when specific interests are directly at stakes in particular circumstances, it can be very helpful for a certain degree of flexibility to be integrated into project design, to catalyze adaptive management through the recognition of failures and the freedom to change course midstream with a view to achieving results and efficient resource use. This requires project management procedures that lend to flexibility and adaptation throughout project implementation.

The emergence of concrete involvement and success of new local stakeholders, such as the Manco, the Association, the *Allianza* and others, late in the process of project implementation, have left many solid tangible results. These results now become building blocks for sustainable local result generating PA management actions in the near future. With smaller, more realizable objectives, stakeholders are motivated in these institutions because they directly see the results of their labor.

- A certain degree of ‘decentralization’ of project management can yield significant results in particular in the context of PA management projects to further buy-in but also result achievement.

The baseline for the monitoring of the MTPA project was finalized at the end of the implementing process and this forms a key part of any comprehensive project monitoring and evaluation system, which did not emerge.

- When the collection of baseline data as part of the development of a robust M&E framework and system takes place near the beginning of projects as they should, this allows for real performance measurement throughout project implementation and more opportunities for learning and adjusting as needed midstream. All stakeholders of such projects need to be sensitized to the importance of monitoring needs and results.

Institutional strengthening was a major component of the MTPA project. A private firm was hired to realize much of this component but tensions between the EAT and the UMT emerged. Although these tensions were alleviated to some degree, definition of roles and responsibilities remained somewhat of an issue throughout the project and information sharing, capacity building and technical assistance activities directly with the main institutions to be strengthened were lacking. In other components of the project, CATIE as a key partner to the central institutions of the Plan Trifinio has been continuously linked to the project and remains as such. Evidence suggests that some further degree of technical capacities may have a better chance at staying amongst the main institutions.

- Though it is not a new lesson, one key to sustainability is ensuring that the main institutions responsible for continuing project results into the future are directly targeted by capacity building activities. When external consultants or firms are the center of such initiatives, built capacity can often leave once projects end.

It has been demonstrated that there have been some ebbs and flows in country participation in this trilateral project, as could be expected. From data collection, it can be noted that the *perception* of lack of desire of one of the members of a regional institutional structure to participate in the process can affect the practical engagement of the other members. In political circumstances such as the one in which the MTPA project was implemented, perceptions become very important.

- Sustaining trilateral coordination and management of the MTPA can be positively affected by the perception of balanced participation of all countries involved. The integration of an adequate amount of initiatives focused on creating forums for this cross-border participation can serve the purposes of improving perceptions.

### 5.3 Recommendations

In this section, the key recommendations emerging from final evaluation analysis are presented and are focused on future projects in the Trifinio area. The recommendations below directly flow from the findings of the evaluation which themselves stream into the lessons learned. Links between findings, lessons learned and recommendations are direct.

In terms of project design:

- ***It is recommended that project design include an extensive risk management analysis process, including identification of all potential risks and the development of mitigation strategies for their potential occurrence.***
  - All risks and mitigation strategies should be included in full in project design documents.
  - Future projects in the MTPA may wish to consider mitigation strategies for: continuing funding and execution in the event of political turmoil, further actions to continue to stimulate trinational participation.
- ***It is recommended that steps be taken to ensure that local actors, including communities and municipalities, are strongly involved in the project design process, in order to help ensure that design is more realistic and adapted to the local reality and to help foster buy-in from the outset, while ensuring local actors are well-informed throughout.***
  - These steps would include both earmarking budget for this purpose and ensuring the procedural steps of project design integrate this aspect.
  - It has been mentioned during the one day presentation in San Salvador that further than consulting the local communities, the fundamental ideas forming the basis of such projects should come directly *from* these communities, before the project design starts. The communities should not be subject of the projects but instigators. In this context, communities should be targeted as part of project feasibility studies or needs assessments.
  - In addition to creating a favorable context for representatives from the communities to participate in the project design, project activities themselves should integrate their continued involvement.
  - This recommendation involves to the extent possible the creation of differentiated implementation measures for different regions and communities around the MTPA.
  - In addition to having local communities and municipalities, different sectors may also be targeted for such involvement.
- ***It is recommended that future projects concentrate on fewer objectives, focusing on building on successes and a feasible set of expected results. A balance between theoretical objectives (studies and researches) and practical objectives (capacity building and infrastructure development) should be sought.***
  - This should include the development of realistic indicators associated with each of the feasible expected results included in design, and building on lessons learned from projects in the region.

In terms of project management and monitoring:

- ***It is recommended that it become a firm requirement of all GEF and IDB projects (or that the existing requirement be fully enforced) to establish a full M&E system and a completed baseline within the first year of project implementation.***
  - The importance of clearly designating a person or an organization as responsible of the monitoring of the project is critical and a full M&E system requires comprehensive indicators that are approved by all and a baseline from which to measure change.
  - The importance of the differentiation between the project monitoring and the MTPA environmental monitoring was brought up as an issue to clearly consider at the beginning of such projects.

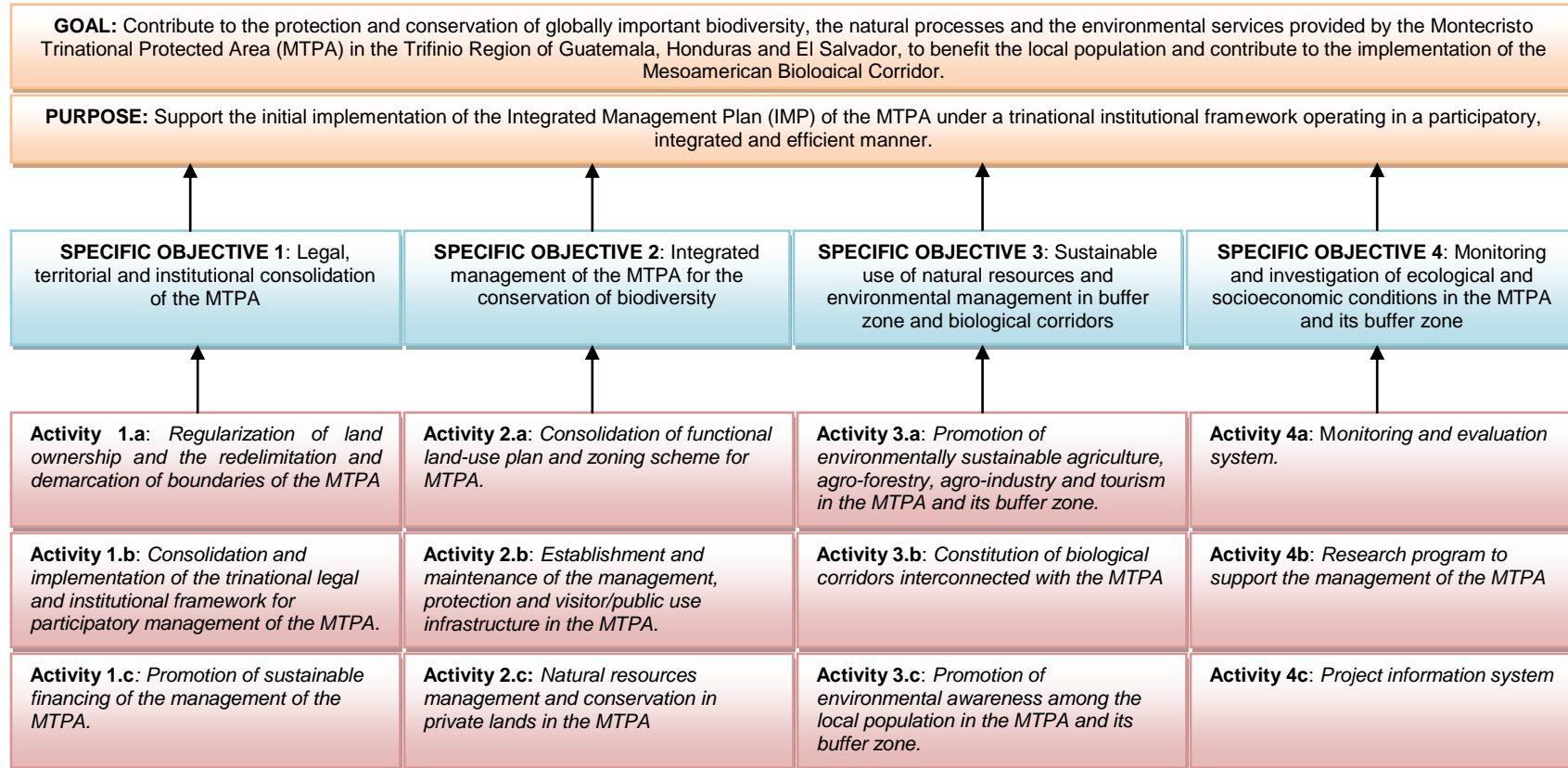


- *It is recommended that all project funds, including co-financing and in-kind contributions be required to be tracked throughout project implementation to ensure that co-financing is reported on adequately and with a view to efficiency.*
  - If this is not already an explicit requirement for GEF and IDB project, then it is recommended that such procedures be reviewed. It is to be noted that the quality of this information is also dependent on the work done by the project managers.
- *It is recommended a review of GEF and IDB project management/implementation procedures take place to identify areas for improvement in terms of management flexibility and the facilitation of adaptive management.*
  - In particular, to the extent possible, measures should be sought to further enhance project management ability to learn lessons and take decisive action throughout project execution and to change course as required, without too much administrative burden. M&E becomes a critical aspect in this context, with a view to learning while executing.
- *It is recommended that communication between project authorities, the affected population and all involved institutions be made a greater priority throughout project in order to further local participation and thereby enhance prospects for result achievement and buy-in at the local level.*
  - This builds on the recommendation above. It may be useful to ensure that a communication/lobbying agent be involved in project implementation.

In terms of MTPA management:

- *It is recommended that the roles and responsibilities of involved institutions and actors in MTPA management be clearly defined and circulated in a detailed document to help ensure that all is clarified and that overlap and conflicts are reduced.*
- *It is recommended that discussions on the developed options for the Trust Fund be re-started and that the involvement of the private sector be considered.*
- *It is recommended that key institutions (such as the CTPT and UMT) be targeted directly for future projects' capacity building efforts to enhance prospects for sustainability.*
- *It is recommended that environmental education be made a priority in future projects in the region.*
- *It is recommended that all the project's products be revised in-depth by all relevant institutions to assess what might be useful for MPTA management moving forward and to help ensure that efforts are not duplicated.*
- *After 25 years of existence, it is recommended that the Plan Trifinio institutions and the overarching institutional framework and structure undergo a wide-scoping and in-depth evaluation in order to identify the areas of strength as well as the challenges that exist so that issues can be addressed.*
- *It is recommended that the GEF and IDB consider another project in the MTPA region, in order to further trinational coordination and management of the MTPA and build on progress made, but with a view to applying lessons learned and following other recommendations listed.*
  - Any such project should also integrate the findings of the evaluation of the trinational institutional framework noted above.

## ANNEX 1 PROJECT LOGFRAME



## **ANNEX 2 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED**

- Julian Muñoz Jiménez, National Executive Director Guatemala
- Fernando Castro Escobar, Director, Department of Conservation Units, CONAP
- Martin Federico Keller Bock (president), Claudia Garcia Executive secretary of the Mesoamerican network of the Associations of private natural reserves.
- Eduardo Martinez, Territorial coordinator Guatemala
- Omar Molina Executive sub-secretary CONAP.
- Mauro Pelligrini, EAT (AGRECO)
- Mario Samuel Buch. During the project, at the end, project coordinator.
- Juan-Carlos Montufar, UTT, Plan Trifinio (10 years).
- Milton Solís, CTAP CONAP (Guat), before EAT
- Ingeniero German Henríquez, CTAP ICF (Hon) before EAT
- Ana-Maria Tablada, M&E, Plan Trifinio
- Milton Rolando Cabrera, PA specialist, Plan Trifinio, Now in KfW.
- Luis Hueca, coordinador territorial oficina en Honduras
- Edgardo Zelaya: Técnico Oficina Territorial Honduras Ex coordinador territorial oficina en Honduras
- Geovany Franco, Técnico Enlace entre la oficina territorial y el proyecto MTPA
- Sr. Rodolfo Peña Monroy, UMA Santa Fe, Ocotepeque
- Licenciada Brenda Maderos, Asistente Administrativa
- Ing. Julio Cesar Castellanos, Técnico ICF La Labor
- Angel Prado, Director Regional ICF
- Hector Alonso Aguirre, Gerente General, Mancomunidad Trinacional, Fronteriza Rio Lempa
- Hector Leveron, Vice-Alcalde de Santa Fe, Honduras.
- Focus Group in Metapan (Water comity and Local development commission).
- Balmore Ochoa, KfW, Bosques y Cuenca project Coordinator, Plan Trifinio
- Oscar Hernandez Vela, MTE evaluator.
- Miguel Pineda, Trinational Executive Secretary, Plan Trifinio.
- Heriberto Durán, Finance Manager, Plan Trifinio
- Carlos Pineda Mejia, ICF, Protected Areas Departmental Chef.
- Miriam Hirezi, National Executive Director, El Salvador
- Esperanza de Rivas, DEN secretary
- Omar Alas, Territorial coordinator
- Ulises Orellana, consultant, education, AGRECO
- Alejandro Sorto, Regina Cuellar, Ester Iliana Chavez Mata
- Nelson Arevalo Second in command MARN
- Patricia Quintana de ANP (MARN)
- Walter Rojas (Marn)
- Maritza Guido (Montecristo representative for the Plan Trifinio)
- Javier Hernández (Representante Alianza for El Salvador)
- Julio Castrillo, DEN Honduras
- Wilton Salinas, ICF, Honduras
- Carlos Pineda, National Director of PA
- Edgar Pineda, Mid-term review consultant, [mataques@gmail.com](mailto:mataques@gmail.com)
- Oscar Hernandez, Mid-term review consultant (assistant), [oscarhernandez@itelgua.com](mailto:oscarhernandez@itelgua.com)

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MAPA DE CRITERIOS PARA DEFINIR LIMITES DEL MTPA (DECLARATORIA). *Figura 10*

MAPA DE CRITERIOS PARA DEFINIR LIMITES DEL MTPA (MICROCUENCAS PRIORITARIAS). *Figura 13*

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## ANNEX 4 FINANCIAL DATA

Project component	GEF financing (in \$)		Cofinancing (in \$)	
	Approved	Actual	Promised	Actual
1. Legal, territorial and institutional consolidation of the MTPA	1,569,357.35	1,569,357.35	357,000.00	No Data
2. Integrated Management of the MTPA for the conservation of biodiversity	968,040.43	968,040.43	1,129,000.00	No Data
3. sustainable use of natural resources and environmental management in buffer zone and biological corridors	259,376.93	259,376.93	2,385,000.00	No Data
4. Monitoring and investigation of ecological and socioeconomic conditions in the MTPA and its buffer zone	353,225.29	353,225.29	452,000	No Data
5. Other	350,000.00	350,000.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,500,000.00</b>	<b>3,500,000.00</b>	<b>4,667,000.00</b>	

### ➤ Cofinancing (June 2006 – July 2010<sup>36</sup>)

Source of cofinancing	Expected	Actual
European Union	475,000.00	37,500.00
Bilateral Program on Transboundary Development El Salvador-Honduras (European Union) CABEL	130,000.00	-
Program for Sustainable Development, Environment and Water Resources in the Upper Lempa River Basin (IAEA)	95,000.00	95,000.00
IDB <sup>37</sup>	1,954,000.00	3,467,300.00
BCIE	-	130,000.00
Local actors	1,669,000.00 <sup>38</sup>	19,900.00
<b>Total (planned cofinancing)</b>	<b>4,323,000.00</b>	<b>3,749,700.00</b>
El Salvador/FANTEL		81,000.00
Tim Hortons; Canada		250,700.00
Norwegian government CATIE		62,600.00
<b>Total (unplanned cofinancing)</b>		<b>394,300.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,323,000.00</b>	<b>4,189,000.00</b>

<sup>36</sup> This is the latest information the evaluators were given.

<sup>37</sup> Includes financing for projects financed by the Bank and executed/coordinated by the CTPT/SET within the framework of the Trifinio Plan: 1331/OC/GU, 1082/SF-HO, 886/OC-ES, RG-T1157. It also includes Bank funded projects in the beneficiary countries with activities considered as co-financing to the present Project: 1077/SF-HO; 1506/SF-HO.

<sup>38</sup> Municipalities, CEL communities, private property owners, NGOs, private researchers.