Final Evaluation of UNDP/GEF project:
Application of a regional approach to the management of marine and coastal protected areas in Cuba's Southern Archipelagos

Evaluation Team:

Alexandra Fischer (Lead Project Evaluator)

Roberto de Andrade

Reinaldo Regadera Prats

GEFSEC Project ID: 3607
Agency's Project ID: 3973
Evaluation time frame- January 2015- February 2015
Date of Evaluation Report: February 2015
Country: Cuba
GEF Operational Program: BD
Strategic Priority: SP1 and SP2
Executing Agency: Centro Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CNAP)

Acknowledgements: *The evaluators would like to thank the UNDP Cuba Country Office and the government of Cuba for the support provided throughout the realization of this Final Evaluation, as well as the many stakeholders who provided feedback on the project.*

Contents

List of Tables

1 Acronyms and Abbreviations

AOP	Annual Operational Plan
BD	Biodiversity
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CGB	Forest Rangers
CIM	Marine Research Centre
CITMA	Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment
CNAP	National Centre for Protected Areas
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CUC	Cuban Convertible Peso
CUP	Cuban Peso
EA	Executing Agency
EFI	Integrated Forestry State Company (Empresa Forestal Integral)
EMED	Executive Company of Donations (Empresa Ejecutora de Donativos)
ENPFF	National Enterprise for the Protection of Flora and Fauna
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
IA	Implementing Agency
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IES	Ecology and Systematics Institute
IPF	Institute of Physical Planning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MINAG	Ministry of Agriculture
MINAL	Ministry of Food Industry
MINCEX	Ministry of Foreign Trade

MINFAR	Ministry of Armed Forces
MININT	Ministry of Interior
MINTUR	Ministry of Tourism
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ONIP	National Bureau for Fish Inspections
PA	Protected Area
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project Document
QOR	Quarterly Operational Report
RSC	Regional Service Centre
SNAP	National Protected Areas System
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TE	Terminal Evaluation
UMA	Environmental Units
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Program Country Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USD	United States Dollars
ZBREUP	Zone under Special Regime of Use and Protection
ZBRMIC	Zone under Special Regime of Integrated Coastal Management

2 Executive Summary

Table 1: Project Summary Table

Project Title:	Application of a regional approach to the management of marine and coastal protected areas in Cuba's Southern Archipelagos Region			
GEF Project ID:	3607		*At endorsement (Million US$)*	*At completion* (Million US $)*
UNDP Project ID:	3973	GEF financing:	5,710,000	5,633,861
Country:	Cuba	IA/EA own:	54,907	54,907
Region:	LAC	Government:	13,810,000	22,649,800
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	240,000	1,231,550
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	GEF 5, BD, SP1 and SP2	Total co-financing:	14,104,907	23,936,257
Executing Agency:	National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP) of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA)	Total Project Cost:	**19,814,907**	**29,570,118**
Other Partners Involved:		ProDoc Signature (date project began):		30 Sept. 2009
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 30-Sep-2014	Actual: **30-Sep-2014**

Overview of objective and methodology for Mid-Term Evaluation

This Final Evaluation (FE) was undertaken between January and March 2015 and adhered fully to the UNDP/GEF guidelines and Terms of Reference for this consultancy. Key issues addressed were project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The methodology included a detailed review of all relevant project documentation; a 1.5 week mission involving extensive interviews with stakeholders, site visits to four provinces across the country, a presentation of the initial evaluation findings to representatives of CNAP, UNDP, MINCEX and CITMA; follow-up phone interviews and correspondence; a detailed analysis of the findings; and finally preparation of the draft and final reports and their translation into Spanish.

Brief project description

Cuba's Southern Archipelagos play an important role in the region in terms of ecosystem function and in the sustainability of fisheries stocks and populations of globally important biodiversity. The main threats to this coastal and marine biodiversity include overfishing, eutrophication, sedimentation and changing hydrological conditions, among others. The long-term solution to addressing these threats is for a mosaic of protected and productive seascapes and landscapes to be planned and managed from a regional, rather than site specific, perspective, given the high degree of region-wide biological interrelations and interdependencies that result from the marine currents that traverse the whole area and the migratory nature of many of the species in the area. The project's overall goal is to conserve globally important coastal and marine biodiversity in Cuba. Its specific objective is to ensure that globally significant marine biodiversity is conserved and sustainably used through an extended, strengthened and integrated network of coastal and marine protected areas in the Southern Archipelagos region. This will be achieved through three planned Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Increased coverage of priority ecosystems by MPAs, related terrestrial PAs and associated

management units within the productive landscape and seascape

Outcome 2: MPAs in the project area are subject to effective management within the framework of a regional protected area subsystem

Outcome 3: Business planning and partnerships with productive sectors increase MPA revenues and cost efficiencies

MAIN FINDINGS

Project Execution

The National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP), the project's Executing Agency, has had substantial experience successfully implementing large international cooperation projects, including GEF projects and has demonstrated strong administrative abilities and capacity for budgetary execution. The Project Management Unit (PMU) fulfilled its duties effectively, employing a diligent and systematic approach. The PMU was able to mobilize key actors, develop multiple partnerships and maintain constructive relationships with stakeholders. Stakeholders interviewed during the Final Evaluation mission indicated that the PMU provided regular support, guidance and follow-up and that there was a high level of coordination.

Project planning was carried out with foresight and in a highly participatory manner. The PMU employed an effective approach to M&E with a well-attended inception workshop, annual lessons learned workshops, and regular visits to the provinces for follow-up with the institutions involved. Reporting was timely in terms of submission of QORs, PIRs and AOPs. It should be noted that the baseline and targets for a few of the indicators were not identified until several years into the project, and the financial section of the Biodiversity Tracking Tool was completed late owing to difficulties gathering this information from the protected areas. Risk management was employed by the project, particularly with regard to the procurement delays experienced.

The PMU maintained a focus on expected project results and deliverables and the project was able to be completed within its five-year time period, with the large majority of Outcomes achieved. Resources were controlled carefully by the PMU. At the time of the Final Evaluation, budgetary execution was 98%, with the remaining funds allocated.

Project Implementation

UNDP carried out its role as Implementing Agency diligently, providing regular technical and administrative support and guidance to CNAP, which facilitated achievement of project goals. The Country Office consistently monitored budgetary execution and participated actively in meetings with CITMA and EMED to assess project progress and help address bottlenecks. UNDP also assisted with the preparation of annual Project Implementation Reviews and provided political/strategic support, such as by organizing a high-level meeting with the Ministry of Tourism. Strong levels of communication and collaboration existed between the PMU and UNDP.

Project Results and Sustainability

Through Outcome 1, the project had a significant impact on increasing the coverage of priority ecosystems, with 15 new marine protected areas declared, as well as three new Zones under Special Regime of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ZBRMICs) and two new Zones under Special Regime of Use and Protection (ZBREUPs). Various additional Zones are in the process of negotiation. Surveys were carried out of priority ecosystems and key species with the realization of 30 expeditions to 15 MPAs, leading to a substantial amount of new scientific information on the biodiversity of the Southern Archipelagos. Many of the targets for this Outcome were met, through there were less formally approved

ZBREUPs than planned and less area under ZBRMICs. This was attributed largely to the complexities involved in getting agreement among the different stakeholders involved.

The project played an important role in strengthening management of the MPAs in the project area as per Outcome 2. Increased inter-institutional cooperation was achieved through joint surveillance expeditions and the development of a national strategy for joint surveillance. Provincial protected areas boards were strengthened with training and provision of equipment. The project also made significant investments in equipment and transportation for 26 MPAs, which are critical for them to be able to carry out their management, monitoring and enforcement functions. A Strategic Management Plan for the Southern Archipelagos was developed, but this was not legally endorsed as a tool to guide future actions in the region. Nevertheless, many of the proposed actions were included in SNAP's Strategic Plan for 2014-2020, which did receive legal approval. A total of 23 PA management plans were developed or updated, as well as several management plans for ZBRMICs. Substantial effort was dedicated toward establishing standardized monitoring protocols for key species and ecosystems in the region, based on extensive cooperation with research centres and universities. The twelve monitoring programs were applied in the MPAs, and a final publication on the state of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Southern Archipelagos was produced, among other publications. Training was provided to MPA personnel on a variety of issues such as MPA management and conflict resolution. A large number of audiovisual products were developed and aired on TV, and other education material developed, leading to increased awareness about the importance of the species and ecosystems of the region. Application of the PA management effectiveness tool in late 2014 demonstrated a significant improvement compared to the project baseline.

With the third Outcome, the project strengthened partnerships with the tourism and fisheries productive sectors and supported improved financial management of PAs, but more work is still required to increase MPA revenues and strengthen business planning. Sustainable tourism products were developed for various PAs, training was provided on sustainable tourism to tourism guides and to local communities and the National Group of Nature Tourism was reactivated, among other impacts. The project supported fishing cooperatives through equipment purchases in their transition to the use of more sustainable fishing gear, in line with new legislation in effect. The project developed a financial planning guide for PAs, including a tool box for protected areas administrators, with training provided on its use. The development of mechanisms for channeling tourism revenues to PA management proved to be one of the most challenging project elements to work on in the Cuban context. The project did support several PAs in their efforts to instigate tourist fees, which have led to increased revenues for MPAs. Although a regional or national policy has not been developed on this subject, the matter was discussed at a high political level in the Cuban National Assembly to raise awareness of the importance of increased financial sustainability for the SNAP. Preliminary economic valuation studies were carried out, which will be built upon in planned future work on ecosystem services. The pilot project work under this Outcome began late and fell somewhat short in what might have been achieved. To start with, community engagement was carried out and sustainable economic alternatives were identified. Some equipment purchases were made in support of sustainable agriculture for one of the villages near a PA, the project supported the development of a regulation for crab harvesting, and as highlighted previously, substantial support was provided to two fishing cooperatives.

Project sustainability is considered likely for various reasons. No substantial risks were noted in terms of the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes in place that could jeopardize sustainability of project benefits. Institutional support and participation were high throughout project implementation and there is a strong interest to continue to build on the project's impacts. At the community level, support was high for the sustainable alternative activities promoted and extensive public

education raised levels of awareness about the importance of the biodiversity of the region. Given the financial situation of Cuba, the scale of some of the activities initiated with the project may be reduced somewhat. However, both at the level of the protected areas and CNAP, there are institutional commitments to continue to fund relevant actions and efforts to find new sources of funding. In addition, further work on ecosystem services and advocacy with high-level decision makers is ongoing to strengthen the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System.

The last section of the Final Evaluation report outlines the best practices employed by the project, the lessons learned and recommendations to guide future initiatives.

Best practices:

- *Project fully integrated within structure of Executing Agency (CNAP)*
- *Inception workshop with high participation and thematic working groups*
- *Designation of PMU members for each Outcome and of project focal points in each province to follow-up on activities at the local level*
- *Lessons learned workshops to facilitate exchanges among stakeholders involved in the project*
- *Extensive inter-institutional collaboration, including development of strong partnerships with scientific research institutions*
- *Designation of technical and executive coordinators for the BD Monitoring System*
- *Facilitation of exchanges of local inhabitants to other sites and countries*
- *Project support for communities affected by change in government policy regarding fisheries*
- *Substantial stakeholder input into specific activities to be carried out in provinces and support required*
- *Wide dissemination of project results and messages in the mass media through audiovisual material, including documentaries and television clips, as well as written material*
- *Coordination and synergy with other UNDP/GEF projects*
- *Substantial South-South collaboration*

Lessons Learned

- *Community-level work is time consuming but vital for the conservation and sustainable use of PAs*
- *Working with all levels of productive sectors and listening to concerns increases effectiveness of engagement*
- *Importance of carrying out environmental education with children to reach adults*
- *Need to work on capacity building at the institutional level, not only individual level*
- *Efficiency of coordinated surveillance in the economic context of the country*
- *Utility of workshops to validate monitoring data*
- *Management and budgetary issues have to be taken to the appropriate political level for resolution*
- *Need to use different language when working with productive sectors versus institutional actors*
- *There is value in being open to the discovery of additional areas for inclusion in the Protected Areas System*

Recommendations

- *Define pilot projects at project design phase to facilitate later implementation*
- *Establish baselines and targets for all indicators at project outset*
- *Set up a high-level Project Steering Committee*
- *Always translate key elements of Project Documents into language spoken in the implementing country*
- *Continue to promote sustainable productive options with communities living near PAs so they can benefit from PAs while supporting monitoring and conservation activities*
- *CNAP to follow up with community of Los Hondones to ensure that greenhouses are set up and to verify that water issue was resolved*
- *CNAP to build on joint initiatives carried out with productive sectors, including tourism and fisheries*
- *Continue to promote mechanisms to reinvest greater financial resources in PAs*
- *Build on the research carried out through the project on economic valuation of ecosystem services to strengthen the financial sustainability of PAs*
- *Ensure the sustainability of the BD Monitoring System on key species and ecosystems*
- *Strengthen linkages between management of coastal-marine areas and CITMA's climate change program*
- *Establish a place in each province (a 'mini documentation centre') with all the information generated by the project accessible to stakeholders*
- *Upload project products to CNAP´s website*
- *Promote the dissemination of the project products in joint meetings of the country's UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Boards and in local government meetings to follow up on ZBRMIC implementation*
- *Continue to promote integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and dedicate special attention to the issue of solid waste management*

Table 2: Ratings of Project Performance

Criteria:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	2. IA& EA Execution	Rating
M&E Design at Entry	Satisfactory	Quality of UNDP Implementation	Highly Satisfactory
M&E Plan Implementation	Satisfactory	Quality of Execution- Executing Agency	Highly Satisfactory
Overall quality of M&E	Satisfactory	Overall quality of Implementation/ Execution	Highly Satisfactory
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating	4. Sustainability	Rating
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	Financial resources:	Likely
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	Socio-political:	Likely
Efficiency	Highly Satisfactory	Institutional framework and governance:	Likely
Overall Project Outcome/Results rating	Satisfactory	Environmental:	Likely
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	Likely

Ratings on a scale of HighlyUnsatisfactory to Highly Satisfactory, except ratings of sustainability on a scale from Highly Unlikely to Likely.

3 Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

1. This Final Evaluation (FE) is a requirement of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was initiated by the UNDP Cuba Country Office in its capacity as Implementing Agency (IA) for this project. It was carried out in accordance with the guidance, rules and procedures for such evaluations as established by UNDP and GEF.

2. Evaluations of UNDP GEF-financed projects have the following purposes (UNDP 2012):

- To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments;
- To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF financed UNDP activities;
- To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the UNDP portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues.
- To contribute to the overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits;
- To gauge the extent of project convergence with other UN and UNDP priorities, including harmonization with other UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) outcomes and outputs.

3.2 Key Issues Addressed

3. This Final Evaluation analyzed the following five main criteria:

- Relevance: the extent to which the activities are suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, taking into consideration changes over time.
- Effectiveness: the extent to which the results have been achieved or the likelihood of their achievement.
- Efficiency: the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible, also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.
- Sustainability: the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Impact: verifiable improvements in ecological status, verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, or indications that progress is being made towards achievement of stress reduction and/or ecological improvement (through process indicators).

4. This report provides a general introduction to the evaluation; outlines the project description; analyzes the project's design and implementation (including the M&E system); assesses the level of achievement of project results and; comments on the expected sustainability of project outcomes. As specified in the Terms of Reference (TORs), certain elements were rated using a scale from Highly

Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory. Conclusions, best practices, lessons learned, as well as recommendations to help orient future projects are provided at the end of the report.

3.3 Methodology of the Evaluation

5. The methodology for this Final Evaluation included the following components:

A) Evaluation Preparation:

6. The consultants carried out an extensive review of documentation, including the Project Document, annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), Annual Operational Plans (AOPs), Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs), Quarterly Operational Reports (QORs), the inception report, the lessons learned workshop reports, Mid-term Evaluation report, a wide variety of project products and other relevant information. The list of documents studied is provided in Annex 3 of this report.

7. The Lead Project Evaluator also engaged in a teleconference with the project's Regional Technical Adviser (Lyes Ferroukhi) from the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (RSC LAC) to go over expectations for the evaluation and key issues to analyze.

8. An Inception Report for the evaluation was prepared with a mission programme and details of the evaluation methodology to be followed.

B) Evaluation Mission:

9. At the beginning of the mission, an inception meeting was held with the Environment and Energy Unit of UNDP Cuba to discuss UNDP's perceptions of the project's achievements, constraints and lessons learned and to review the mission programme. Further meetings were held in Havana with the Project Management Unit, and other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Tourism, Mundo Latino, the National Enterprise for the Protection of Flora and Fauna, and the Department of International Relations of CITMA.

10. In addition to the meetings in the province of La Habana, field visits were carried out to four additional provinces involved in project activities, namely, Artemisa, Pinar del Rio, Matanzas, and Ciego de Ávila, with representatives from the province of Camaguey also participating in the Evaluation meetings. A large number of stakeholders, such as provincial representatives of CITMA, protected areas administrators, Forest Rangers and others gave presentations and participated in interviews/meetings with the Final Evaluation team.

11. In total, interviews were carried out and/or meetings held with approximately 102 stakeholders involved in different capacities in the project (see Annex 1 of this report).

12. On the final day of the mission, the initial findings were presented by the consultants to the UNDP CO, the Project Management Unit, representatives of the Ministry of External Relations (MINCEX) and the Department of International Affairs of CITMA (GEF Focal Point). This led to further discussions, clarification of different points and the provision of feedback.

13. The mission itinerary is presented in Annex 4.

C) Report preparation:

14. Follow-up was carried out with the UNDP CO and with the Project Management Unit (PMU) to obtain pending documents and to request clarification on some issues. Additional material was reviewed with a focused attention on project outcomes and outputs. A detailed analysis of the data was undertaken and the findings were consolidated into a draft report in English. This draft was prepared in accordance with the guidelines and Terms of Reference for this Final Evaluation (see Annex 5 of this report).

15. The second international consultant and the national consultant provided feedback on the draft and the report was translated it into Spanish. It was then circulated for review to CNAP and UNDP CO. Upon receipt of the reviewers' comments, a final evaluation report was prepared.

3.4 Structure of the Evaluation

16. The structure of this evaluation followed the Terms of Reference provided by UNDP Cuba and approved by the UNDP-GEF Regional Service Centre (RSC) (see Annex 5 of this report). UNDP Guidelines for Evaluators as well as GEF evaluation policies were followed, as well as the specific expectations of the Implementing Agency (IA) and Executing Agency (EA).

4 Project Description and Development Context

4.1 Project Start, Expected Duration and Funding

17. The Project Document (ProDoc) was signed on September 30, 2009, with a planned five-year implementation period and a closure date of September 30, 2014. A Project Director from CNAP (the Deputy Director of the institution) was designated to the project. The date of first disbursement was October 2009 and the inception workshop took place from 27-29 January, 2010. The total resources committed by GEF for this project were USD $ 5,710,000 and the total expected co-financing amount as specified in the ProDoc was USD 14,104,907.

4.2 Problems that the Project Seeks to Address

18. Cuba has high levels of coastal and marine biodiversity and is considered to be the island with the most biodiversity in the Caribbean basin. The project area plays an important role regionally in ecosystem function and in the sustainability of fisheries stocks and populations of globally important biodiversity. Fish populations in the coral reefs, molluscs, and crustaceans, including in the project area, have decreased significantly in the last years along with catch levels. Existing studies of coral populations suggest reduced abundance of black coral colonies and the dominant reef-forming elkhorn coral *Acropora palmata*. Marine and coastal vegetation has witnessed degradation and loss, such as sea grass beds, which are key breeding areas for lobsters and other marine fauna. One of the most important threats to this coastal and marine biodiversity has been overfishing carried out primarily by commercial operators, including in spawning areas during critical periods, along with the use of destructive fishing techniques such as dragnets. In addition, eutrophication and sedimentation have led to the degradation of sea grass beds. The mangrove and coastal lagoon systems have been negatively impacted by reduced water volume flowing into them, leading to reduced nutrient inputs and increased salinity. Coral reefs have been degraded by changing hydrological conditions, notably increased sediment loads in the water flowing into the area resulting in increased turbidity, sedimentation, and nutrient concentrations, among other factors.

At the local level, some damage to coral reefs has also occurred from divers, snorkellers and the anchors of diving boats.

19. The long-term solution to address these threats to biodiversity, as described in the ProDoc, is as follows:

> A mosaic of protected and productive seascapes and landscapes needs to be planned and managed from a regional, rather than site specific, perspective, given the high degree of region-wide biological interrelations and interdependencies that result from the marine currents that traverse the whole area and the migratory nature of many of the species in the area.

20. The achievement of this solution is impeded by the following barriers:

Barrier 1: The definition of priorities for protected area (PA) establishment in the project area has largely been carried out on a site-specific basis to date and does not reflect the conceptual framework that has been defined for the marine protected areas (MPAs) as a whole, which recognizes the need for zoning, regional networks and connectivity. The prioritization has also occurred in the context of substantial information gaps.

Barrier 2: Management and logistical capacities are insufficient within the institutions responsible for PAs and for the regulation of the production sectors in the surrounding seascapes and landscapes.

Barrier 3: Insufficiently effective mechanisms exist to allow for cost efficient MPA operations, and there is insufficient integration between MPAs and productive sectors (especially tourism and fisheries), which limit opportunities for MPA financing and effective management.

21. The project design specifically addresses these barriers.

4.3 Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project

Project overall goal: Conserve globally important coastal and marine biodiversity in Cuba.

Specific Objective: Ensure that globally significant marine biodiversity is conserved and sustainably used through an extended, strengthened and integrated network of coastal and marine protected areas in the Southern Archipelagos region.

22. The project's objective is expected to be achieved through the following four Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Increased coverage of priority ecosystems by MPAs, related terrestrial PAs and associated management units within the productive landscape and seascape;
Outcome 2: MPAs in the project area are subject to effective management within the framework of a regional protected area subsystem;
Outcome 3: Business planning and partnerships with productive sectors increase MPA revenues and cost efficiencies.
Outcome 4: Monitoring. learning. adaptive feedback & evaluation

4.4 Expected Results

23. The Strategic Results Framework (SRF) contained in Section II of the ProDoc presents the Project Objective and four Project Outcomes, including specific indicators, baselines and targets. The project is expected to lead to substantial global environmental benefits, as described in more detail in Section I, Part II of the ProDoc, "Incremental reasoning and expected global, national and local benefits". In summary, the project was designed to enhance ecosystem function across the Southern Archipelagos, improve the conservation status of various globally rare species, and help to counter population reductions of species of marine fauna in the Caribbean, given that the project area is an important breeding and spawning ground. In addition, the project was developed to produce important national and local level benefits by enhancing the sustainability of the fisheries and tourism industries, which are both key sources of livelihoods in Cuba, and to improve the ability to adapt to climate change and improve resilience.

4.5 Main Stakeholders

24. The main stakeholders involved in the project are described in Section 1, Part 1, Situation Analysis and Section IV, Part 2 of the ProDoc (Stakeholder Analysis and Stakeholder Involvement Plan), including their roles and functions, interest in the project and form of participation/ impact. These include the National Centre for Protected Areas (CNAP), which is the institutional stakeholder with responsibility for planning and coordinating the National Protected Areas System (SNAP) and the MPAs. State-owned companies such as ENPFF and EFI (which belong to the agricultural ministry MINAG) own and manage a significant part of the PAs in the region, and CITMA owns and manages a smaller proportion of PAs. The Ministry of Food Industry (MINAL) is the principal institution in the fisheries sector, charged with promoting fisheries activities (through PESCACUBA and its dependent companies), purchasing fish and other seafood catches, as well as regulating and supervising the sector. It has direct involvement in PAs as a result of its establishment of ZBREUPs or fisheries reserves. MINTUR represents the main institution in the tourism sector, including several State-owned tourism enterprises that are involved in tourism projects with foreign investors. The Ministry of the Armed Forces (MINFAR) also plays a role in the tourism sector through its company Gaviota. The Institute of Physical Planning (IPF) is charged with planning of infrastructure development including in the tourism sector, and the Ministry of Environment is responsible for overseeing the environmental impact assessments (EIAs) of proposed investments. There is an inter-institutional National Coordinating Board for SNAP, and similar provincial-level bodies as well as Administration Boards for certain PAs. The resident population in the PAs of the project area includes approximately 25,000 inhabitants in the core and buffer zones. Various other stakeholders have interests in PAs or have an impact on them, but do not inhabit them. Twelve fishing enterprises that comprise PESCACUBA are involved in commercial fishing in the area, totaling 2,964 people.

5 Findings

5.1 Project Design/ Formulation

(Moderately Satisfactory)

- **Analysis of project objectives and components, Strategic Results Framework (project logic/strategy, indicators)**

25. The project objective and four Outcomes were well formulated and appropriate to address the main threats affecting coastal and marine BD in Cuba's Southern Archipelagos and to tackle the barriers preventing the long-term solution from being achieved. The selected indicators were "SMART"[1] and the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) included specific and measurable targets for end-of-project. At the Objective level, for the indicator related to human well-being[2], the means of measuring this indicator were not specified, which would have been useful for later implementation. In addition, there was only one relatively "macro-level" indicator included to measure the achievement of Outcome 3, which included many planned deliverables. Additional indicators would have facilitated reporting on the impact of various elements under this Outcome. The baseline PA financial information for the tracking tool was not available at the time of submission of the ProDoc. Finally, target values for three of the indicators were not available at the project design stage but the SRF specified that this information would be gathered at project outset.

26. The ProDoc would have benefitted from greater details on each of the Outputs in order to clarify how they would be operationalized. The Strategy section of the ProDoc included a description of each of the Outcomes but the Outputs were only listed in the SRF, without an explanation of what they would entail, how they would be achieved, the stakeholders involved, and the contribution of co-financing, among other elements. During project implementation, the PMU carried out more detailed planning on the specific activities to be carried out under each Outcome, but it would nonetheless have been helpful to have had more detail upfront.

27. Outcome 3, which tackles business planning, partnerships with productive sectors and pilot projects, was perhaps overly ambitious, especially in light of Cuba's economic context, as well as political and economic structure. The contribution of productive sectors to the financial sustainability of the protected areas system was an important goal to strive for, but an issue that had not yet been defined at the political level. The inclusion of greater detail on the different outputs involved in the ProDoc would have been particularly useful for this Outcome given the more limited experience in Cuba in carrying out these types of activities. In addition, the definition of pilot projects and inclusion of detail on planned activities would have helped orient project activities and likely would have sped up associated actions. An Annex on the pilot projects could have included details such as the proposed geographic locations for their implementation, activities to be carried out, stakeholders involved, etc. As it was, the implementation of the pilot projects began late and was affected by delays in importing some of the required materials.

28. Finally, although it does not relate directly to project design and will be mentioned again in the section on recommendations, the ProDoc was not translated into Spanish, which would have been helpful for the Executing Agency and other stakeholders.

- **Assumptions and Risks**

29. The ProDoc identified five main risks with low to medium risk ratings, which include:

- Conflicts between conservation interests and those of productive sector actors in relation to the to the declaration and management of PAs;

[1] Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.
[2] Proportion of people whose productive activities are affected by modification of the PA estate, who are fully compensated by alternative activities.

- Tourism levels increase so rapidly in the project area that ecological functioning of MPAs is impacted;
- Tourism levels are negatively affected by global or regional economic downturns;
- Reduced emphasis is placed on market-based mechanisms in relation to conservation;
- Climate change undermines BD values in MPAs.

30. Appropriate mitigation strategies were identified for these risks. In hindsight, it might have been useful to analyze in more detail the potential risks associated with the development of business plans and mechanisms to increase the financial sustainability of protected areas, given the economic and political structure of Cuba (see project results, Outcome 3 for more details). Furthermore, the approval of a financial mechanism to ensure reinvestment of revenues from PAs is outside of the control of the Executing Agency, as such decisions must be made by the Ministry of Economy and Planning; this was a project risk that might have merited mention. Specifically, the lack of experience in business planning, dependence of productive sectors on government policies, and difficulty in earmarking funding for particular purposes might have benefitted from being given more careful consideration.

31. One risk that did materialize and caused project delays relates to the difficulties experienced in importing goods in the context of the economic embargo and the fact that all imports need to go through the country's sole importation company, EMED. This critical risk was added in the 2012 PIR.

- **Planned Stakeholder Participation**

32. The ProDoc included a Stakeholder Analysis section, which described the main stakeholders in the project, as well as a more detailed Stakeholder Involvement Plan, outlining all the main relevant stakeholders, including their roles and functions/ mandate, interest in the project (how the project will contribute to the stakeholders' mandates etc.), and form of participation/ impact. The capacities of the stakeholders, roles, responsibilities and needs were adequately taken into consideration in the design of the project.

- **Replication Approach**

33. The ProDoc indicated that the project's regional approach to marine protected areas, as well as integrated management of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and of conservation and productive sectors, are highly replicable because of the high levels of biological connectivity and threats from productive sectors in other parts of the world. The project design itself did not focus on replication aspects during its implementation period, although uptake of various project deliverables, such as the Biodiversity Monitoring system did end up occurring outside of the project area, as did replication of some project activities.

- **UNDP Comparative Advantage**

34. UNDP Cuba has been working in Cuba since 1975, with an in-country office, which has enabled relationships to be formed with various stakeholders. Provision of administrative support, technical backstopping and financial oversight is facilitated by the agency's presence in the country and by its previous experience implementing a variety of natural resource and environmental projects. UNDP Cuba currently has 16 projects in its Environment and Energy Unit portfolio, including four in the biodiversity focal area (three Full-Sized Projects and one Enabling Activity). The Unit is comprised of three Program Officials and two Program Assistants (in addition to four staff members dedicated to specific projects). UNDP Cuba also implements the GEF Small Grants Program (GEF SGP), which funds community-based and collaborative management arrangements, including in the biodiversity focal area. These different

factors underscore UNDP´s strong comparative advantage as Implementing Agency for this project.

- **Linkages between Project and Other Interventions within the Sector and Lessons from Other Relevant Projects Incorporated Into Project Design**

35. The project design took into consideration the UNDP/GEF Sabana Camagüey project to ensure complementarity. This project in Cuba's Southern Archipelago is focused on 13 of Cuba's 21 important spawning aggregation sites for fish species, while the other eight had been included in the Sabana Camagüey project on the Northern coast. In addition, the ProDoc indicated that the project would learn from the Sabana Camagüey project's experiences in promoting environmentally and socially viable economic alternatives with local inhabitants, such as sponge culture and clam farming, and from the work carried out to develop instruments to support zoning and regulation.

36. This Southern Archipelagos project builds on achievements of a previous UNDP/GEF project to strengthen the national Protected Areas System, though this was not mentioned specifically in the ProDoc. It might have been useful for a section on coordination with other initiatives to have been included in the ProDoc to describes linkages with other projects in more detail.

5.2 Project Implementation- Monitoring and Evaluation (Design at entry and Implementation)

(Overall quality of M&E: Satisfactory)

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Design at entry (*Satisfactory*)**

37. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan design is satisfactory. The ProDoc included a detailed description of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan, covering key activities, such as a project inception workshop and preparation of inception report, quarterly progress reports, annual project reviews/project implementation reports (APRs/PIRs), periodic monitoring through site visits, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, annual audits, learning, and knowledge sharing. A total of US$ 337,900 was designated for the implementation of the M&E plan, which is considered sufficient. Each M&E activity is described, budgeted, and the responsible parties identified.

38. As explained in the Project Design section of this report, the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) is generally considered to have been well formulated, with appropriate indicators, baseline values, and targets to measure progress toward the project's Outcomes and specific objective, as well as identified risks. Additional indicators could have been included for Outcome 3 as mentioned previously.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation (Satisfactory)**

39. The Executing Agency and PMU carried out M&E tasks effectively. The Strategic Results Framework served as an important tool to guide project implementation and activities were planned with a view to achieving the targets that were set out. M&E activities were sufficiently funded during project implementation.

40. The Inception Workshop, the first important activity of the M&E plan, benefitted from high stakeholder participation, with approximately 64 participants from 39 institutions/ provincial delegations. During the workshop, working groups were formed to help orient activities under the different project

Outcomes, which helped steer the project from the outset.

41. The PMU regularly visited the provinces involved in the project to follow up on project progress with the institutions involved. Stakeholders commented on the continual support received from CNAP. In addition, the PMU carefully controlled all the resources provided by the project to ensure their appropriate use.

42. Another very useful tool used by the PMU for monitoring and evaluation was the lessons learned workshops, which were carried out annually with wide participation of relevant stakeholders. These provided a valuable opportunity for designated provincial project coordinators and other stakeholders across the country to share project achievements, learn from each other, and discuss any issues. In addition, the activities to be included in the AOPs were discussed; as such, annual project planning was carried out in a highly participatory manner.

43. A Mid-Term Evaluation took place in August 2013, approximately one year after the project mid-way mark, which would have been mid 2012. This was due to the desire to allow more activities to be carried out for Outcome 3 so that the MTE could provide substantive feedback on this element, as well as due to delays in finalizing and approving the TORs, hiring the evaluation team and scheduling the mission. Many of the recommendations proposed ideas for the pilot project work, which had yet to be implemented at that stage.

44. As described in more detail in the Executing Agency Implementation section, the PMU carried out regular project reporting, including through the submission of quarterly operational reports, annual PIRs and AOPs. There were a few issues with regard to reporting on progress toward achieving project indicators. Specifically, the targets for three of the indicators, as well as the financial information on PAs for inclusion in the tracking tool, were not identified until 2013, the fourth year of project implementation. In addition, in a few instances, there were inconsistencies in the reporting on a few of the indicators related to species and ecosystems and the numbers provided in the PIRs were not justified. There were no problems with the submission or quality of the QORs or the AOPs.

45. The tracking tool for GEF biodiversity projects was partially completed for 19 protected areas during project design and was fully reapplied in the fall of 2014 near project closure for 29 protected areas (this includes the new PAs that were established during the project). The 2014 data provides information on the project's impact on PA management effectiveness (see Outcomes description for more details). Due to the substantial difficulties experienced in obtaining financial information on the protected areas, the financial section of the tracking tool was only completed once in 2014, meaning that this data cannot be compared to a pre-project baseline. It is therefore not possible to comment on the project's final impact on the financial sustainability of the protected areas in the project area.

46. It should be noted that a Project Steering Committee was not established as the PMU felt that this structure would duplicate other existing structures for discussion of the project and resolution of problems, including the National Protected Areas Board, the provincial Protected Areas Boards, the sessions between MINCEX, CITMA and UNDP ('maratones'), and the annual lessons learned workshops. Despite the fact that the project was very successful without such a Committee, it is recommended that it be formed for future projects to ensure that high-level decision makers meet on a regular basis to discuss project progress, bottlenecks and identify solutions. For this project, it is difficult in hindsight to foresee the role that a PSC might have played, but it is possible that it could have sped up some of the delays in gathering financial information for the completion of the PA tracking tool and supported the implementation of various elements of Outcome 3.

47. The ratings included in the most recent PIR for 2014 are consistent with the ratings of the Final

Evaluation. The FE covered the period until January 2015, six months after the PIR for 2014 was completed.

2014 PIR:

	Rating of Progress toward meeting development objective	*Rating of implementation progress*
National Project Manager	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory
UNDP Country Office	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
UNDP Regional Technical Adviser	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

FE Ratings:

Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation	Satisfactory
Overall quality of project Implementation/ Execution	Highly Satisfactory
Overall quality of project outcomes	Satisfactory

5.3 Implementing and Executing Agency –Implementation, execution, coordination and operational issues

(*Overall quality of Implementation/Execution: (Highly Satisfactory)*

Implementing Agency Execution *(Highly Satisfactory)*

48. UNDP Implementation of this project is rated as Highly Satisfactory. Interviewees commented on the strong levels of communication and collaboration between the PMU and the UNDP Cuba Country Office. UNDP provided regular technical and administrative support and guidance to CNAP, which facilitated achievement of the project's goals. In parallel to the system set up by CNAP, UNDP employs its own mechanism for controlling expenditures using a database. UNDP played an important role in monitoring budgetary execution, helping to speed up acquisitions and patiently and regularly following up on the procurement issue. This entailed active participation in regular sessions between UNDP, CITMA and EMED, locally known as 'marathons'. In addition to these sessions, UNDP Cuba participated in the annual lessons learned workshops, benefitting from information exchange on the project and participation in the preparation of Annual Operational Plans.

49. In terms of the preparation of the annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), UNDP support included: (i) preparing guidelines for the project team to complete the PIR and explain changes to the template, etc. (ii) holding meetings with the project team to conduct technical discussions, provide advice and seek clarifications regarding indicators, outputs, lessons learned, adjustments, etc.; (iii) reviewing/translating some sections into English.

50. UNDP Cuba also provided political/ strategic support to the project. For example, the UNDP Resident Representative held a high-level meeting with the Minister of Tourism to discuss priorities for cooperation. Among other issues, lessons learned and the experiences of this project were discussed. The Ministry of Tourism expressed its satisfaction with the work that has been achieved to promote sustainable tourism with the project.

Executing Agency Execution (*Highly Satisfactory)*

51. CNAP as the Executing Agency performed its functions in a highly satisfactorily manner.

52. CNAP is an independent body within the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA), which reports directly to the Vice Minister. CNAP has the benefit of substantial experience successfully implementing large international cooperation projects, including GEF-funded projects. For example, prior to this project it executed a project to strengthen the national protected areas system and this project builds on its predecessor. In addition, CNAP executed the Sabana Camaguëy project, which was focused on the coastal and marine areas of the North of Cuba. As a result, CNAP has accumulated know-how on relevant proceedings and has established relationships with various stakeholders across the country, factors that played a beneficial role in project execution. It should also be noted that CITMA has a physical presence/ organizational structure across the country, which facilitates project execution. As commented by many of the stakeholders, CNAP has solid administrative abilities and a strong capacity for budgetary execution. The agency also has experienced personnel to work on environmental projects.

53. The Project Management Unit (PMU) comprised a solid and experienced team, including a Project Director (who is also the Deputy Director of CNAP), a project technical coordinator, and coordinators for each of the project's three Outcomes. The PMU is seen by stakeholders to have employed a very professional, disciplined, organized and systematic approach to project execution. It demonstrated leadership and had the ability to mobilize and convene key actors, develop productive partnerships and positive relationships and maintain significant credibility.

54. Stakeholders interviewed during the Final Evaluation mission all concurred that the PMU provided regular support, guidance, and follow-up and that there was a high level of coordination. Communication was said to be direct and regular, which sped up project execution. The PMU periodically visited the provinces involved in the project for follow-up. The provinces provided quarterly updates, which were consolidated by the project's technical coordinator and were used in the development of POAs and PIRs. The PMU was considered to have adopted a flexible approach with stakeholders, to have been receptive to their needs, and to have made adjustments when needed based on the conditions in the country. The PMU also demonstrated significant organizational abilities. For example, all planned scientific expeditions were carried out, with the PMU coordinating the involvement of many different institutions and specialists and arranging all the logistics and required permits.

55. The PMU regularly controlled the project's budgetary execution, maintained a focus on the expected project results and worked hard to produce expected deliverables. The project was able to be completed within its planned five year time period, without the need for an extension. As highlighted in the Monitoring & Evaluation section of this report, CNAP carried out periodic M&E activities. This included regular submission of QORs, with no issues in terms of quality noted. Annual PIRs were submitted in a timely manner; the M&E section of this report describes a few issues related to the presentation of data for some project indicators. The PMU also carried out project planning of each activity with foresight and diligence. The annual process of preparing the AOPs was carried out in a participatory manner with the input of a large number of stakeholders at the lessons learned workshops.

56. According to interviews, the PMU responded to problems that emerged rapidly and efficiently and risk management was carried out effectively. For example, the PMU continuously followed up on the issue of procurement delays in order to expedite budgetary execution, maintaining regular communication with the company responsible for all imports in Cuba, EMED.

57. Resources purchased with the project were carefully controlled by the PMU, as well as by local-level stakeholders, who maintained their own system to register and track these resources.

58. CNAP's legal and administrative mandate is focused on regulating the country's protected areas. Nevertheless, it took on the role of Executing Agency for a project that included work with communities and with productive sectors outside of protected areas due to the inherent linkages involved. CNAP has less human resources and experience with this type of socio-economic work. Nevertheless, it has worked with other sectors such as tourism in the past and these relationships with productive sectors were strengthened through the project. Additional staff members with social and economic training were brought on board to work with the communities in this project for Outcome 3.

59. Finally, CNAP maintained high project visibility throughout, with the distribution of project material, mass media coverage, regular communication and interaction with a wide variety of stakeholders, and publication of scientific articles.

- **Finance**

60. Annual budgetary execution levels were strong, with approximately USD 1 million spent per year. In the national context and given the substantial difficulties in procurement, this is a sizeable feat. At the time of the Final Evaluation, the project had spent 98% of its budget, with the remaining funds earmarked for the final lessons learned workshop and the Final Evaluation. Table 3 summarizes the expenditures per Outcome and per year, as compared to the amounts included in the ProDoc and in the AOPs. Levels of budgetary execution were somewhat lower in the first years, but improved significantly over time.

61. Financial audits on the project were carried out in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 and no major findings were highlighted, apart from the fact that not all of the annual budget was executed in the first few years due mainly to delays in importing goods. In addition to these audits, the project also underwent strict internal, national auditing and controls through CITMA. The PMU carried out strong financial management and employed an appropriate system to reconcile project expenses.

Table 3: Summary of Expenditures by Outcome and Year

Outcome	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total Accumulated Project Budget
Outcome 1:							
Budget in ProDoc	310,324	183,074	176,324	91,674	83,047		**844,443**
Amount in AWP in Atlas	0	282,147	284,614	216,836	133,254	2,300	916,852
Amount disbursed	4,254	147,724	193,816	199,616	109,111	2,339	**656,860**
Delivery Rate	**0%**	**52%**	**68%**	**92%**	**82%**	**102%**	**78%**
Outcome 2:							
Budget in ProDoc	1,027,000	730,847	556,451	188,332	182,301		**2,684,931**
Amount in AWP in Atlas	30,000	717,483	1,006,600	566,762	724,781	335,577	3,045,626
Amount disbursed	9,589	603,385	452,583	933,309	422,088	309,691	**2,730,645**
Delivery Rate	**32%**	**84%**	**45%**	**165%**	**58%**	**92%**	**102%**
Outcome 3:							
Budget in ProDoc	247,412	492,239	472,437	257,622	140,416		**1,610,126**
Amount in AWP in Atlas	3,875	230,183	416,182	339,391	434,300	181,543	1,423,931
Amount disbursed	0	199,128	275,815	459,375	618,748	163,508	**1,716,575**
Delivery Rate	**0%**	**87%**	**66%**	**135%**	**142%**	**90%**	**107%**
Outcome 4:							
Budget in Prodoc	162,920	61,120	126,370	83,120	136,970		**570,500**

Amount in AWP in Atlas	21,200	120,642	416,182	141,941	157,094	130,488	857,059
Amount disbursed	14,829	80,820	95,478	114,339	126,086	98,230	**529,782**
Delivery Rate	**70%**	**67%**	**23%**	**81%**	**80%**	**75%**	**93%**
Gran Total							
Total budget in ProDoc	**1,747,656**	**1,467,280**	**1,331,582**	**620,748**	**542,734**		**5,710,000**
Total Amount in AWP in Atlas	55,075	1,350,455	2,123,579	1,264,930	1,449,429	649,908	6,243,468
Total disbursed	**28,672**	**1,031,057**	**1,017,692**	**1,706,639**	**1,276,033**	**573,769**	**5,633,861**
Total delivery Rate	**52%**	**76%**	**48%**	**135%**	**88%**	**88%**	**99%**

- **Co-financing**

62. The PMU tracked co-financing contributions nationally and provincially. Provincial-level coordinators provided the PMU with a completed template on co-financing levels regularly. By project end, total co-financing contributions amounted to 23,936, 257 Cuban pesos (CUP). The most important co-financier was FONADEF. These contributions came primarily in the form of the payment of: the salaries of the Project Management Unit and provincial coordinators; the salaries of workers involved in monitoring of species and ecosystems, surveillance activities, control of forest fires, planting of mangroves, and other activities; use of equipment; and others (see Table 4).

63. By project end, co-financing amounts exceeded the original projection included in the ProDoc due to additional funding received from FONADEF, state budgets and other resources that were leveraged during project implementation.

Table 4: Summary of Co-financing

Co-financing (type and source)	UNDP financing			Government (CUP)			Other sources (CUP)			Total (US$)		
	Amount in ProDoc	Amounts committed after ProDoc approval	Funds spent	Amount in ProDoc	Amounts committed after ProDoc approval	Funds spent	Amount in ProDoc	Amounts committed after ProDoc approval	Funds spent	Amount in ProDoc	Amounts committed after ProDoc approval	Funds spent
Grants				13,810,000		19,027,600	294,907.00		1,160,550	14,104,907		20,188,150
Credit										0.00		0
Equity										0.00		0
In-kind	54,907		54,907							0.00		54,907
Non-grant instruments									71,000	0.00		71,000
Other types						3,622,200				0.00		3,622,200
Total	54,907	0.00	54,907	13,810,000	0.00	22,649,800	294,907.00	0.00	1,231,550	14,104,907	0.00	23,936,257

- **Adaptive Management**

64. While the annual PIRs did not report on the use of adaptive management, it is evident that the PMU and the Executing Agency in general did do so on various occasions. For example, CNAP took advantage of a change in government policy with the elimination of trawling nets to provide support to fishermen in the communities of Ciénaga de Zapata and Batabanó for the adoption of more sustainable fishing techniques. CNAP also adapted to different formats for project reporting.

65. During the project implementation period, there were some changes in Cuba's institutional framework. For example, the Fisheries Ministry became part of MINAL (Ministry of Food Industry), which did not have a negative impact on the project. In addition, the institution that had been responsible for the issue of ZBRMICs, called CIGEA, was dismantled, which has led to some delays in the formal approval of new ZBRMICs.

- **Stakeholders/ Partnership Arrangements**

66. Many different partnerships were strengthened or created as a result of this project in order to cooperatively work toward achievement of the project's Outcomes. For example:

- Partnership with Mundo Latino, the national television producer, for the production of a large number of audiovisual documentaries and clips related to the project, MPAs, and sustainable tourism.
- Partnership with over 30 universities and research centres to develop and come to agreement on ten protocols for the monitoring of key species and ecosystems.
- Partnership with national institutions such as the Forest Rangers and Border Guard for joint surveillance exercises and for monitoring of key ecosystems, such as mangroves.
- Partnership with the state tourism sector (including the national sustainable tourism operator EcoTur), with the Ministry of Tourism, and with local private tourism actors, to increase awareness among tourism operators about the values of the region's PAs, to promote sustainable tourism generally and to engage communities in private sustainable tourism activities.
- Partnership with the Centre for Fisheries Research for training on the closed season of the lobster fishery.
- The project worked with different NGOs and CSOs, such as COSPE, WWF Netherlands, Sea to Shore Alliance, Mac Arthur Foundation, Birdlife, Environmental Defense, International Ocean Institute, ProNaturaleza, , Cuban Federation of Sports Fisheries, and The Nature Conservancy, which provided support for activities that complemented the project, such as sea turtle monitoring and training activities.

5.4 Project Results/ Effectiveness

Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*Satisfactory*)

Effectiveness (*Satisfactory*)

Outcome 1: Increased coverage of priority ecosystems by MPAs, related terrestrial PAs and associated management units within the productive landscape and seascape

67. Under this Outcome, priority ecosystems, such as coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves, as well as key species were surveyed with the realization of 30 expeditions to 15 MPAs. All planned expeditions were carried out with the participation of various stakeholders. In addition, baseline information was gathered for the 28 MPAs in the project area. This information was consolidated by one of the members of the CNAP PMU and was used in the designation of new MPAs and in the updating and development of MPA management and operational plans. These expeditions led to the gathering of a substantial amount of new scientific information on the biodiversity of the region, as there had been little characterization of many areas within the Southern Archipelagos before the project. This includes over 200 reports of new species for the region or for Cuba, and reports of previously unknown nesting sites for crocodiles and iguanas, among other findings. The scientific results also contributed to the publication of over 60 scientific articles and to Master's and doctorate degrees.

68. A total of 15 new MPAs[3] in the project area were declared during the project, and the project area now has a total of 28 MPAs. At a regional level, there is continuity in terms of the location of the MPAs. This represents a significant increase in the coverage of priority ecosystems in protected areas and an important project achievement. Based on project reports, these MPAs include key sites for the life cycle of many species with high conservation and/or commercial value, including fish spawning sites and feeding and resting areas for many species of invertebrates and fishes. All new MPAs have staff members assigned to them as their approval is dependent on the existence of management capacity and the state providing at least a minimum of funds for their management.

69. Three new Zones under Special Regime of Integrated Coastal Management (ZBRMIC) were legally approved, five more proposals have been prepared and three are in the process of being prepared. The ZBRMICs involved the definition of management units and zones, taking into consideration issues such as biological connectivity and ecosystem protection and were the result of a participatory process including workshops. For six of these new ZBRMICs some planning or implementation of actions is being carried out through the implementation of programs to manage the areas with periodic checks as to the level of achievement of planned actions. The institution that had been responsible for ZBRMICs, entitled CIGEA, no longer exists as a result of institutional restructuring, which means that new ZBRMICs either need to be approved by the Council of Ministers or at a more local level. This institutional change has led to delays in the approval of new ZBRMICs. As part of this Outcome, the project also supported updated mapping of the 25 existing ZBREUPs and led to the declaration of two new Zones under Special Regime of Use and Protection (ZBREUPs) with fishing restrictions, with an additional six ZBREUPs in the process of being negotiated.

70. Based on the new data gathered on priority ecosystems and species through project monitoring, a total of 40 protected areas have been included in the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan for SNAP, meaning that 12

[3] Reserva Ecológica Los Pretiles, Parque Nacional Cayos de San Felipe, Elemento Natural Destacado Banco de San Antonio, Área Protegida de Recursos Manejados Península de Zapata, Parque Nacional Jardines de la Reina, Elemento Natural Destacado Sistema Espeleolacustre, Parque Nacional Punta Francés, Área Protegida de Recursos Manejados Sur de la Isla de la Juventud, Área Protegida de Recursos Manejados Península de Guanacahabibes, Refugio de Fauna Cayos Campos- Rosario, Refugio de Fauna Ojo de Agua, Refugio de Fauna Humedales del Gua y Cayos de Manzanillo, Reserva Ecológica El Macio.

areas were included in addition to the 28 areas with which the project had worked. These 40 areas include formally approved PAs and some that are in the process of formal designation.

71. As detailed in Table 5, many of the targets for this Outcome were met in terms of coverage of ecosystems and establishment of different categories of PAs. There were, however, less ZMREUPs that were declared and somewhat less area covered under ZBRMICs than included in the original project targets, primarily because of the complexities involved in working with various municipalities and provinces and obtaining consensus for such designations among different stakeholders, including communities and economic sectors. In this sense the project design may have been overly ambitious in terms of the expected targets.

Outcome 2: MPAs in the project area are subject to effective management within the framework of a regional protected area subsystem

72. The project promoted increased inter-institutional cooperation and developed a national strategy of joint surveillance for MPAs. The institutional strengthening and equipment purchases enabled a total of eight joint surveillance expeditions to be carried out in six provinces during the project with the involvement of the Coast Guard of the Ministry of Interior (MININT), Fisheries Inspectors and MPA managers. Part of this work entailed the definition of a methodology for dealing with illegal activity when out at sea. The implementation of joint expeditions is now a policy of the National Protected Areas System Board, and will be expanded to the Northern part of the country. The project also supported the strengthening of provincial protected areas boards through training and provision of equipment. For example, four boats were acquired for CNAP, ONIP, CGB and CIM and five vehicles for the fisheries sector, ENPFF and PMU (these boats facilitate monitoring and protection, including joint surveillance actions), along with diving equipment to permit underwater monitoring, among others.

73. The project made significant investments in providing equipment and transportation for the administrative offices and biological stations of 26 MPAs, which are critical for them to be able to carry out their management, monitoring and enforcement functions. This material support also improved the working and living conditions of local workers. Equipment purchases included 21 small boats (many of the MPAs did not have any), terrestrial transportation, solar panels, office supplies and computers, among others. It also included equipment for monitoring, research and surveillance activities, such as measurement instruments, camping and diving gear, binoculars, etc. SNAP's Communication System was strengthened with the purchase of 198 new pieces of equipment. In addition, the project funded drilling equipment and accessories, including 400 buoys and 400 anchors to enable the delimitation of MPAs and diving areas in five MPAs and to permit moorage of vessels to avoid damage to coral reefs. The evaluators were able to visit the Maria la Gorda International Diving Centre, where boats had been anchoring to the coral reefs for 20 years before the project supported the purchase of buoys for moorage. The demarcation of protected areas was also important for community members and other stakeholders to know the actual limits of the MPAs.

74. A Strategic Plan was developed for the Southern Archipelagos, which takes into consideration issues such as sustainable development, and included indicators to measure its effectiveness. It also included broad financial figures regarding funding requirements for the action programs. It would have been useful to include more of an analysis of biological connectivity for the region. This Strategy guided project implementation, but was not legally approved as a stand-alone strategy. However, many of the actions included therein were included in SNAP's third Strategic Plan for 2014-2020, which did receive legal approval, including programs on fisheries resources, sustainable tourism, joint surveillance, climate change and monitoring, both for the region and for the country. To strengthen management at the level of individual PAs, a total of 23 management plans were developed or updated, as well as one Special

Operational Plan. At the time of project closure, all legally approved MPAs with administrative staff have management plans. In addition, three management plans were developed for ZBRMICs and are under implementation, with seven more that have been developed or are in the process of being developed. To support the authorities charged with management of the ZBRMICs, that is, the local governments, 13 capacity building classrooms were provided with computers and furniture, among other equipment.

75. In terms of the reporting and monitoring of MPA management, the PA management effectiveness tool was applied in 2010 and 2014. During the Final Evaluation mission, PA administrators commented that they included adaptive management measures in Annual Operational Plans based on application of this tool. The project went a step further than just applying the tool by revising the methodology in use in Cuba for measuring PA management effectiveness for the first time in 10 years. The methodology now includes 40 indicators, as well as an increased emphasis on marine elements and on socio-economic issues, leading to increased utility.

76. The PMU dedicated substantial time and efforts in support of Output 2.7, which involved the establishment of systems for ecological assessments and monitoring of MPAs. Ten key species and ecosystems were selected[4] and twelve standardized monitoring protocols were developed based on extensive work with research centres and universities. Prior to the project, some monitoring was taking place for some of these species and ecosystems, but the methodologies in use varied among different areas. Some species, such as manatees, had not been monitored at all before by protected areas staff. The protocols that were developed include substantial detail and scientific information but remain user-friendly and readable for those without a scientific background. The monitoring programs were applied within the project area in 26 MPAs and have even started to be used outside of the project area. A system to manage the monitoring data collected was established with the protected areas gathering the data, executive coordinators following up to ensure that this is done and scientific coordinators reviewing the data. A total of 21 scientific and executive coordinators and one general coordinator were involved in this work. Validation workshops were carried out to provide feedback on the quality of the data and make adjustments accordingly. The information was sent to CNAP on an annual basis, which reviewed and consolidated the data. The project also supported the purchase of equipment to facilitate monitoring, such as monitoring kits and field equipment.

77. According to interviewees, information from the monitoring activities is being used to support management of protected areas, species and ecosystems; for example, iguana nests were transplanted as a result of evidence of higher sea levels. The project published the ten standardized protocols, an interim report on the results of the BD monitoring, a multimedia with all documentation related to the BD monitoring program, and a final publication on the state of coastal marine biodiversity in the Southern Archipelagos of Cuba based on all the results of the BD monitoring gathered during the time of the project. The PMU is to be commended for the knowledge management carried out, with the consolidation of a large amount of information in different publications to make it as accessible as possible. A total of 1000 copies of the protocols were printed and distributed to relevant stakeholders, such as all the PAs, the institutions, University of La Habana, research centres, botanical gardens, Forest Rangers, Border Guard, State Forest Service, and pedagogical training institutes, among others. In addition, 13 species identification factsheets were developed to support monitoring in protected areas. CNAP has expressed its commitment to continue to manage this BD monitoring system, which is now part of the organization's Strategic Plan, and hopes that it will expand to the rest of the country and will include additional species and ecosystems. To support the implementation of the monitoring protocols, over 280 specialists of CNAP were trained on the protocols, species and ecosystems.

[4] The ten key species and ecosystems that were prioritized include crocodiles (two protocols developed), iguanas, marine turtles, manatees , aquatic and terrestrial birds, coral reefs (two protocols developed), marine grasses, mangroves and vegetation of the sandy coast.

78. The project provided substantial support to increasing the capacity of MPA personnel on a variety of issues, such as planning and management of MPAs, diving, marine signalling, and conflict resolution, among others. Information exchanges were carried out with USA, Mexico, Colombia and the Dominican Republic on planning and management of MPAs. In addition, the project supported the development of a number of Master's and Doctorate degrees.

79. Finally, the project also supported the production of educational material and information, such as television editing equipment, underwater video cameras and other equipment for the production of audiovisual material by Mundo Latino, a television producer. Mundo Latino also participated in some of the scientific expeditions in order to film the PAs and developed photo exhibitions. In total, over 30 audiovisual material related to MPAs and project results were produced with a substantial number of viewers reached through the state television channel and an international cable channel. The project provided support for annual festivals in the MPAs (materials, etc.) and for environmental education activities with children (through 'circulos de interes[5]) and support for over 20 publications.

Outcome 3: Business planning and partnerships with productive sectors increase MPA revenues and cost efficiencies

80. The project strengthened partnerships with the tourism and fisheries productive sectors and supported improved financial management of PAs, though more work is still required to increase MPA revenues and strengthen business planning. In terms of the tourism sector, sustainable tourism products for four PAs were developed and an additional existing tourism product was revised. Three of the four new sustainable tourism products are in the process of implementation. The project funded the development of a publication on sustainable tourism in the region, which includes strategic guidelines for sustainable tourism in Cuba's National Protected Areas System, a guide for the design of sustainable tourism products, as well as a methodology to monitor the public use of marine protected areas in Cuba, which is already beginning to be applied (Outputs 3.1 and 3.2).

81. As part of Output 3.6, the project supported training programs for MPA stakeholders on the topic of sustainable tourism and best practices. Based on the interviews carried out during the Final Evaluation, this training, which was led by an international consultant specialized in sustainable tourism with the help of a respected former CNAP employee, was very well received. A total of 120 nature tourism guides received training and over 200 tourism guides participated in various meetings. Travel agencies were taken on two excursions to the Ciénaga de Zapata protected area (in some cases for the first time) as part of itinerant training/ workshops on sustainable tourism. The Ministry of Tourism expressed its satisfaction with this training. Local community members also benefitted from workshops on sustainable tourism. The capacity building provided by the project contributed to a significant increase in locals living near PAs who are renting out rooms to tourists, which is having positive economic impacts on the local economy.

82. The project kickstarted the reactivation of the National Group of Nature Tourism and the provincial groups, which were legally approved by the Council of Ministers in December 2013. The National Group is charged with analyzing the subject of nature tourism, approving new sustainable tourism products, such as tourist paths, and marketing them. The project also led to agreements with national tourism operators so that MPAs are incorporated in their work. To promote sustainable tourism,

[5] These are a coordinated set of community-based after-school activities dedicated to increasing exposure to science and to scientific careers among K-12 students in Cuba.

the project supported the production of a documentary on the country's main sustainable tourism operator, Ecotur, and other documentaries and shorter clips on Cuba's protected areas, species and ecosystems, through a partnership with the TV producer, Mundo Latino. One of the interviewees commented that "the project enabled a rapprochement between the conservation and tourism sectors".

83. Output 3.5, which entailed the development of mechanisms and agreements for channeling tourism revenues to PA management, proved more challenging for several reasons. Firstly, the final decision on the channeling of revenues rests with the Ministry of Economy and Planning, not CNAP or even CITMA. Furthermore, in the political and economic climate of Cuba, the concept of financial sustainability for the national protected areas system still requires further promotion. While the project did not result in the type of regional or national financial mechanism originally envisioned, it did provide support to several protected areas in which fees are now being collected from tourists and are reinvested in the PAs. For example, in the Elemento Natural Destacado Sistema Espeleolacustre de Zapata, the project supported awareness raising activities and the identification of the area's carrying capacity. Since 2013, this protected area now receives payments from tourists for access to dive sites, resulting in annual revenues of 19,326 CUC, excluding the profits for the tourism sector. The project also supported several academic studies into the topic of willingness to pay. The issues of PA financial sustainability, ecosystem services and implementation of sustainable productive activities near PAs were raised at the political level and were taken to the level of the Cuban General Assembly to increase awareness among decision makers. Parliamentarians also benefitted from visits to several protected areas.

84. For Output 3.7, training programs, manuals and procedures for MPA personnel in financial/ business planning and financial management, the project produced a financial planning guide for PAs, which includes a "tool box" to standardize the calculation of budget expenditures associated with PA management plans and operational plans, estimates of revenues, funding sources and financing gaps. This useful tool complements work being undertaken by CNAP to revise the methodology to develop PA management plans by strengthening the financial planning aspect. Training was provided to PA administrators on the use of this manual and the instrument is beginning to be used. In addition, the PMU gathered financial information on PAs, which proved challenging, and completed the UNDP tracking tool on PA financial sustainability in 2014. In this way, it was able to identify SNAP's funding gap. A proposal was made to CITMA, the DMA and the Parliamentary Commission on PAs regarding financial mechanisms for SNAP, which involved one part of PA revenues remaining in the PAs, another going to the SNAP for redistribution among PAs, and a third part going to the government budget. This proposal also suggested that a special fund be set up, but this was not deemed feasible in the current economic climate. At the time of the Final Evaluation, a modified proposal that is considered more practical was presented to decision-makers including Cuba's Vice President and the Ministry of CITMA and is in the process of being discussed. The project also developed a Strategic Financial Plan for the MPAs of the project, which was included in the Regional Strategy for the Southern Archipelagos. Finally, the project developed a Strategy for the Financial Sustainability of SNAP as a whole, which includes the topic of payments for ecosystem services.

85. Through the project, preliminary economic valuation studies were carried out for various protected areas. Five case studies were carried out through working groups on the economic value of different ecosystem goods and services for five MPAs. Training was also provided to communities on alternative productive activities, ecosystem services and human well being, among other topics. This led to the production of a multimedia CD, as well as a detailed publication on the links between ecosystem services and the welfare of human communities, which has been disseminated to key stakeholders from the National Protected Areas Board, among others, and in national and international conferences. This information is important for the project planned under GEF 6 on economic valuation, as it provides the basis for further analysis of ecosystem services and development of mechanisms to put market values on these so that they may constitute a source of funds for PAs. As a result, as per Output 3.3 (information on

economic implications, such as costs and benefits of conservation to guide financial planning and policy formulation), the project took some steps to gather this information but further efforts are still required for this to guide financial planning and policy formulation.

86. Output 3.8 related to pilots/demonstrations of revenue generation for PAs and reducing impacts on PAs through sustainable productive activities (e.g. tourism and fisheries). The project supported workshops to enable six communities living near PAs to map out the existing problems and identify feasible economic alternatives which would contribute to their standard of living and reduce pressure on PA natural resources. Based on this work, a document on economic alternatives was produced, with some preliminary studies on apiculture and crab harvesting, among others. This document has now been finalized and is being disseminated. Little implementation of these economic alternatives occurred during the project time period due to the late start-up of this work and limited budget availability (more budget was assigned to other elements such as support for sustainable fishing). The project did contribute to the development and approval by MINAL of a regulation on crab harvesting in Ciénaga de Zapata, which included the establishment of a quota. In addition, equipment and tools were purchased to enable the community of Los Hondones, which suffers from poor soil conditions, to promote small-scale farming with six greenhouses (for consumption and sale), complemented by workshops on environmental issues. Procurement delays meant that the greenhouses were not set up by the time of the Final Evaluation. The community is in the process of finding a resolution for a recent failure of the micro-aqueduct in order for the urban agriculture pilot project to reap the intended results.

87. As part of the pilot project work on alternative productive activities, the project supported the acquisition of sustainable fishing gear to help two fishing cooperatives adapt to the recent changes in legislation with the elimination of trawling nets (known as "chinchorros" in Cuba). This included the purchase of plastic mesh, fishing hooks, and other necessary equipment. The main investments were for eight trawlers in Ciénaga de Zapata and two in Batabanó. The project also provided training to support this shift to more sustainable fisheries. The PMU's decision to carry out this work with the fishermen of these two communities was well received. The project also supported training related to the lobster and shrimp fisheries to promote sustainability.

88. In general, there were some delays in the implementation of Outcome 3, including the implementation of pilot projects and other actions, which may be due to staffing changes during project implementation, less in-house expertise within CNAP on social and economic issues, insufficient detail in the ProDoc to guide actions, and lack of experience in carrying out economic valuation, financial planning and implementing sustainable economic alternatives in communities (including because there is no cultural tradition of starting local businesses). Nonetheless, valuable and novel experiences were gained and information gathered to support strengthened financial planning, greater cooperation and partnerships with the tourism and fisheries sectors, the economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services and implementation of sustainable economic alternatives with communities. It would be useful to further build on these experiences in the future to develop financial mechanisms for reinvestment of PA revenues, to charge for ecosystem goods and services, and to explore issues such as willingness to pay among national and international tourists.

89. The baseline in terms of the financial sustainability of protected areas was only calculated in the fall of 2014 rather than at the project design stage or in the first year of project implementation, as the PMU indicated that it was very difficult to obtain financial information about individual protected areas in the Cuban context. As a result, it is not possible to comment on the final project impact in terms of the tracking tool score on financial sustainability of protected areas. Nevertheless, as indicated in the Table that follows, there has been an increase in PA revenues and the associated target was exceeded.

Outcome 4: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback & evaluation

90. The project carried out regular monitoring and evaluation activities. Annual lessons learned workshops were carried out to review achievements and plan for upcoming activities. Annual PIRs were prepared and reported on project indicators, although the baseline data for a few indicators were not available until 2013. The POAs were prepared in a highly participatory manner and took into consideration previous achievements and pending tasks. A Mid-term Evaluation was carried (though somewhat later than the mid-term mark), with positive ratings. As described in the project execution section, the PMU employed adaptive management when necessary to work toward achievement of the project's objective.

Table 5: Level of Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes based on Project Indicators

Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2014 based on the PIR	Comments at Final Evaluation
Objective: Globally significant marine biodiversity conserved and sustainably used through an extended, strengthened and integrated network of coastal and marine protected areas in the Southern Archipelagos region	Maintenance of extent of mangroves	395,602 ha	395,602 ha	333,914 ha	The maps of the priority ecosystems were revised during the project and information was field checked. This led to a reassessment of the extent of mangroves at 333,914 ha (2013 data). Given that no new pressures were placed on the mangroves, the apparent reduction in area of mangroves is likely due to an inflated baseline figure. In fact, since 2012 there has been a government moratorium on cutting of mangroves. It was also noted by interviewees during the Final Evaluation that some project co-financing was used for the planting of mangrove trees. The mangrove monitoring protocol recommends that monitoring be carried out every two years, so new data are expected to be collected in 2015.
	Maintenance of cover of live coral, by site	% at sites (see data below)	% at sites (see data below)		

		Colorados 16 Guanahacabibes 20 San Felipe 20 Sur de la IJ 16 Canarreos 16 Bahía de Cochinos 30 Cazones 24 Jardines 15 Guacanayabo 21	Colorados 16 Guanahacabibes 20 San Felipe 20 Sur de la IJ 16 Canarreos 16 Bahía de Cochinos 30 Cazones 24 Jardines 15 Guacanayabo 21	Colorados 16 Guanahacabibes 24 San Felipe 17 Sur de la IJ 16 Canarreos 13.1 Bahía de Cochinos 29.2 Cazones 32.2 Jardines 14.4 Guacanayabo 9.7	The targets in terms of percentage of coral cover were reached for four of the sites: Colorados, Guanahacabibes, South of Isla de la Juventud and Cazones. The targets were actually surpassed for Guanahacabibes and Cazones. In two of the sites, the percentage of coral cover decreased slightly (Bahía de Cochinos and Jardines). However, in San Felipe, Canarreos and Guacanayabo, there were more pronounced reductions. In Canarreos, this is believed to be due to the impact of several hurricanes since the baseline figures were calculated in 2001, which led to strong surf and increased sedimentation. Decreases in coral reef cover in this area and others are also believed to reflect global and regional trends linked primarily to climate change.
	Maintenance of total biomass of fish and carnivores, by site (total/carnivores)	Sites g/m2	Sites g/m2		

		Colorados 35/9 Guanahacabibes 40/8 San Felipe 190/47 Sur de la IJ 90/20 Canarreos 77/18 Bahía de Cochinos 63/16 Cazones 75/23 Jardines 120/32 Guacanayabo 81/22	Colorados 35/9 Guanahacabibes 40/8 San Felipe 190/47 Sur de la IJ 90/20 Canarreos 77/18 Bahía de Cochinos 63/16 Cazones 75/23 Jardines 120/32 Guacanayabo 81/22	The latest monitoring data are: Colorados 35/9 Guanahacabibes 148/123 . San Felipe 202/176 Sur de la IJ 90/20 Canarreos 151/77 Bahía de Cochinos 62/55 Cazones 103/74 Jardines 132/41.9 Guacanayabo 74/11	Based on monitoring data from 2014, the targets in eight of the nine sites were met or exceeded in terms of total biomass of fish/ carnivorous fish as measured in g/m². This is believed to be the result of various factors, including the establishment of ZBREUPs, the joint surveillance actions, and the elimination of net trawling. The reduction in total biomass in Guacayabo may be due to the fact that this was the last area to establish protected areas and other management zones, or due to other factors such as climate change, which may have affected fish populations since the baseline was calculated in 2001.
	Proportion of people whose productive activities are affected by modification of the PA estate, who are fully compensated by alternative activities.	None, as no additional restrictions have yet been placed on the fisheries sector	100% of people affected are fully compensated	100% of people affected have been fully compensated. More than 1000 people have benefited from project action Fisheries: In response to the establishment of conservation fishing regulations, 12 fish boats have been compensated with the acquisition of new, permitted fishing gears. Each boat has a crew of 8 fishermen, and this measure also benefits the workers at the fishing cooperative and their families. In relation to the private tourism initiatives, the number of private homes for rent has increased in the Biosphere Reserve Cienaga	The Final Evaluation confirmed a high level of satisfaction among fishermen with the support provided by the project for new, permitted fishing gear in the communities of Ciénaga de Zapata and Batabanó. Replication has occurred with funding from SOS Pesca, which enabled the purchase of additional fishing gear in Ciénaga de Zapata. There are still some cooperatives and fishing boats that do not have all the permitted fishing gear. The exact proportion of the total number of fishermen in the project area versus those that now have new fishing gear was not available to the evaluators, however, it is believed to be an important proportion. For example, in Ciénaga de Zapata eight of the twelve boats involved in finfishing were outfitted

				de Zapata, from 9 rental houses to over 90. This alternative has benefited the local people of the project. More than 30 families (210 people) have been favored with the implementation of a pilot project for sustainable agriculture in the Community Los Hondones. Also this pilot project has improved the lives of these inhabitants of the project area, including better access to drinking water.	with new fishing gear. At the time of the Final Evaluation, the number of rental houses in the Ciénaga de Zapata Biosphere Reserve for tourists visiting the PAs had increased to over 150 compared to nine in 2010. In terms of the sustainable agriculture project, it should be noted that families have not yet benefitted from the pilot project, although 210 people (30 families) are slated to do so. This is because the greenhouses have yet to be built due to delays in acquiring the materials. In addition, a recent failure of the micro aqueduct means that the locals will need to ensure that this is repaired before they can irrigate the 10 semi-sheltered greenhouses. In terms of the indicator itself, it would have been useful to have more clearly defined how it would be measured at the project design phase.
Outcome 1: Increased coverage of priority ecosystems by MPAs and associated management units within the productive landscape and seascape, including related terrestrial areas	Proportions of the priority ecosystems in the project area, that are included within protected areas or management units (which have legal declaration or have been approved by the National Protected Areas Coordinating Board, and are covered by human and logistical resources)	Management Unit / % / ha Coral reefs: PAs /12.23 / 20,180 ZBRMIC / 0 / 0 ZBREUP / 15.33 / 25,292 Sea grass beds:	Management Unit / % / ha Coral reefs: PAs/20.13/33,213 ZBRMIC/47.56/78,464 ZBREUP 23,42% 38.643.4 Sea grass beds: PAs/19.49/399,643	Coral Reefs % ha PAs 29,46% 98,365 ZBRMIC 64,2% 107,234 ZBREUP 23,42% 38,643.4 Seagrass beds APs 32,26% 661,753 ZBRMIC 34,7% 712,104.03 ZBREUP 15,26% 313,071 Mangroves APs 72,1% 258,210,68 ZBRMIC 72.89% 288,351 ZBREUP 10,36% 40,966 The Project is reporting 8 new PAs which have been approved by the CNAP and are included in the SNAP Plan. While these areas are still waiting for legal approval by the Council of Ministers they are already managed under the precautionary principle.	The percentages and hectares as reported in the 2014 column remain unchanged. Almost all of the targets in terms of the percentage and number of hectares of coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves that are included within protected areas or other management units were met and in most cases exceeded. The only exception is the target for the percentage of mangroves in protected areas. The project contributed to the establishment of 15 new marine protected areas, above initial projections, with the main priority ecosystems included. Due to institutional restructuring, the organization charged with ZRRMBICs no longer exists, which has led to delays in the formal approval of new ZBRMICs.

		PAs / 10.96 / 224,713 ZBRMIC / 0 / 0 ZBREUP / 13.78 / 282,583 Mangroves: PAs / 66.27 / 262,159 ZBRMIC / 0 / 0 ZBREUP / 10.36 / 40,996	ZBRMIC/35.66/731.402 ZBREUP 15,26% 313,071 Mangroves: PAs/74.40/294,309 ZBRMIC/73.35/291,751 ZBREUP 10,36% 40966	Similarly, the area under 14 ZBRMIC is being considered given that they have equipment and management plans and are functional, even though final approval has not yet been issued by CITMA Finally, the area under 25 ZBREUP is being considered. This area (960589 ha) had not been measured/reported until this year	
	Coverage of protected areas (by category) that have been legally approved or have been approved by the National Parks Coordinating Board, and with corresponding regulations	PA / ha NP/784,695 RE/42,235	PA / ha NP/784,695 RE/114,967	NP 785,146 RE 53,315 END 39,723 RF 293,089 RFM 5,249 APRM 1,031,550 Total 2,208,072 (38% total project area) As monitoring of species and ecosystems happened during project implementation and detailed results became available for CNAP, some recategorization occurred in the plan of PAs types. For example, planned RF area was increased and planned END areas were decreased.	The target of 35% was exceeded by project end with 38% coverage of protected areas by project end.

		END/14,912 RF/105,176 RFM/5,249 APRM/733,189 Total/1,685,455 (28.43% of total project area)	END/72,775 RF/256,948 RFM/5,249 APRM/841,349 Total/2,075,984 (35% of total project area)		
	Proportion of area of PAs that is included in ZBRMIC	0 ha	1,415,630 ha of PAs (68%) are included in ZBRMIC, of the total surface of PAs in the project (2,075,985 ha)	1.455.125,36 ha of PAs (68,75%) are included in ZBRMIC, of the total surface. 23 MPAs in the project area are included in 14 Zones under Integrated Coastal Management Regime (ZBRMIC) with some level of approval or implementation. The inclusion of these areas in ZBRMIC has	The target of 68% in ZBRMICs was slightly exceeded by project end. I should be noted that several of these still await formal approval.

				helped to coordinate conservation efforts with productive sectors, mainly tourism and fisheries.	
	Total coverage of declared management units (APs. ZBREUP and ZBRMIC). outside of PAs. by category	ZBREUP: 710,603 ha (11,9% of total project area)	During project life, 4 new ZBREUPs will be created and 3 existing ones extended,	ZBREUP: 960,589 ha (16,3% of total project area) For the declaration of fisheries reserves (ZBREUPs) several workshops were conducted in five provinces of the project with the aim to harmonize the fisheries plans and conservation efforts with MINAL. Two new ZBREUPs were declared, including seven protected areas and the existing ZBREUPs were enforced. Another two were extended. The remaining MPAs are developing their projects of ZBREUPs according to the zoning and the management plans of the areas.	The project made significant progress with the declaration of two new ZBREUPS and extension of two ZBREUPS. The target of 4 new ZBREUPs was not met due to the difficulty of obtaining consensus among the various stakeholders, including communities and productive sectors, among others. However, there are ongoing negotiations to establish additional ZBREUPs.
		ZBRMIC: 0ha (0% of total project area)	ZBRMIC: 2,788,740 ha (47% of total project area)	ZBRMIC: 1,987,155 ha (33.55% of total project area).	A substantial area is now included in ZBRMICs, representing a significant increase over the baseline. The full project target was not met due to the complexities involved in obtaining consensus among all the stakeholders involved.
Outcome 2: MPAs in the project area are subject to effective management within the framework of a regional protected area subsystem	Management effectiveness rating of PAs, measured through the UNDP Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT).	Average METT score of PAs in the Project area is 37.8	By the end of year 5, the average METT score of PAs in the Project area is 54.78	The average METT score of PAs in the Project area is 69	The project contributed equipment, tools and substantial training, among other elements, to improve PA management effectiveness. In addition, 23 marine protected area management plans were developed or updated. By project end, the average METT score had increased in the project area to 69, significantly exceeding the project target of 54.78. It is also worth mentioning that the methodology to assess PA management effectiveness was revised through the project for the first time in 10 years, with various changes made to improve the utility of the tool, for example, by ensuring sufficient focus on socio-economic elements and reducing overlap among indicators.
	Adequacy of legal, policy and	Total Capacity Development	Total Capacity Development	Total Capacity Development Scorecard rating 82	There was a substantial strengthening of the legal, policy and institutional framework for MPAs with an

	institutional framework for the MPAS sub-system covered by the project, measured according to the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for PA systems	Scorecard rating of 59	Scorecard rating of 88		increase from 59 to 82, though this fell somewhat short of the target of 88.
	Coverage of protected areas whose management plans refer to the regional PA sub-system and provide for synergies with other management units (ZBREUP and ZBRMIC)	0 ha (0% of total PA estate in the sub-system)	By end of year 5, at least 1,415,630 ha of PAs (68% of total PA estate in the sub-system) have management plans that refer to the regional PA sub-system and provide for synergies with other management units (ZBREUP and ZBRMIC)	1498697 ha of PAs (71% of total PA estate in the sub-system) have management plans that refer to the regional PA sub-system and provide for synergies with other management units (ZBREUP and ZBRMIC)	The project provided support and funding for the development and updating of 23 PA management plans. All refer to the regional PA subsystem and provide for synergies with other management units. The target for this indicator was exceeded (71% of total PA estate with management plans versus target of 68%).
Outcome 3: Business planning and partnerships with productive sectors increase MPA revenues and cost efficiencies	Total annual income for a representative sample of 12 protected areas	MN 6,845,283 (non-convertible pesos) and CUC 103,170 (convertible pesos), subject to confirmation at project start	MN 10,000,000 (non-convertible pesos) and CUC 180,000 (convertible pesos)	MN 10,946,518 (non-convertible pesos) and CUC 399,700 (convertible pesos)	The targets were exceeded in terms of revenues from the 12 protected areas. It should be noted that not all of the revenues are directly reinvested in the PAs, some are channeled through the general government budget.
Outcome 4: Monitoring, learning, adaptive feedback & evaluation	Numbers of annual work plans and budgets and PIRs which adequately take into account	0	5 AWPBS 5 PIRs	5AWPBS 4 PIRs	The Final Evaluation can confirm that the Annual Operational Plans and PIRs were developed with ample participation of stakeholders through lessons learned workshops and other fora and took into consideration the results of monitoring and evaluation. Four PIRs were produced (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014).

	the results of monitoring and evaluation				
	Numbers of documents on lessons learnt produced and disseminated within the GEF system	0	2 of the end year 3	4 by the end year 5	The project has employed an excellent approach to knowledge management, with the realization of annual lessons learned workshops (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014), with minutes that were disseminated to relevant national stakeholders. The final lessons learned workshop was held the week of February 2, 2014, one week after the Final Evaluation mission, with the minutes not yet available to the evaluators. Information exchanges took place throughout the project to disseminate documents and learning, such as through the Conference on Protected Areas of the Convention on the Environment.

5.5 Efficiency

91. The project is considered to have been highly efficient in its use of resources to achieve expected results. This is due to a number of factors. Firstly, the project mobilized a large number of stakeholders from many institutions in support of project activities, such as MPA management, BD monitoring, surveillance, and environmental education. The high levels of participation of experts and personnel and the partnerships achieved greatly augmented the impacts that the project was able to have with the resources available. Secondly, the project benefitted from substantial co-financing in the amount of 23,936,257, which exceeded the original projection in the ProDoc. Thirdly, the project worked in partnership with other UNDP/GEF projects to maximize synergies and reduce costs. For example, the project organized some joint visits and activities with the UNDP/GEF project on Invasive Alien Species (IAS)[6], for the purpose of BD monitoring and promotion of local livelihoods (sale of IAS harvested from PAs). The project also cooperated with other donors such as SOS Pesca on the monitoring of ecosystems and promotion of sustainable fisheries.

5.6 Country Ownership and Relevance

92. National ownership of this project was very high and the project was considered highly relevant to the country. The project was designed to be fully aligned with the country's policies and to contribute to their implementation, including the Strategic Plan of the National System of Protected Areas for 2008-2013. Once project implementation began, project results significantly informed the content of the Strategic Plan for SNAP for 2014-2020, with the inclusion for the first time of a Biodiversity Monitoring Program, as well as programs on sustainable tourism, sustainable fisheries, and climate change.

93. During project implementation, 15 new marine protected areas were approved as well as three new Zones under Special Regime of Integrated Coastal Management (ZBRMICs) and two new Zones under Special Regime of Use and Protection (ZBREUPs). Other examples of policies approved as a result of the project intervention include strategic guidelines for sustainable tourism in the National Protected Areas System; a Communication Strategy for the National Protected Areas System; and twelve biodiversity monitoring protocols.

94. One of the reflections of the high level of country ownership is the substantial participation of stakeholders at national and provincial levels in project actions, such as in biodiversity monitoring, joint surveillance, and strengthened management of PAs. Provincial project coordinators from CITMA were designated in each of the 10 provinces involved in the project. Stakeholders participated in large numbers in annual lessons learned workshops and in the many training events organized by the project. Key institutions are also represented on the national and provincial Protected Areas boards, which met regularly during project implementation and discussed the Southern Archipelagos project. It should also be noted that significant co-financing was provided to the project, for example, in the form of worker salaries.

95. Generally, political will in support of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources is demonstrated by the recent government policy to eliminate all use of trawling nets in the country and the national moratorium on mangrove cutting. The government has also signaled its commitment to further promote sustainable tourism.

[6] UNDP/GEF project: "Enhancing the prevention, control, and management of Invasive Alien Species in vulnerable ecosystems in Cuba".

96. One area in which there is still a need to strengthen high-level government support is on the topic of finding mechanisms to increase the financial sustainability of the National Protected Areas System.

5.7 Mainstreaming of UNDP Priorities

97. The project carried out actions to mainstream several UNDP priorities, including poverty reduction, gender, disaster reduction, and South-South cooperation. It was also consistent with the priorities of the UNDP Country Program as laid out in various strategic documents.

Poverty reduction

98. The project focus on tourism and fisheries was based on a recognition of the importance of these productive sectors to the livelihoods of inhabitants of the project area. According to the 2014 PIR, there were over 1000 beneficiaries of the sustainable tourism and sustainable fisheries project actions. In terms of sustainable tourism, the project provided training and support and contributed to increases in the number of community members renting out rooms of their houses to tourists visiting protected areas ("casas de renta"). For example, between 2010 and 2014, the number of rental houses around Ciénaga de Zapata increased from 9 to over 150, and this now represents the main source of income for the community. As mentioned previously, the project supported two fishing cooperatives in the communities of Ciénaga and Batabanó with permitted fishing gear to facilitate the transition away from trawling nets. At this point, this has not yet led to increases in catches or income (though the fish caught are larger and therefore bring in more revenues on a unit basis, due to more selective fishing). However, the move will undoubtedly help to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fisheries.

99. The impact of the urban agriculture pilot project in the community of Los Hondones on local incomes and food security cannot yet be determined as the greenhouses had not yet been set up at the time of the Final Evaluation.

Gender

100. The project carried out a socio-economic assessment of five communities in the project region, which looked at indicators such as population structure by sex, health (maternal and child program indicators), education (education level by sex) and economics and services (female sector employment). In general, it was found that there is little employment of women in the formal sector in the project region. Through the project, community members, including both men and women, participated in discussions to identify promising sustainable economic alternatives. Women benefitted in significant numbers from the promotion of sustainable tourism and associated increase in rental houses, both directly as many were involved in managing the local businesses, and indirectly through associated services such as provision of food and cleaning. In terms of project support for sustainable fisheries, most of the fishermen in the areas that benefitted directly from the purchase of permitted fishing gear were male, though the long-term sustainability of the fisheries will of course benefit families in general. The urban agriculture pilot project was not fully established at the time of the Final Evaluation, and it is therefore not yet possible to comment on the benefits to women and men, although it is expected that an increase in food security through increased vegetable production would have favourable impacts.

101. Women were well represented on the Project Management Unit and the provincial project coordination. For example, the three members of the PMU in CNAP who were responsible for the first three Outcomes were all female.

Disaster risk management and climate change

102. The project did not have any specific outputs focused on climate change included in its design and could perhaps have coordinated more closely with CNAP's climate change program, although there was some interaction between the project and this program. One of the project indicators at the Objective level was related to the maintenance of the extent of mangroves in the project area, in recognition of the important role this ecosystem pays in disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change. Due to a revision of the priority ecosystem maps (using satellite data and field checking) , the baseline area of mangroves was reassessed partway through the project and was found to be less than originally indicated in the ProDoc. As such, the original target was not reached due to what was deemed to be an inflated baseline. However, the project reported that no new threats to the mangroves in the area were experienced during project implementation. In fact, the government placed a moratorium on mangrove cutting in 2010. Furthermore, some project co-financing was used for mangrove planting including for training and supplies in specific areas where the need to do so was identified.

103. It should be noted that the protocols for monitoring of key species and ecosystems took into consideration climate change where applicable. For example, the coral reef monitoring protocol includes measurements of coral bleaching, which is associated with climate change, and the sea turtle monitoring protocol assesses impacts of sea level rise on turtle nesting. Monitoring plots were established for mangroves and other key ecosystems. Besides the development of the protocols themselves, the project supported their implementation through funding of equipment, boats and training of personnel. The monitoring data on species and ecosystems that were gathered for the three years of project implementation provide useful information on changes over time that can feed into CNAP's climate change program.

104. The project, along with other projects and inputs, played a role in the inclusion of a program on climate change in the Strategic Plan for 2014-2020 for the National Protected Areas System, which was not the case with the previous Plan. This is because this issue is expected to have a significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and associated species.

South-South Cooperation

105. There has been substantial and regular South-South cooperation throughout the five years of project implementation. For example, in 2010, a trinational workshop with participants from Cuba, USA and Mexico took place in Florida about management effectiveness, tourism in marine protected areas, and Integrated Coastal Zone Management. That same year, the IV regional workshop was carried out with Mexican marine protected area specialists on experiences in protected areas planning, management, monitoring and public use. In 2011, an exchange activity on financial sustainability was organized with Mexican protected areas, attended by members of the Cuban Parliament, local governments and CNAP. Another exchange took place in Mexico between specialists from protected areas and scientific institutions of Cuba and Mexico with regard to the monitoring protocols for the priority ecosystems and species identified in the project's region. Mexican experts also provided support and training to personnel on the installation of buoys in the project's diving areas for boat moorage and for the delimitation of MPAs.

106. Experiences were shared with protected areas of Costa Rica on issues related to ecotourism, public use and community involvement, with the participation of specialists from CNAP and WWF Holland. In 2012, a visit to the Dominican Republic took place to learn from their work promoting the financial sustainability of protected areas and co-management with local communities. In 2013, the VIII Congress of Protected Areas was held in Havana, an international event in the framework of the IX

International Convention of Environment and Development, in which the project shared its achievements.

Consistency with UNDP Country Program

107. The project conforms to agreed priorities in the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and the Country Program Action Plans (CPAPs) both for the 2008-2012 time period (which was extended to include 2013) and the 2014-2018 period. The 2008-2012 CPD includes as one of its main thematic areas: Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development. One of the expected results is the promotion of strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in protected ecosystems and productive sectors. The 2014-2018 CPD includes as one of the key themes Environmental Sustainability and Disaster Risk Management. During this time period, UNDP will support the integration of environmental considerations and risk reduction with economic development as well as the integrated management of ecosystems to heighten resilience to the impacts of climate change, within the framework of the national environmental strategy.

5.8 Sustainability

Institutional and governance framework sustainability (Likely)

108. No substantial risks were noted in terms of the legal frameworks, policies, accountability systems, governance structures and processes in place that could jeopardize sustainability of project benefits. Many of the spheres of intervention of the project have now been incorporated into SNAP's Strategic Plan for 2014-2020, including biodiversity monitoring, sustainable tourism and fisheries, climate change adaptation and risk, to name a few. A total of 40 protected areas in the Southern Archipelagos have been included in the Plan. In addition, the project developed instruments, such as BD monitoring protocols, a revised PA management effectiveness methodology, and sustainable tourism guidelines, which will support continued project impacts.

109. The majority of the marine protected areas that were the focus of the project are legally approved and have management plans in place to support effective management. Some of the proposed Zones under Special Regime of Integrated Coastal Management and Zones under Special Regime of Use and Protection have not yet been formally approved by the Council of Ministers, though some actions to implement the associated programs are already occurring . With regard to the ZBREMICs, this is related to institutional restructuring since the institution in charge (CIGEA) was dismantled. The process of approval still needs to be further clarified in terms of which institution will be charged with this task (Ministry of Environment or local governments).

110. The project carried out extensive training activities thus strengthening the capacity for management of coastal-marine areas and contributing to the continuity of project actions. To many of the stakeholders interviewed, this was one of the biggest impacts the project had. There are interesting spin-offs of this training in terms of sustainable impact. For example, the scientific coordinators of the BD Monitoring System are in many cases university professors and indicated during the Final Evaluation mission that the up-to-date research being gathered through monitoring is being shared with their national and international students, an unexpected added value. The training carried out by the project is supported by newly developed methodologies and materials such as the BD monitoring protocols and by the purchases of much-needed equipment and supplies.

111. Staff turnover is a reality in different protected areas given the difficult work conditions, and it will therefore be important to continue with capacity building efforts in the future. Institutions such as

CNAP and CGB implement capacity building as part of their regular activities and should incorporate the aspects introduced through the project. It should also be noted that there are insufficient staff in some of the protected areas to carry out a large number of activities over large areas, from monitoring and scientific research to protected areas planning and management and enforcement, to name a few. One of the responses to address this has been to train guides and forest rangers in monitoring so that they can provide support, but it nevertheless remains an issue. Another strategy that was successfully strengthened through the project is inter-institutional joint surveillance expeditions (for example with Forest Rangers and with Border Control).

Socio-political sustainability(Likely)

112. Evaluation mission interviews and visits to different areas demonstrated strong institutional support at the national and provincial levels to sustain project outcomes and continue to carry out effective PA management, BD monitoring activities, and the like. The project was able to garner the participation of 30 institutions across the country. Substantial government ownership of the project was evident during the Final Evaluation. In addition, political will in support of conserving the country's natural resources and key ecosystems is apparent in several recent government decisions, most notably, the moratorium placed on the deforestation of mangroves forests and the elimination of trawling. The environmental education work and community engagement carried out by the project contributed to greater levels of awareness of key species and ecosystems and the importance of protected areas, and local support for continued actions to strengthen the PA system seems to exist. Even among fishermen who were affected by the ban on trawling, there is greater understanding of the medium and long-term benefits of using more sustainable fishing techniques and fishermen interviewed indicated their commitment to continue to do so now that the project has concluded. The project increased the level of involvement and interest among community members to implement sustainable productive alternatives. This work should be further built upon, especially given that there is limited experience in Cuba of carrying out such activities. All in all, no significant socio-political risks to sustainability were in evidence.

Financial sustainability (Likely)

113. Financial limitations will likely mean that the scale of some activities carried out under the project will be reduced somewhat. In particular, this may be the case for marine protected areas, where the cost of monitoring and enforcement is higher than for terrestrial (coastal) areas due to higher fuel costs. With the economic embargo on Cuba and the limited national manufacturing of goods, the purchase of equipment and supplies in the future will continue to be difficult. Not all needs could be covered with the project, of course; for example, some PAs do not have the necessary equipment to manage populations of lionfish, others lack sufficient boats capable of navigating deeper waters. Also in some cases, equipment purchased by the government is not of the same quality as what was purchased with project funds. A case in point is the hooks for the fishermen who received support to adopt more sustainable technologies; fishermen commented that the ones now being purchased by the state company do not last as long as the ones that had been received through the project.

114. A standard policy enabling PA revenues to be reinvested into the PA system still does not exist, as PA revenues generally go into the main government coffer. Efforts will need to be made to ensure that financial resources are available for fuel and other costs associated with PA management and monitoring and for the maintenance of the equipment purchased with the project, such as the boats. This is particularly important given that the ongoing changes to the country's economic policy and to the relationship with the United States could be associated with greater pressures on the environment.

115. On the other hand, it should be noted that the state provides funding for protected areas management through FONADEF. As such, protected areas receive annual budgets in accordance with their annual operational plans to cover some, though not all, of their needs in terms of personnel, fuel and other costs. Furthermore, there are ongoing high-level discussions going on as a result of the project related to the financial sustainability of the PA system. Various new projects have also been developed which will permit continuity of different project actions (for example, in Pinar del Rio), related to topics such as species and ecosystem monitoring, climate change adaptation, and others. In addition, follow-up to community initiatives related to sustainable economic alternatives can be supported by government funding for local development projects. There are now some precedents where local PA revenues from charges to tourists are being reinvested into the system. Further high-level discussions to strengthen the financial sustainability of CNAP are ongoing and Cuba plans to implement a GEF-6 project on economic valuation of ecosystem goods and services, which will contribute to this subject.

116. In the case of the BD Monitoring System, the protocols were designed so that the methods would be simple and relatively economical to implement. Nevertheless, the Monitoring System as a whole requires substantial funding (fuel costs, logistics, etc). There are indications that a significant amount of funding for monitoring for the next four years has been secured. In addition, some monitoring programs already existed pre-project, such as the long-standing turtle monitoring program, and therefore have substantial momentum to continue. The PMU held a meeting with all the coordinators of the BD monitoring system to discuss the critical need for continued actions to ensure the sustainability of the system and there was significant commitment to do so and interest in continuing to seek funding for monitoring activities.

117. As for the mass media coverage that was achieved through the partnership with Mundo Latino, the TV programs and clips that were developed will continue to be aired on public television without the need for further funding and there are also plans to disseminate the programs in other ways to communities without access to these channels.

Environmental sustainability (Likely)

118. The Southern Archipelagos region of Cuba is highly vulnerable to extreme storm events, and these are expected to continue to increase with climate change. Such events, combined with other changes such as rising sea levels, could pose increasing threats to key species and ecosystems, such as sea turtles, iguanas, coral reefs and mangroves. These risks are real. However, as recognized by the project, increased protection and monitoring of ecosystems and species as well as increased coordination with other sectors could help offset some of these risks.

5.9 Global Environmental Benefits/ Impact

119. Project actions contributed to protecting coral reefs, mangroves and biomass of fish/ carnivorous fish, as well as other key ecosystems and species in the Southern Archipelagos region through the establishment of an increased number of MPAs, ZBRMICs, ZBREUPs and substantial support to strengthen institutional capacity to manage and monitor these areas. Experience in other areas such as the ZBREUP of Jardines de la Reina shows that such designations lead to significant increases in species population numbers but that it takes time. Greater joint surveillance, inter-institutional cooperation and support for local communities to participate in sustainable productive activities (such as sustainable fishing) will also likely benefit these ecosystems and species. Various project actions are complemented by key changes in government policies in favour of conservation, most notably, the elimination of

trawling nets and the moratorium on all mangrove deforestation.

120. It is difficult to measure the global environmental benefits from the specific impact of this five-year project, for various reasons. Firstly, many of the baseline data were obtained in 2001 (specifically with regard to coral reef cover and total biomass of fish/ carnivores) such that any changes in the values by project end, either positive or negative, cannot be attributed solely to the project. Furthermore, in terms of extent of mangroves, the baseline was recalculated part way into the project. Given the slow growth rate of mangroves, it is therefore difficult to detect changes over this relatively short time period. Finally, other factors were at play that were outside of the influence of the project or even the country, notably the influence of extreme climatic events such as hurricanes, and climate change in general, which are affecting coral reefs and other priority ecosystems and species.

121. The data that *are* available on environmental indicators of impact at the Objective level are mixed, with some improvements and some negative changes, depending on site-specific factors in many cases. For example, coral reef cover was maintained in some areas but decreased in others. No definitive conclusions can be reached on changes in the area of mangroves during the project implementation period due to the recent modification of the baseline, but co-financing of mangrove planting in key areas suggests a positive contribution. In terms of total biomass of fish and carnivores, the data indicate a maintenance or increase in this biomass in all but one of the eight areas monitored, suggesting that the establishment of ZBREUPs, ZBRMICs, and associated zoning, training for fishermen, support for alternative fishing gear and the like, have had positive impacts on fish/ carnivore populations. This may be because of the protection of key fish spawning areas. Some fishermen interviewed during the mission who benefited from the purchase of more sustainable fishing gear indicated that there were more snapper this year than last year, however, the hard data will still need to be gathered on the impact of the elimination of the trawling nets and use of more sustainable techniques.

122. The data related to percentages of key ecosystems that are protected in MPAs, ZBRMIC and ZBREUPS demonstrate that these have increased in almost all cases by project end. It is also important to note that the application of the GEF tracking tool indicates that the management effectiveness of the MPAs in the project area increased substantially during the project.

123. Please see the section on Mainstreaming UNDP Priorities, Climate Change, for a discussion on how the project addressed the issue of climate change.

5.10 Conclusions

124. This project benefitted substantially from a strong Executing Agency with experience in effectively implementing GEF projects. A highly dedicated Project Management Unit, which was fully aligned with CNAP's institutional priorities, was able to achieve a multitude of deliverables, high levels of budgetary execution and successfully engage a large number of stakeholders.

125. The Southern Archipelagos project has had significant impacts in terms of increasing marine protected areas coverage in key ecosystems and strengthening their management. As highlighted in the description of Project Outcomes, the project successfully led to the establishment of 15 new marine protected areas and developed proposals for new Zones under Special Regime of Integrated Coastal Management and Zones under Special Regime of Use and Protection (formal approval of several of these areas is still outstanding.)

126. Surveys of protected areas and biodiversity monitoring led to valuable baseline data on species and ecosystems, which in some cases led to the identification of new areas worthy of incorporation in the protected areas system. This work also contributed a large amount of new scientific knowledge on key species and ecosystems. The project dedicated substantial time toward the development of standardized biodiversity monitoring protocols for various species and ecosystems, which is an important project contribution and one that was achieved through the coordinated effort of CNAP at the national and provincial levels, as well as research centres and universities. Joint inter-institutional surveillance was carried out during the time period of the project. This increases efficiencies and is therefore a practice that should be continued. Extensive capacity building is another key result of the project on a wide array of topics, such as planning and management of MPAs, diving, marine protected area delimitation, and conflict resolution. The importance of the project support for materials and transportation (both marine and terrestrial) cannot be underestimated as the provinces now have significantly enhanced ability to manage marine protected areas, with means of transportation, computers, improved communication systems, monitoring equipment, and the like. The project also supported the development and updating of 23 MPA management plans.

127. With regard to the third Outcome, the project developed a guide to strengthen financial planning at the PA level and worked with several communities to promote economic alternatives, such as sustainable tourism and fisheries. The project fell somewhat short in achieving all of its goals under this Outcome, for example, in terms of the business planning and pilot projects. The economic and political climate in Cuba, while changing rapidly, was perhaps not yet ripe for the institutionalization of a financial mechanism to channel PA revenues back into the PA system. However, the project did take some critical steps in this direction and initiated discussions on the matter, including at the high political level. As highlighted in the Recommendation section, it will be important to build on the work carried out with this project on economic valuation, promotion of sustainable economic alternatives with communities living near protected areas, and increased financial sustainability of the national protected areas system.

128. As described in the next section, the project employed a significant number of best practices, which should be taken into consideration by other GEF projects to maximize effectiveness and impact. The main report closes with a description of lessons learned and recommendations related to project execution in general and more specific recommendations to help orient future projects in Cuba.

5.11 Best practices

- *Project fully integrated within structure of Executing Agency (CNAP)*

129. The project was completely aligned with CNAP's institutional objectives and within its structure. The Deputy Director of CNAP served as the project director and the other members of the PMU were staff members of CNAP. This was a key factor in project ownership and facilitated achievement of project objectives. It also meant that the project staff were experienced and had already established institutional relationships that enhanced project implementation.

- *Inception workshop with high participation and thematic working groups*

130. The inception workshop had high levels of participation, including the provincial coordinators of 10 provinces and other stakeholders. In addition to presenting the project scope and main components, the four-day workshop also included working groups on topics including financial issues, creation of protected areas and ZBRMICs, monitoring, tourism, and fisheries, which helped to guide project implementation from the outset.

- *Designation of PMU members for each Outcome and of project focal points in each province to follow-up on activities at the local level*

131. The PMU included a staff member responsible for each of the project's main three Outcomes. In addition, there were designated project focal points in each province (and in some cases, staff members for each Outcome at the provincial level as well, replicating the national structure). This structure played an important role in the effectiveness of the project as it enabled greater local-level ownership and considerably increased the actions and impacts that could be achieved.

- *Lessons learned workshops to facilitate exchanges among stakeholders involved in the project*

132. Annual lessons learned workshops were held during the entire project implementation period from 2010-2015, an excellent practice that has since been adopted by other projects in Cuba, such as the UNDP/GEF Invasive Alien Species project. These workshops enabled relevant provincial and national stakeholders to come together to report on project progress and to discuss lessons learned with a view to ensuring that the desired project Outcomes were achieved. They also enabled all the provinces to take part in project planning through discussions of the Annual Operational Plans among key stakeholders.

- *Extensive inter-institutional collaboration, including development of strong partnerships with scientific research institutions*

133. CNAP was able to develop partnerships and facilitate agreements with a large number of stakeholders to support achievement of the project's objectives. For example, relationships were forged with research centres and universities who participated actively in the development and implementation of the BD monitoring protocols. The stakeholders interviewed praised the PMU for having successfully convened a large number of scientists and for having facilitated the difficult work of ensuring that they come to agreement on the final BD monitoring protocols.

- *Designation of technical and executive coordinators for the BD Monitoring System*

134. The project set up an interesting and effective structure to operationalize the BD Monitoring System. For each of the priority species and ecosystems, the project designated technical coordinators, who were responsible for reviewing the technical data gathered, as well as executive coordinators to ensure that the data gathering process proceeded smoothly.

- *Facilitation of exchanges of local inhabitants to other sites and countries*

135. The exchanges that were organized to other sites in Cuba and other countries proved to be very enriching for local inhabitants. For example, fisheries specialists from other countries were brought in to Cuba to share their experiences and Cuban fishermen traveled to San Andres, Colombia to learn from their experiences. This type of exchange can play a significant role in changing people's mindsets and in opening up new possibilities for them.

- *Project support for communities affected by change in government policy regarding fisheries*

136. The project stepped in at a time of significant change in fisheries policy to eliminate all trawling nets, through the purchase of more sustainable fishing gear, training and education activities. This facilitated the transition for community members dependent on fisheries.

- *Substantial stakeholder input into specific activities to be carried out in provinces and support required*

137. The project adopted a highly participatory approach with the 10 provinces involved in the project when it came to planning local project activities, developing AOPs and procuring required goods. This also applied to the definition of economic alternatives for communities, which were proposed by the

community members themselves. This maximized local-level support and utility of the goods and services provided.

- *Wide dissemination of project results and messages in the mass media through audiovisual material, including documentaries and television clips, as well as written material*

138. Primarily through the project's partnership with Mundo Latino, a large amount of audiovisual material was produced and disseminated on Cuban television (as well as in a few cases in other countries through Cubavision Internacional). It is believed that this environmental education reached a large number of viewers to increase understanding of the importance of the species and ecosystems of Cuba's Southern archipelagos and the benefits of sustainable tourism.

- *Coordination and synergy with other UNDP/GEF projects*

139. The project built on a previous UNDP/GEF investment to strengthen the national Protected Areas System, and enabled continuity between the different projects. In addition, it worked in synergy with other ongoing UNDP/GEF projects, including the Sabana Camaguey project and the Invasive Alien Species project (see Coordination with other projects section for details) through exchanges of experiences and joint expeditions.

- *Substantial South-South collaboration*

140. The project took part in information exchanges with other countries in the region such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, and the USA, throughout its period of implementation. Moreover, a cooperation agreement was signed with Haiti. In addition, various stakeholders from CNAP and from local communities were trained in other countries.

5.12 Lessons Learned

- *Community-level work is time consuming but vital for the conservation and sustainable use of PAs*

141. The project work with communities took some time to get started and progress in gathering data and identifying priorities was not rapid. Communities all have their own idiosyncrasies and need time to assimilate new ideas and participate in new initiatives. Stakeholders concurred, however, in the importance of involving communities in the sustainable use of natural resources and in the conservation of PAs. Such participation is key to preventing resource exploitation given the pressing socio-economic needs of community members. In addition, communities have much to contribute to support BD monitoring, surveillance, sustainable use and conservation of PAs. Individuals who may have formerly exploited species can be converted into conservation allies (for example, community members who may have hunted crocodiles could become guides for ecotourists to view these animals).

- *Working with all levels of productive sectors and listening to concerns increases effectiveness of engagement*

142. In its work with productive sectors, CNAP established partnerships at different levels. For example, when promoting more sustainable fishing techniques, CNAP worked with fishermen, fishing cooperatives as well as with the Director of Fisheries Regulations and Science of MINAL. This facilitated the coming to agreement on issues and the negotiation of the ZBRMICs. It was also found to be very important to listen to productive sector concerns and ideas and involve them from project outset.

- *Importance of carrying out environmental education with children to reach adults*

143. The project provided support to various local festivals, such as sea turtle festivals, which have

become significant annual community events in some communities. Participation of children was high and contributed to awareness raising about the importance of conserving species and ecosystems. The environmental education of children is seen as an effective means to reaching adults and thus promoting sustainable use, reducing predation on species and increasing the conservation of species and ecosystems.

- *Need to work on capacity building at the institutional level, not only individual level*

144. The project funded a very large number of training workshops and played an important role in building the capacity of stakeholders involved in PA management and community members. In addition to this very worthwhile training, it is important to identify ways to strengthen capacity at the institutional level and to ensure that it is not dependent on individual staff members who may be lost with staff turnover. Examples might include the strengthening of inter-institutional coordination structures, the institutionalization of ongoing capacity building programs within institutions, the establishment of mini-documentation centres with relevant information for new staff members (see related recommendation), the acquisition of the necessary materials to carry out the required work, and the continued refinement of appropriate tools for PA management, including systems for BD monitoring.

- *Efficiency of coordinated surveillance in the economic context of the country*

145. Through the project, a total of six joint surveillance expeditions were organized, which were well received. With limited resources, it makes sense for different institutions such as CNAP and the Forest Rangers to join efforts in surveillance. Based on interviews carried out during the evaluation mission, the institutions are committed to continuing to carry out joint monitoring/surveillance in the future.

- *Utility of workshops to validate monitoring data*

146. Protocols for BD monitoring were developed with the project and data were collected for a period of three years. In order to ensure that different stakeholders in different sites were collecting the data in a consistent fashion, workshops were organized to validate the data and to provide guidance as to required revisions. In this way, more standardized information could be collected.

- *Management and budgetary issues have to be taken to the appropriate political level for resolution*

147. Some matters addressed by the project, most notably, the issue of financial mechanisms that would enable income to be reinvested in protected areas, need to be brought to a higher political level to be resolved. While there are now some cases where protected areas are able to directly receive funds from their income, there is no national-level policy at this point to ensure that this is the case, as the issue would need to be addressed at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Prices. This is important to increase the financial sustainability of the country's protected area system. The project raised the topic at the level of the country's National Assembly to increase the awareness of parliamentarians. Further promotion and advocacy is needed at this level.

- *Need to use different language when working with productive sectors versus institutional actors*

148. The project's engagement of the tourism and fisheries sectors demonstrated the importance of employing different language that responds to their particular needs and interests. This was cited by CNAP as one of their lessons learned.

- *There is value in being open to the discovery of additional areas for inclusion in the Protected Areas System*

149. As a result of the BD monitoring work carried out with the project, new areas with high biodiversity value were discovered, which are now proposed for inclusion in the SNAP. For example, the

Humedal Sur de los Palacios is now considered the most important wetland for birds in Cuba with 79,000 individuals counted as well as new species sitings for Cuba.

5.13 Recommendations

Recommendations related to project design and execution

- *Define pilot projects at project design phase to facilitate later implementation*

150. As part of the process of developing a Project Document, pilot projects should be defined in as much detail as possible to speed up their later implementation. This was not done for this project, which might have contributed to the delays in their implementation as part of Outcome 3.

- *Establish baselines and targets for all indicators at project outset*

151. For projects that do not yet have all baseline values and targets in the project design phase, it is important to gather this information as soon as possible during project implementation. This is needed to be able to accurately measure project impact. For this project, for three indicators, the target values were only established in year four of the project. In addition, the baseline financial information on protected areas for the tracking tool was not collected until 2013.

- *Set up a high-level Project Steering Committee*

152. For this project, various structures in place provided the space for discussions on project progress and difficulties encountered. These included the annual lessons learned workshops, the sessions among CITMA,MINCEX and UNDP, and the provincial and national Protected Areas Boards. It should nevertheless be standard practice to establish a Steering Committee that meets at least once a year with high-level representatives of key institutions involved in the project. Both project execution and project results were excellent for this project, and it is difficult to speculate on the role a Steering Committee might have played, but it is possible that such a high-level venue might have helped to speed up some of the bottlenecks experienced, such as the implementation of the pilot projects and the gathering of financial information for the completion of the tracking tool.

- *Always translate key elements of Project Documents into language spoken in the implementing country*

153. To facilitate interpretation of Project Documents and project execution, Project Documents, or at least key sections such as the description of Project Strategy and the Strategic Results Framework, should always be translated. In this case, due to the need to use a state company for all translations, this would have entailed a wait time, but should nevertheless have been pursued.

Recommendations to guide future projects

- *Continue to promote sustainable productive options with communities living near PAs so they can benefit from PAs while supporting monitoring and conservation activities*

154. The project started somewhat late to implement community-based initiatives under Outcome 3 but was nonetheless able to achieve some promising results, particularly in terms of promotion of sustainable tourism and sustainable fishing techniques. In order to increase the impact and facilitate replication to other parts of the country, further work is recommended with communities to promote

initiatives such as apiculture, local restaurants for tourists ("paladares"), tourism guide services, bird watching, agrotourism, artisanal production, among others. Given the recent introduction of a national policy that allows individuals to be self-employed, representing a significant economic transformation in the country, the timing is opportune. Funding could be sought from the GEF Small Grants Program and from other sources to kickstart the implementation of such initiatives to promote alternative sustainable productive options in communities living near PAs. Proposals for small-scale projects could make use of the data gathered under the project on five communities, which identified the most feasible alternatives to put in place. In addition, the exchange of experiences among communities carrying out sustainable productive activities should be promoted for further replication.

- *CNAP to follow up with community of Los Hondones to ensure that greenhouses are set up and to verify that water issue was resolved*

155. Given that the project ended before the urban agriculture pilot project was fully established, it is recommended that CNAP follow up with the community involved to ascertain that the greenhouses are built and that the micro-aqueduct has been repaired. This is important to ensure that the investment came to fruition and will also enable the community to share its experiences with other communities for further replication.

- *CNAP to build on joint initiatives carried out with productive sectors, including tourism and fisheries*

156. This project played a significant role in enhancing the level of collaboration between CNAP as the agency responsible for protected areas and several key productive sectors. It is recommended that CNAP continue to build on these relationships to promote productive activities that are in harmony with conservation and sustainable use objectives.

- *Continue to promote mechanisms to reinvest greater financial resources in PAs*

157. The project contributed to the establishment of systems in a few protected areas whereby tourists make payments that are then reinvested in the same protected area (see description of Outcome 3). However, as mentioned in the lessons learned section, there is still a need for the establishment of a national policy/ financial mechanism(s) so that these do not remain isolated cases and so there is more consistency in terms of PA payments and the use of the revenues. As such, further advocacy and work is required to continue to explore the most viable options in this regard. CNAP will need to work closely with other agencies of CITMA to move this topic forward. This will entail discussions with the Ministry of Finance and Planning, among other actors, which could take place through working sessions at the national Protected Areas Board or in other meetings. The experience of protected areas in which revenues are being reinvested should be shared with relevant agencies and with decision-makers to show what can be achieved. This funding is important for the financial sustainability of the protected areas system to be able to effectively carry out management, monitoring, surveillance and other actions.

- *Build on the research carried out through the project on economic valuation of ecosystem services to strengthen the financial sustainability of PAs*

158. The project carried out five studies related to the economic valuation of ecosystem services. This was an important contribution to the national discourse as there had been little previous analysis on this subject in the Cuban context. This first step of research needs to be followed up with further analysis of ecosystem goods and services, further work on economic valuation and the development of mechanisms to integrate the economic contribution of these services into decision making. The ultimate goal is that such studies would strengthen the financial sustainability of the national protected areas system.

- *Ensure the sustainability of the BD Monitoring System on key species and ecosystems*

159. One of the project's most important achievements was the establishment of a standardized biodiversity monitoring system for key species and ecosystems in the Southern Archipelagos, through the participatory development of protocols, as well as the gathering of data for a three-year period. For this monitoring system to provide useful information for decision-making and to measure changes in time due to climate change and other factors, data collection needs to be ongoing in the future. It is therefore necessary to prioritize the maintenance of the partnerships established with various scientific institutions and to raise the necessary funds to continue with this work. It would also be useful to ensure that the mechanism of information flow that was established through the project be maintained (from the protected areas to the scientific and executive provincial coordinators to CNAP at the central level).

- *Strengthen linkages between management of coastal-marine areas and CNAP's climate change program*

160. The project did not have an explicit focus on climate change, although it did take the issue into consideration for some activities and gathered relevant data. Given the substantial expected impacts of climate change on communities, species and ecosystems in coastal-marine areas, links between BD monitoring in these areas and PA management need to be strengthened with ongoing work on climate change.

- *Establish a place in each province (a 'mini documentation centre') with all the information generated by the project accessible to stakeholders*

161. For each of the 10 provinces that participated in the project, it is recommended that a small documentation centre be established with all project products in print form. This will enable institutional stakeholders, NGOs and community members to be able to access the information, and will facilitate information dissemination in the context of a country with limited internet connectivity.

- *Upload project products to CNAP´s website*

162. The project produced a large amount of very useful documents, from protocols for the monitoring of 10 key species/ ecosystems to sustainable tourism guidelines, to name a few. While the internet is not comprehensively used in Cuba to gain access to such outputs due to connectivity problems (limited broadband access) and gaps in coverage, it is a key mechanism for other countries to learn from Cuba's experience. As such, if at all possible, it is recommended that CNAP hire the necessary expertise to upload these project products, while taking into consideration internet speed issues.

- *Promote the dissemination of the project products in joint meetings of the country's UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Boards and in local government meetings to follow up on ZBRMIC implementation*

163. Cuba has six UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, including two within the project area (Ciénaga de Zapata and Península de Guanahacabibes Biosphere Reserves). All of these face the typical challenges associated with the presence of protected areas in larger landscapes/seascapes that include productive sectors. There is merit in sharing the project's experiences in the promotion of alternative livelihoods with communities living near PAs. It is therefore recommended that CNAP prepare hard copies of key project products to enable them to be disseminated at the joint meetings of the country's Biosphere Reserve board meetings, which take place biannually. This should include, among others, the results of the community work in promoting sustainable productive alternatives, and the final lessons learned workshop minutes. In addition, relevant project products should be disseminated at the local government meetings that are held periodically to follow up on implementation of ZBRMIC programs.

- *Continue to promote integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and dedicate special attention to the issue of solid waste management*

164. In partnership with local governments and other stakeholders, it is recommended that CNAP continue to promote integrated coastal management and the establishment and approval of ZBRMICs. There is a need to increase understanding among relevant stakeholders about the utility of ZBRMICs as a tool to reconcile different interests within landscapes and seascapes. As part of the promotion of ICZM, the issue of solid waste management needs to receive particular attention as this is a pressing concern in many communities.

Annex 1: List of Stakeholders Interviewed and/or Present in Final Evaluation Meetings

Name of participant	Position/ Institution
Mariza García García	Director of CNAP
Enrique Hernández Hernández	Project Director, Sub-Director of CNAP
Alfredo Martínez Arteaga	Financial Director, CNAP
Hahna Ferro Ageona	Project Coordinator of Outcome 3, CNAP
Aylem Hernández Avila	Project Coordinator of Outcome 2, CNAP
Susana Perera Valderrama	Project Technical Coordinator, CNAP
Mayda Trujillo Ramos	International Collaboration, CNAP
Méndez	International Relations Department
Alaín Muñoz Caravaca	Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management Official, Environment and Energy UNDP Cuba
Gricel Acosta	Program Official, Focal Point for Environment and Energy, UNDP Cuba
Cayetano Casado	Program analyst, Environment and Energy, UNDP Cuba
Manuel Loma Gómez	Junta Nacional, Cuerpo de Guardabosques
María E. Alvarez Doral	Technician for Forest Management and Protection, of the Circuito Naval of Cajío, Cuerpo de Guardabosques
Londro Alvarez Doval	J. Circuito Naval de Cajío, Cuerpo de Guardabosques
Martha R. Acosta Blanco	Protected Areas Specialist, CITMA, Guanahacabibes
José Alberto Camejo Lamos	Guanacahabibes National Park
Marina Martínez Díaz	Municipal specialist, CITMA
Lázaro Márquez Llavger	Guanacahabibes National Park
Osanaui Bomego Fernández	Guanacahabibes National Park
Dorka Cobían Rojas	Guanacahabibes National Park
Ana María Rodríguez	Coordinator at CITMA, CITMA Camaguey

Leslie Hernández Fernández	Researcher, CIEC, Cayo Coco
Tamara Frigunda Matín	Environmental Specialist, CIEC, Cayo Coco
María del Carmen Olivera	Director of Environmental Unit, Citma, Ciego
Jeiniet C. Cauz Alvarez	Protected Areas Specialist, CITMA, Ciego
Rafael Pérez Carmenate	Delegate, CITMA, Ciego de Avila
Maykel Borges Rodríguez	Coordinator of Jardines de la Reina National Park, Empresa de Flora y Fauna
Fabián Pina	Director of CIEC, CITMA, Ciego
Andrea Armas Rodríguez	Delegrate, CITMA, Camagüey
Rudy Montego Mata	Director of Environment, CITMA, Camagüey
Oriol López Carvajal	J. Técnico, FF Ciego de Avila
Mereyda Jerro Bazon	Director of CIMAC, CIMAC
Jorge Luis Jiménez	Director of CITMA, Ciénaga de Zapata, Project coordinator for province of Matanzas
Angel Reyes Adez	Specialist in Quality and Project Technician, PESCAMAT
René Hernández Aise	Specialist in Investments, Pesca Matanzas
Camilo Fernández	Fisherman
Elisa Garcia Rodriguez	Director of Fisheries Regulations and Science, MINAL
Suleydi J. Placencia Mejías	President, Coordinating Board, Ciénaga
Oroste Soto Mejia	Fisherman
Benito Castillo Romero	Zapesca
Miguel Aorta Herrera	Zapesca
Samuel Martínez Plasencia	DMPF
Yeny del Buy Mejías	DMEP
Adalmid Gálvez Mérquez	DIS
Reynaldo Santone Aguilar	CITMA, Ciénaga de Zapata
Renier Pérez Martín	CITMA, Ciénaga de Zapata
Rumi Jiménez Fundora	CITMA, Ciénaga de Zapata
Eduardo Abree	Sistema Espeleolacustre
Carlos Torres Rodríguez	Servicio Estatal Forestal
Amado Rodríguez	ONIP

Orelys León Abrey	Comercial Cubanacán
Francisco Medeira Tejesa	Administrator, Ciénaga de Zapata Protected Area
Ariel González Mosa	CGB
Yaxnoski Méndez Pages	PNR
Arnold Aleyra Dtmt.	Director, Public Health
Mirta Fernauf Lop	Community Director
Soleydi J. Plasencia Mejías	President, Junta Coordinadora
Rosendo Martínez	Formerly CNAP
Noraida	Playa Larga
Ronald and Ivette	Playa Larga
Yvette	Girón
Ana Mabel Pérez Machado	Specialist of CITMA in Community of Venezuela
Dévron Alvarez Valido	President of Municipal Assembly of the Popular Power in Venezuela
Lamilet García Fernández	First Secretary of the Cuba Communist Party in the municipality of Venezuela
Idelsi Ramírez Roque	Information Processing Specialist of CITMA in Community of Venezuela
Dené Menéndez	Head of Diving Club
Daniel	Manager of María la Gorda Diving Centre
Yenna García	María la Gorda
Qrasteo Horgio	Specialist of CNAP
Raúl Mordeado	Specialist of CNAP
Jorge Ferrochez	Researcher, ECOVIDA
Maria Arcostaniena	Specialist of CNAP
Juan A. Hernández Valdés	CNAP
Rolando Félix Cefrato	Specialist of CNAP
Vicente Berovides Alvarez	Faculty of Biology
Hansel Caballero Aragón	Acuario Nacional de Cuba
Félix Moncada Gavilán	Centro de Investigaciones Pesqueras
Julia Azanza Ricardo	CIM Instec
Yanet Fomeriro M-Viaña	Empresa Nacional para la Protección de la Flora y la Fauna
Susana Aguilar Mugica	CNAP

Lourdes Mugica Valdés	Faculty of Biology, University of Havana
Anneys González Rossel	CNAP
Jesús García Martinez	Member of community of Los Hondones[7]
Magali Hernández García	Member of community of Los Hondones
Maikel Canizales	Member of community of Los Hondones
Humberto Fuentes	Member of community of Los Hondones
Juan Carlos Piedra	Member of community of Los Hondones
Damaris Vila	MINCEX
Enrique Moret	Director of International Relations Department, CITMA
Martha Rosa Acosta Blanco	Project Coordinator for Pinar del Río, CITMA
Odalys de la Cruz Rivera	Office for the Development of Guanahacabibes
Rafael Díaz Castro	Office for the Development of Guanahacabibes
Zanmiuri Hernández	Cayos de San Felipe National Park
Humberto Medina Márquez	Director, Cayos de San Felipe National Park
Maira Cordero Sánchez	RFM San Ubaldo Sabanalamar
Maribel Moreno Rojas	RFM San Ubaldo Sabanalamar
Sonia Pujada Meléndez	RE Los Pretiles
Noel Hernández Ledesma	RE Los Pretiles
Noel Bruguera Amarán	Delegate of CITMA
Idalia López Pedroso	Director of UMA
Glenda Hernández Regalado	CITMA

[7] A total of 19 community members in Los Hondones participated in the meeting with the evaluation team. Only those individuals who contributed to the discussions have been listed.

Annex 2: Interview Questions

Note that the consultants prepared specific questions that were tailored to each particular stakeholder based on this general list.

Project Formulation

- How relevant is the project and its objectives to the country's national priorities?
- Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and realistic within its time frame?
- To what extent did stakeholders participate in the project design process?
- Were the capacities of the executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?
- Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design?
- Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?
- Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at project entry?
- Were the project assumptions and risks well articulated in the Project Document?

Project Results and Impact

- Please comment on the level of achievement of each of the main indicators / targets set in the logical framework to date.
- What do you consider to be the project's main achievements?
- What were the project's main limitations?

Sustainability

- Are there social or political risks that may threaten the sustainability of project outcomes?
- Is there sufficient stakeholder awareness and ownership in support of the project's long-term objectives?
- Are there financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes? Has a mechanism been installed to ensure financial and economic sustainability once GEF assistance ends?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- Are requisite systems for accountability and transparency, and required technical know-how, in place?
- Are there ongoing activities that may pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outcomes?

Project Implementation

- How effectively did the PMU manage the project?
- Please comment on the executing modality of this project.
- Can you comment on the performance of UNDP as Implementing Agency?
- Was there an appropriate focus on results by the implementing and executing agencies?
- Please comment on the quality of risk management

- Were managing parties responsive to significant implementation problems (if any)?
- Was the chosen executing agency for project execution suitable, given the project design?

Monitoring and evaluation

- Please comment on the adequacy of the M&E plan and the logical framework.
- Were baseline conditions, methodology and roles and responsibilities well articulated at project start-up?
- Was the M&E Plan sufficiently budgeted and funded during project preparation and implementation?
- Were the indicators provided in the Project Document effectively used to measure progress and performance?
- Were progress and financial reporting requirements/ schedules complied with, including the timely delivery of well-developed monitoring reports (PIRs)?
- Were follow-up actions, and/or adaptive management, taken in response to monitoring reports (PIRs) and to the MTE?
- Were PIR self-evaluation ratings consistent with the MTE and TE findings? If not, were these discrepancies identified by the project steering committee and addressed?

Adaptive Management

- Were there any changes in planned project outputs and activities? If so, did they have a significant impact on the expected project outcomes?
- Why were the changes brought on? (e.g., due to weaknesses in the initial project design or due to changes in the social, political and/or environmental circumstances in the project area)?
- Were the project's changes articulated in writing and then considered and approved by the project steering committee?

Stakeholders

- Did the project involve the relevant stakeholders through information sharing and consultation and by seeking their participation in project design, implementation, and M&E?
- Did the project consult with and make use of the skills, experience, and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities?
- Were the perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process taken into account while taking decisions?

Country Ownership

- Please comment on the level of national ownership of this project.
- Were the relevant representatives from government and civil society involved in project implementation, including as part of the project steering committee?
- Has the government enacted legislation and/or developed policies and regulations in line with the project's objectives?

Project Finance

- Is there sufficient clarity in the reported co-financing to substantiate in-kind and cash co-financing from all listed sources?

- Were there significant differences in the level of expected and actual co-financing and if so, what were the reasons for these differences?
- Were externally funded project components well integrated into the GEF supported components?
- Did the extent of materialization of co-financing have an effect on project outcomes and/or sustainability?
- Were there additional leveraged resources committed during project implementation?

Mainstreaming

- Did the project have any positive or negative effects of the project on local populations and on livelihoods?
- Have gender issues been taken into account in project design and implementation? If so, how and to what extent?
- Is there evidence that the project outcomes have contributed to better preparations to cope with natural disasters?
- Do the project objectives conform to agreed priorities in the UNDP country programme document (CPD) country programme action plan (CPAP), and UN Development Assistance framework (UNDAF)?

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

- Please comment on any lessons learned as a result of this project.
- Please comment on best practices employed.
- Please provide recommendations with regard to actions that should be carried out to improve project execution.

Annex 3- Documents consulted during evaluation

Acosta Cruz, Martín, Lourdes Múgica Valdés, Susana Aguilar Múgica. 2013. Protocolo para el monitoreo de aves acuáticas y marinas.

Anmari Álvarez-Alemán, James A. Powell, Eddy García Alfonso, Yanet Forneiro Martín-Viaña. Protocolo para el monitoreo de poblaciones de manatíes en áreas protegidas cubanas.

Baez, Ana. 2012. Lineamientos Estratégicos para el Desarrollo del Turismo Sostenible en el Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas de Cuba.

Centro Internacional de la Habana S. A.. 2010. Informe de Auditoría.

Centro Internacional de la Habana S. A.. 2011. Informe de Auditoría.

Centro Internacional de la Habana S. A.. 2012. Informe de Auditoría.

CNAP. 2013. Estrategia de Comunicación para el Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas.

CNAP. 2010. Manual para la Planificación Financiera en Áreas Protegidas de Cuba.

CNAP. 2013. Reporte de Avance del Sistema de Monitoreo de la Biodiversidad.

CNAP. 2014. Estado Actual de la Biodiversidad en los Archipiélagos del Sur de Cuba.

CNAP. 2014. Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects.

CNAP. 2010. Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects.

CNAP. 2010. Sitio web del proyecto.

CNAP. 2010. Relatoría Taller De Inicio Del Proyecto: "Aplicación De Un Enfoque Regional Al Manejo De Áreas Costeras Y Marinas Protegidas En Los Archipiélagos Del Sur De Cuba"

CNAP. 2010. Informe de Reunión de lecciones aprendidas 2010.

CNAP. 20111. Reunión de lecciones aprendidas 2011.

CNAP. 2012. Reunión de lecciones aprendidas 2012 y Plan Operativo 2013.

CNAP. 2013. Reunión de lecciones aprendidas 2013.

CNAP. 2010. QORs for 2010.

CNAP. 2011. QORs for 2011.

CNAP. 2012. QORs for 2012.

CNAP. 2013. QORs for 2013.

CNAP. AOP for 2010.

CNAP. AOP for 2011.

CNAP. AOP for 2012.

CNAP. AOP for 2013.

CNAP. AOP for 2014.

CNAP, Hernández Avila, Aylem. 2013. Reporte de avance del Sistema de Monitoreo de la Biodiversidad.

Conas (Consultores Asociados S. A.). 2013. Informe de Auditoría.

Ferro Azcona, Hakna, Gómez País, Gloria; Acosta Rodríguez, Orlando (editors). 2014. Áreas Protegidas Y Comunidades Humanas. Una Mirada Desde El Sur.

Ferro Azcona, Hakna, Gómez País, Gloria; Acosta Rodríguez, Orlando (editors). 2014. Actividades Económicas Alternativas En Áreas Protegidas Marino-Costeras Al Sur De Cuba

González Rossell, Amnerys, Vicente Berovides Álvarez, Manuel Alonso Tabet, Manuel López Salcedo. 2013. Protocolo para el monitoreo de Cyclura nubila nubila.

Guzmán Menéndez, José Manuel; Lic. Leda Menéndez Carrera. 2013. Protocolo para el monitoreo del ecosistema de manglar.

Hansel Caballero, Pedro M. Alcolado, Patricia González, Susana Perera, Leslie Hernández. Protocolo para el monitoreo de bentos en los arrecifes coralinos. 2013.

Hansel Caballero, Pedro M. Alcolado, Patricia González, Susana Perera, Leslie

Hernández. Protocolo para el monitoreo de bentos en los arrecifes coralinos. 2013.

Hernández Avila, Aylem. 2012. Plan Estratégico Regional de Manejo de los Archipiélagos al Sur de Cuba.

Martínez Daranas, Beatriz, Danay Macías Reyes, Mercedes Cano Mallo. 2013. Protocolo para el monitoreo de los pastos marinos.

Milian Hernández, Elvis (editor). 2014. Turismo Sostenible en Áreas Marina Protegidas.

Moncada Gavilán, Felix, Julia Azanza Ricardo, Gonzalo Nodarse Andreu, Yosvani Medina Cruz, Lic. Yanet Forneiro Martín-Viaña, Lic. José L. Gerhartz Muro. 2013. Protocolo para el monitoreo de la anidación de tortugas marinas en Cuba.

Pina Amargos, Fabian, Cobián Rojas, Dorka and Jorge Martinez. 2013. Protocolo para el monitoreo de la Ictiofauna en los arrecifes coralinos.

UNDP. CDRs for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

UNDP Evaluation Centre. 2012. Project Evaluations. Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP supported, GEF financed projects.

Annex 4: Itinerary

WORK ITINERARY FOR EVALUATORS

Date	Time	Activity	Place
Sunday 18/1/2015		Arrival and transfer of evaluators to hotel.	Hotel El Bosque
Monday 19/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel El Bosque
	9:00 am	Meeting at UNDP and signing of contract	UNDP
	11:00 am	Meeting with PMU, DRI, MINCEX	UNDP
	1:00 pm	Lunch and receipt of per diems	
	3:30 pm	Meeting at CNAP	CNAP
Tuesday 20/1/2015	8:00 am	Departure for Cajío. Visit to the naval zone of the CGB and discussions with staff.	CGB Cajío
	12:30 pm	Lunch	CGB Cajío
	2:00 pm	Departure for Pinar del Río.	
	4:00 pm	Meeting with CITMA Delegation	CITMA Pinar
	6:00 pm	Accomodation and Dinner	Hotel Vuelta Abajo
Wednesday 21/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel Vuelta Abajo
	7:45 am	Departure for Península de Guanahacabibes APRM	
	10:15 am	Visit to visitor centre of Guanahacabibes National Park (NP), presentations and exchange of information.	Visitor Centre Guanahacabibes NP
	12:30 pm	Visit to ecological station of Cabo Corrientes	Guanahacabibes NP
	1:30 pm	Lunch	Guanahacabibes NP

	3:00 pm	Visit to diving centre to view the buoys and discussions with staff in charge of nature tourism.	Centro Internacional de Buceo María la Gorda
	4:30 pm	Return to Pinar del Río.	
	7:00 pm	Accommodation and Dinner	Hotel Vuelta Abajo
Thursday 22/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel Vuelta Abajo
	7:45 am	Departure for Ciénaga de Zapata APMR.	
	1:00 pm	Lunch	Finca Fiesta Campesina. Ciénaga de Zapata
	3:00 pm	Visit to the CITMA CZ body, presentations and exchanges with the coordinator.	Órgano CITMA CZ
	5:30 pm	Accommodation and Dinner	Hotel Playa Larga
Friday 23/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel Playa Larga
	8:00 am	Visit to the fishing cooperative and exchanges with the fishermen and leaders of the national fishing sector.	UEB Playa Larga
	10:30 am	Meeting with local government and APRM Coordinating Board.	Playa Larga
	12:30 pm	Visit to nature tourism establishments of the private sector.	Playa Larga y Caletones
	1:30 pm	Lunch	Playa Larga
	3:00 pm	Exchange with locals and community leaders of Los Hondones and representatives of local agriculture	Community of Los Hondones
	4:30 pm	Visit to the END Administration of Cave System (Sistema Espeleolacustre)	END Sistema Espeleolacustre
	6:00 pm	Accommodation and Dinner	Hotel Playa Larga
Saturday 24/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel Playa Larga
	7:45 am	Departure for Ciego de Ávila.	
	12:30 pm	Lunch	Río Azul
	2:00 pm	Meeting with the coordinator, Flora and Fauna department of	CITMA Delegation,

		Ciego and Camagüey, Administration of the Jardines National Park and tourism representative.	Ciego de Ávila
	4:00 pm	Visit to the Venezuela training room.	Venezuela
	6:30 pm	Accommodation and Dinner	Hotel Santiago Habana
Domingo 25/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel Santiago Habana
	8:00 am	Departure for Havana	
	12:30 pm	Lunch	Ranchón Aguada
	4:30 pm	Arrival, accommodation and dinner.	Hotel El Bosque
Monday 26/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel El Bosque
	8:30 am	Meeting with directors of Flora and Fauna y Ministry of Tourism	CNAP
	9:30 am	Meeting DRI and MINCEX	CNAP
	10:30 am	Exchange with the coordinators of the Biodiversity Monitoring System.	CNAP
	1:00 pm	Lunch	
	2:00 pm	Meeting Mundo Latino	Mundo Latino
	5:30 pm	Accommodation and dinner.	Hotel El Bosque
Tuesday 27/1/2015	7:00 am	Breakfast	Hotel El Bosque
	8:30 am	Working session of evaluating team	CNAP
	12:30 pm	Lunch	
	2:30 pm	Meeting to present preliminary conclusions	UNDP
Wednesday 28/1/2015		Return to countries	

Annex 5: Terms of Reference

SOUTHERN ARCHIPELAGOS
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE FINAL EVALUATION

Country:	CUBA
ATLAS Award ID:	70074
PIMS Number:	3973
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
GEF Strategic Objective:	OP2
GEF Budget (USD):	5,710,000.00
Co-Financing Budget (USD):	14,104,907.00
Project Document Signature date:	30 Sept. 2009
Date of first disbursement:	Oct. 2009
Original Planned Closing Date:	30 Sept. 2014
Executing Agency:	CNAP- CITMA
Date of Project Closure	30 Sept. 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy for UNDP/GEF project has four objectives:

- to monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
- to provide a basis for decision making and any necessary amendments and improvements;
- to promote accountability for resource use;
- to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

To ensure effective project M&E, a mix of appropriate tools is used continuously throughout the lifetime of the project, such as: periodic monitoring of indicators, mid-term evaluations, audit reports and final evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full size or medium projects funded by GEF should carry out a mid-term review in the third year and a final evaluation upon completion of the fifth year of the project.

These terms of reference pertain to the Final Evaluation of the ***Application of a regional approach to the management of marine and coastal protected areas in Cuba's Southern Archipelagos*** project. For issues related to content and methodology of the evaluation, reference is made to the Guidelines for GEF projects (version for Evaluating Teams).

Brief Project Description

See Complete ToRs or ProDoc.

Special circumstances that have occurred since the beginning of the project

As part of the transformation of the model of economic development, there have been changes in the structure of the state administration. The Ministry of Fisheries, a key stakeholder identified in the PRODOC, was assimilated by the Ministry of Food Industry (MINAL), although this has not had a strong impact on the project, as the project has continued to work with the fishing industry in its new administrative location. In fact, during the course of the project, the Ministry that took on responsibility for fishing activity has encouraged the policy of eliminating the trawling system in use for finfish fisheries in the country and has worked on searching for more sustainable fishing alternatives that are less destructive of the marine environment, which the project has supported, as well as the review and development of new tools that will allow them to enforce this policy.

In accordance with the Guidelines for Economic and Social Policy, the strategic guide for the changes in the Cuban development model, the Cuban government is encouraging greater participation of the private sector in the economy (self-employed workers), which has led to the emergence of new local actors interacting with and making use of natural resources. For example, there has been new distribution of land for agricultural, livestock and forestry production, private fishermen , craftsmen , traders and collectors of products, rental housing for tourism, and others, which increase the pressure on ecosystems.

During this period, the country has witnessed a series of transformations to the legal framework and to the structuring of the institutions of the central government with direct relationships to natural resources, through various working commissions at the first level of government. These commissions have worked on the development of regulatory policy on the environment, with emphasis on coastal zones, with a system of monitoring and control adopted for the measures taken, which has enabled new regulations to be developed in terms of environmental policy, as with the recent moratorium for mangrove forests. This new instrument prohibits their use completely and will facilitate the recovery and restoration of these ecosystems as priority measures in the face of the effects of climate change. In addition, fishing for finfish with aggressive fishing gear has been prohibited (specifically trawling methods known as "chinchorros").

Moreover , the Cuban parliament approved the new Tax Law 113 , which lays out a series of taxes, levies and charges with direct implications for the National System of Protected Areas. The openness to the development of private and cooperative activities, on the one hand, provides greater opportunities for communities and nearby protected areas to carry out tourism-related activities, such as renting rooms, gastronomic activities and transportation.

As part of the restructuring process, the National Fund for Forestry Development (FONADEF) has also undergone changes, with a reduction in the budget for the 11 protected areas, which affected the project's co-financing budget. Moreover, marine protected areas cannot access this fund to finance activities in the marine environment; these have been funded through a budget allocated by the National Enterprise for the

Protection of Flora and Wildlife (Empresa Nacional para la Protección de la Flora y la Fauna") in Cuban pesos.

Contributions of new sources of foreign cofinancing that have supported the achievement of the project objectives and activities include: SOS FISHING and the Marine Programme of WWF Netherlands. Other institutions have provided support by conducting workshops and training activities such as: TNC , EDF, UNEP / CARSWAP, among others.

The complex situation of widespread shortages of inputs in Cuba during the project years (2010 to 2014) , has forced changes in the strategy to be made in relation to the dynamics of budgetary execution and acquisitions plans.

In 2012 , the third year of the project, Cuba was hit by Hurricane Sandy. This extreme weather event devastated the eastern provinces. This situation aggravated the tense economic scenario affecting the island, have a direct impact on the implementation of planned project activities and delaying the planned timelines required for the importation of certain inputs and execution of some tasks in these territories, these are scheduled to be met in the last quarter.

In 2014, importation processes became more complex with the Empresa Ejecutora de Donativos (EMED) being the only company authorized to import for cooperation projects and with the release of goods at the new port of Mariel. It has not been possible to finalize project publications. This situation has resulted in the inability to implement all the project funds by the official closing date of the project. The team has worked hard to conclude the budgetary execution in early 2015.

After Project Signature in September 2009, the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers declared 54 new protected areas, representing an increase of 3,041,340.83 ha under legal protection, of which 1,657,458.79 are terrestrial and 1,383,882.04 are marine. Of this total, 17 protected areas fall within the project area, with an increase in area of 995,637.68 ha, of which 460, 199.37 are terrestrial and 535,438.31 ha are marine.

Management Category	**NAME of PA**	**PROVINCE**	**Significance**	**CECM Agreement/Yea r**
PN	Cayos de San Felipe	Pinar del Rio	National	6871/10
RE	Los Pretiles	Pinar del Rio	National	7233/12
END	Banco de San Antonio	Pinar del Rio	National	7233/12
APRM	Península de Guanahacabibes	Pinar del Rio	National	6871/10
RF	Ciénaga de Lugones	Pinar del Rio	Local	7233/12
END	Sistema Espelolacustre de Zapata	Matanzas	National	6871/10
APRM	Península de Zapata	Matanzas	National	6871/10
RF	Bermeja	Matanzas	Local	6871/10
RF	Canales del Hanabana	Matanzas	Local	7233/12

PN	Jardines de la Reina	CA, Camagüey	National	6803/10
APRM	Humedales de Cayo Romano	Camagüey	National	7233/12
RE	El Macío	Granma	Local	7233/12
RF	Humedales del Gua y Cayos de Manzanillo	Granma	Local	7233/12
PN	Punta Francés	Isla de la Juventud	National	7233/12
RE	Los Indios	Isla de la Juventud	National	7233/12
RF	Campos - Rosario	Isla de la Juventud	National	7233/12
APRM	Sur de la Isla de la Juventud	Isla de la Juventud	National	6871/10

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE FINAL EVALUATION

The Final Evaluation should be based on the application of the five main criteria which are **relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; results** and **sustainability**. The rating of each of the criteria shall be done in accordance with the scales presented in the Guidelines for Evaluations of GEF projects (Annex 1) and shall be supported by evidence gathered during the evaluation.

The Final Evaluation of the Southern Archipelagos of Cuba Project is to analyze and document the results obtained through the implementation of the project and determine the impacts achieved, their sustainability and lessons learned.
The evaluation will focus specifically on:

- Evaluating the achievement of the project objectives, outcomes/impacts and outputs (changes made over time to the project logical framework should be considered and evaluated in terms of its objectives, expected results and execution modality).
- Evaluating the implementation of the project including ownership by the environmental authorities of the country and by regional stakeholders, stakeholder participation, adaptive management, financial planning and co-financing, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability and replicability.
- Identifying problems or circumstances that may have affected project implementation and the achievement of impacts.
- Recommending measures to ensure the viability and sustainability of the project and its results to guide the preparation of other phases of long-term intervention including new potential interventions from new donors.
- Identifying key lessons learned that can be disseminated to other relevant GEF projects and to local and national authorities and stakeholders involved in the project and planning follow-up actions.
- Providing relevant information for future studies , including verification of the final evaluation if requested by GEF.

Furthermore, the evaluation will consider the following issues:
a) Community Initiatives related to the search for sustainable economic alternatives: It is important to assess the design and implementation of community initiatives and determine how they contributed to the

national/regional approach to the protection and sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems
b) Global environmental benefits: define global environmental benefits in the context of the project, to what extent the project has internalized these, and what progress can be reported at this time . In particular, how the project has integrated management measures and adaptive planning to manage the impacts of climate change.

The main stakeholders involved in this evaluation are described in ANNEX 2.

2. EXPECTED EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

It is expected that the project evaluation team will develop the three products that are described in the Guide for GEF project evaluations (Annex 1) :

- An Inception Report which will be developed and submitted prior to the visit of the consultants to Cuba
- An oral presentation of the main findings of the evaluation to the UNDP Country Office (CO) and the Project Team (Management Unit) before the conclusion of the visit, to allow clarification and validation of key findings
- Final Evaluation Report, which will be in line with the description in Annex 3 of the Guide for Evaluations (Report Outline). The Final Evaluation Report must be submitted in Spanish and in English.

The Final Evaluation report will be structured in accordance with the guidelines of the Guide for Evaluations.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY OR APPROACH

The evaluation methodology to be applied should follow the guidelines established in the Guide for Evaluations. It is recommended that the evaluation team present its proposal for conducting the evaluation, which will be contained in the Inception Report , based on the evaluation methodology . The Inception Report will be discussed prior to the visit to Cuba with the Project Management Unit and UNDP Cuba in order to create a balance of written information, interviews and field visits.

This evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner . Therefore, all participants must understand and identify completely with the evaluation report . The evaluation of the project will begin with a review of key documents (Annex 3). These documents include the Mid-Term Review and the Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) that include a series of recommendations on the progress of the project. The evaluation should consider how these recommendations have been internalized in the implementation of the project.

These will constitute part of the inputs for the preparation of the Final Evaluation Report. Interviews should be considered with everyone involved, including key personnel who have worked and/or participated at some point in the development and implementation of the project. Finally field visits should be carried out, in order to directly observe project activities.

The review the final report will be carried out by the main actors involved in the project , including the project team , the regional UNDP and UNDP office in Cuba and office of the GEF Focal Point.

4. EVALUATION TEAM

The Team of Evaluators will consist of two international and one national specialist, all with over 10 years of professional experience and postgraduate training related to the project. Their professional profiles will include a wide range of skills and knowledge, expertise in carrying out analyses and project evaluations and skills in technical aspects related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity , as well as experience in social and economic development, and the linkages of these with the public policies of the environmental sector. The evaluators should also have an updated knowledge of the strategies and policies of the GEF.

Preference will be given to evaluators with experience working in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the evaluators must have a good knowledge of Spanish and English as the languages of work for this assignment.

The consultants in charge of the Final Evaluation will be subject to ethical standards referred to in the Guide and must sign the Code of Conduct (Annex 4) once they accept the assignment.

One evaluator will serve as Team Leader and will be responsible for submitting the evaluation report. This Leader will coordinate with the rest of the team to define the methodology of the work and the timing of their inputs for the report and the final revisions.

Table 1 - Profiles of the evaluators

Evaluator/ origin	**Responsibility**	**Technical knowledge**	**Experience**
1 (international)	Team Leader	Expert(s) in evaluation of international projects related to marine and coastal biodiversity, in relation to fishing.	Extensive experience in the design, management and evaluation of UNDP/ GEF projects for biodiversity conservation, in particular coastal marine biodiversity. Management of marine resources and sustainable fisheries.
2 (international)	Member	Expert(s) in planning and management of protected coastal and marine areas.	Management and evaluation of natural resource planning and management projects in protected coastal and marine areas with participation of stakeholders and institutional coordination. Knowledge of monitoring and evaluation

			systems and follow-up of marine and coastal resources.
3 (national)	Member	Expert(s) in environmental issues and the processes the country is going through during project implementation.	Management and evaluation of projects related to coastal marine activities. Knowledge of the social and economic context and environmental policies of the country related to the management of natural resources and the environment.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The UNDP Country Office in conjunction with the Project Management Unit will be responsible for the coordination and logistical arrangements for the evaluation and will also provide support to the Evaluation Team (transportation, lodging, office space, communications, etc.). They will pay the per diems and contractual payments in a timely manner, as well as organize the visits to the sites.

The evaluation team will meet with UNDP Cuba at the beginning and end of the mission. Teleconferences will be organized with the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) in charge of the project in the UNDP Regional Centre in Panama. Other meetings may be arranged as deemed necessary by any of the parties.

Payment details: The evaluators will be hired using project funds. The payment schedule is 50 % upon delivery of the first draft of the evaluation report to UNDP Cuba. The remaining 50% will be paid once the final report has been completed and approved by UNDP Cuba and UNDP/GEF-RCU (upon signature of Annex 5). The quality of the final report will be evaluated by UNDP Cuba and UNDP/GEF-RCU . If the quality of the report does not meet the standards or requirements of the UNDP/GEF, the evaluators will be asked to rewrite or revise the document (as often as necessary) before the final payment is made.

The hiring of the international evaluators will be funded by the budget provided by GEF for the project and the national evaluator will be part of Cuba's contribution to the project.

Duration and Deadlines

The MTE process will require 20 days of work which will be carried out over a period of approximately three months. The distribution of the work will be as follows:

<u>Work prior to visit to Cuba (3 days):</u>

1. Upon signature of the contract, the documents listed in Annex 3 will be sent to the consultants. This documentation will include background information and documents related to the design of the project. In addition, it will include documents to understand the country context.
2. Upon receipt of the documents, the consultants will have two weeks to prepare and send the Inception Report to the UNDP Country Office.

3. In the following two weeks, the UNDP Country Office and the Project Management Unit will review the Inception Report and will correspond with the Evaluating Team to refine it based on the suggestions of both offices.

Visit to Cuba (10 days):

4. The Evaluating Team will carry out a ten-day mission to Cuba which will include the following activities:

    - Meeting with the UNDP Country Office and teleconference with the RTA of the Regional Service Centre of Panama
    - Meetings with the key stakeholders of the country
    - Joint review of the available material with a focused attention on the results and products of the project
    - Visit to project sites
        - Observation and review of completed and ongoing field activities (capacity building, awareness raising/ education, demonstration activities of sustainable use, demonstration of other activities, community development, etc.)
        - Interviews with beneficiaries and key stakeholders, including representatives of local authorities, local environmental protection authorities, key stakeholders in the communities, etc.
    - Presentation of preliminary findings to key national stakeholders and to the UNDP Country Office.

Work after visit to Cuba (7 days):

5. Once the visit to Cuba ends, the Evaluating Team will have three weeks to prepare the draft Final Evaluation Report and circulate it to the stakeholders- UNDP Regional Office, UNDP Country Office and CITMA.
6. The Cuba UNDP Office together with the Project Management Unit will have three weeks to review the Evaluation Report and return it to the evaluators with the corresponding comments. If there are any discrepancies between the impressions and findings of the evaluating team and the stakeholders, an annex will be included in the final report reflecting these discrepancies.
7. The Evaluating Team will have an additional two weeks to include the relevant comments and prepare the Final Report.

The report will be considered finalized once the expectations have been met and the quality of the report meets the standards and requirements of UNDP/GEF. The UNDP Country Office and the UNDP Regional Office will sign the form in Annex 5, to confirm their acceptance of the final report.

Annex 6: Signed Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Forms (see separate files)