

Terminal Evaluation of the Project

**“Sustainable Land Use Management in the Semiarid
Region of Northeast Brazil (Sergipe)”**

Deliverable 3: Terminal Evaluation Report

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ACRONYMS

ABC	Brazilian Cooperation Agency
ADEMA	Administração Estadual do Meio Ambiente; State Environmental Administration (Sergipe)
AFS	Agro-forestry system
ANA	National Water Agency
ANATER	National Agency of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension
APL	Local Productive Cluster
APP	Area of Permanent Preservation
ASA	Semiarid Network (NGO)
ASD	Areas Susceptible to Desertification
ASF	Upper São Francisco
ATER	Technical Assistance and Rural Extension
BANESE	Bank of the State of Sergipe
BBZ	Zero-base dam
BNB	Bank of the Northeast
BNDES	National Bank of Economic and Social Development
CAR	Rural Environmental Registry
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBHSF	São Francisco River Watershed Committee
CEF	Federal Savings Bank
CEMA	State Environment Council
CFAC	Dom José Brandão de Castro Agriculture and Livestock Training Center
CHESF	São Francisco Hydro-Electric Company
CODEVASF	São Francisco and Parnaíba Valleys Development Company (MI)
COHIDRO	Water Resources and Irrigation Development Company
CONAMA	National Environment Council
CONERH	State Water Resources Council
CPATSA	Agriculture and Livestock Research Center for the Semiarid Tropics
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTASS	Territorial Commission of the Alto Sertão of Sergipe
DCD	Department to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation
DNOCS	National Department of Public Works Against Droughts (MI)
EFA	Family Farmer School
EIA/RIMA	Environmental Impact Assessment/Report on Environmental Impact
EMBRAPA	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (MAPA)
EMDAGRO	Agriculture and Livestock Development Corporation
ES	Ecosystem services
FBB	Bank of Brazil Foundation
FIDA	International Fund for Agricultural Development

FNE	Northeast Constitutional Finance Fund
FNMA	National Environment Fund
FUNBIO	Brazilian Fund for Biodiversity
FUNDECI	Scientific and Technological Development Fund
FUNDEMA	Sergipe Environmental Defense Fund
GEB	Global Environmental Benefit
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOB	Government of Brazil
GPCD	Standing Working Group to Combat Desertification (Sergipe)
IBAMA	Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
ICMBio	Chico Mendes Institute of Biodiversity Conservation
INCRA	National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (MDA)
INSA	National Semi-arid Institute (MCTI)
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment for Dryland Areas
LR	Legal Reserve
MAPA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (GoB)
MDA	Ministry of Agrarian Development (GoB)
MDS	Ministry of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger (GoB)
MF	Ministry of Finance (GoB)
MMA	Ministry of Environment (GoB)
NCCD	National Commission to Combat Desertification
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OEMA	State Environmental Agency
PAE	State Action Plan to Combat Desertification and Mitigation of the Effects of Drought (Sergipe)
PAM	Municipal Action Plan to Combat Desertification and Mitigation of the Effects of Drought
PAN	National Action Program to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought
PMFS	Sustainable Forest Management Plan
PNATER	National Policy for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PRONAF	National Program to Strengthen Family Agriculture
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SAF	Secretariat of Family Agriculture
SAP	Early Warning System for Drought and Desertification
SAS	Sergipe's Alto Sertão
SE	Sergipe
SEBRAE	Brazilian Service to Support Micro and Small Business

SEDETEC (Sergipe)	State Secretariat of Economic Development and Science and Technology
SEDR	Secretariat of Extractivism and Sustainable Rural Development (MMA)
SEMARH	State Secretariat of Environment and Water Resources (Sergipe)
SEPLAG	State Secretariat of Planning, Budget and Management (Sergipe)
SFB	Brazilian Forest Service (MMA)
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SGP	Small Grants Program; (GEF)
SICAR	National Rural Environmental Registry System
SRH	Superintendency of Water Resources (Sergipe)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TQ	Terra Quilombola; Maroon Land
TT	Tracking Tool
UC	Conservation Unit
UFS	Federal University of Sergipe
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
ZNLD	Zero net land degradation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Table 1 Project Information Table			
Project Title	Sustainable Land Use Management in the Semiarid Region of Northeast Brazil (Sergipe)	PIF Approval Date:	April 12, 2013
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	3066	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date (MSP):	October 22, 2014
GEF Project ID:	5276	ProDoc Signature Date:	June 8, 2015
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	83642	Date Project Manager hired:	January 1, 2016
Country/Countries:	Brazil	Inception Workshop Date:	April 27, 2016
Region:	Latin America and the Caribbean	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	November 22, 2019
Focal Area:	Land Degradation	Revised Expected Terminal Evaluation completion date	December 22, 2021
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/ Objectives:	Land Degradation	Planned Operational Closure Date:	December 8, 2021
Trust Fund:	Global Environment Facility Trust Fund		
Implementing Partner:	Department to Combat Desertification (DCD) of the Secretariat for Extraction and Sustainable Rural Development (SEDR) of the Ministry of Environment (MMA) and the Sergipe State Secretariat of Environment and Water Resources (SEMARH)		
Financial Information			
PDF/PPG		at approval (US\$M)	at PDF/PPG completion (US\$M)
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project preparation		84,886	84,886
Co-financing for project preparation		40,000	40,000
Project		at CEO Endorsement (US\$M)	At TE (US\$M)
[1] GEF financing		3,815,192	3,100,990
[2] UNDP contribution:		300,000	2,386,125
[3] Government		12,483,040	13,198,116
[4] NGO		2,125,734	
[5] Private Sector		2,424,242	
[6] Total co-financing [2 + 3 + 4 + 5]:		17.333.016	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1+6]		21.148.208	18,685,231

Project Description

1. The project initiated in June 2015 under the leadership of United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) as Implementing Agency and the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) as Executing Agency. The total Global Environmental Facility (GEF) budget was USD 3,815,192, to address land degradation (LD) in the state of the Sergipe with a view to scaling up to the country's entire semiarid region.
2. The project is aimed to strengthen the state environmental governance framework to better address the main drivers of land degradation and desertification, focusing primarily on the escalating conflict of land use and unsustainable agriculture practices where LD is causing soil erosion, soil nutrient depletion, damaging hydrological system integrity and undermining ecosystem services. By reducing LD and maintaining vital ecosystem services, the project expects to improve livelihoods in an area with high poverty and social problems.
3. The project's primary objective is to strengthen sustainable land management (SLM) governance frameworks to combat land degradation (LD) processes in the semiarid region of the state of Sergipe in the Northeast (NE) of Brazil to be achieved through the following two Outcomes: OUTCOME 1: Strengthened governance framework contributes to avoiding, reducing and reverting land degradation in Sergipe (Areas Susceptible to Desertification – ASD); OUTCOME 2: Uptake of SLM/SFM practices increased in Alto Sertão of Sergipe (SAS), with replication in rest of the State's ASD.

Evaluation Rating Table

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
M&E Plan Implementation	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
Overall Quality of M&E	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	5 (Satisfactory)
Effectiveness	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
Efficiency	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
Overall Project Outcome Rating	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
Socio-political/economic	3 (Moderately Likely)
Institutional framework and governance	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
Environmental	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	2 (Moderately Unlikely)

Ratings

Ratings for Outcomes, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution	Sustainability ratings:	Impact Ratings:
6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2: Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	4: Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3: Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2: Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1: Unlikely (U): severe risks	3: Significant (S) 2: Minimal (M) 1: Negligible (N)

Concise summary of findings

4. The project is highly relevant for Brazil, because it is a concrete step towards implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The project addressed two main barriers that are preventing SLM in Sergipe, an insufficient governance framework and the capacity and finance constraints limiting the uptake of sustainable practices in the state.
5. The political turnover at federal and state levels was acknowledged as the project's major challenge. Stakeholders acknowledge the flexibility and adaptive capacity that allowed the project to continue, even when no project director was appointed for a period of 12 months during 2019, forcing implementation to an almost full stop.
6. Due to the accumulated delay in execution, the project requested and was granted two extensions totaling 18 additional months. A Substantive Revision of project design was finalized in June 2020. The project is on track to partially achieve the expected goals. Until the third quarter 2021, the project executed USD 3.1 million, 81% of the total available budget.
7. In terms of progress, Outcome 1 Outcome 1, only two out of four indicators report partial progress. The most important achievement has been the publication of the State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe on November 6th, 2020.
8. Outcome 2 reports better performance than Outcome 1, with two indicators already or close to be achieved, one partially achieved, and one indicator without significant progress. The project performed a good job in implementing actions with farming households in SAS, for them to adopt and appropriate of SLM practices. The indicator that shows the number of farmers that implemented these practices is on track (98.15% compliance).

Recommendation summations

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Sustainability		
A.1	Stakeholders would like to see a second phase of the project, to allow an adequate closure of project activities and to ensure institutions are able to assimilate the important level of investment deployed since the project's Substantive Revision. There is interest from northeastern states and capacities in place to continue the preservation and sustainable management of the Caatinga biome.	UNDP MMA	Mid term
A.2	It is recommended to follow up on budget plans at the state level. The challenge now lies in the capacity of the institutions to ensure good spending and documented impact.	MMA	Mid term
A.5	It is important to build an institutional route that provides clarity on the competencies of the MMA, and that allows scaling up to the national level what has been worked on at the regional level through the project and other interventions.	MMA MAPA	Mid term
A.6	For future projects it is important to evaluate the possibility to incorporate state governments as responsible parties to execute some project activities in order to further build institutional capacities and deconcentrate risk from federal agencies.	UNDP	Long term
A.7	Future projects implementing activities at the state and municipal scales, should consider a more balanced distribution of the PMU between Brasilia and the state or place where activities are implemented.	UNDP	Long term
A.8	Cofinancing should be monitored systematically, with tools that allow periodic report of the progress in terms of resource mobilization against original commitments.	UNDP	Long term
B	Category 2: Outcomes		
B.1	It is recommended that the implementation of Law No. 8785 (State Policy to Combat Desertification - PECD) be monitored to verify compliance, otherwise there is a risk that it will remain on paper.	MMA	Short term
B.2	It is important to follow up on the status of the INCRA credit lines and the environmental fines conversion instrument promoted by the project.	MMA UNDP	Mid term
B.3	Since the project developed material for online training, it is recommended to take advantage of the inputs generated to continue capacity building remotely with farmers and interested families in Sergipe.	MMA UNDP	Short term
C	Category 3: Exit strategy		

C.1	It is essential that the closure of the project is used to generate a repository of all the information generated, and that a way is found to ensure that it can continue to be used and made available after project closure.	MMA UNDP PMU	Short term
C.3	Often, an accelerated project closure process means that many activities implemented at the end may have a low capacity for assimilation by partners and beneficiaries. It is necessary for UNDP to accompany the closing processes of pending consultancies and to commit state authorities to assume key roles and responsibilities are in place to ensure sustainability.	UNDP PMU	Short term
C.4	Regarding the exit strategy that has been developed, it is important to formalize the follow up commitments of actors or partners to fund and technically support the implementation of SLM practices or the implementation of the State Policy to Combat Desertification in Sergipe.	UNDP PMU	Short term

1 INTRODUCTION

9. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Project is carried out as part of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework established in the ProDoc, which establishes that an independent TE must be carried out three months before the final meeting of the Project Board. The TE is undertaken following UNDP and Global Environment Facility (GEF) guidance. It is expected that this evaluation will allow demonstrate progress of results originally planned by the project, its impact, sustainability, as well as recommendations for monitoring activities.

1.1 Purpose and objective of the TE

1.1.1 Purpose

10. The Terminal Evaluation assesses the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draws lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.
11. The TE is conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the “Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-Financed Projects (2020)”. The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.
12. The TE evaluated all interventions made by the Executing Agency (UNDP) to ensure project execution and project team/beneficiaries’ safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil. In this evaluation, work plan adjustments, financial and budgetary aspects, field activity adaptations, the engagement strategy and communication efforts are considered.

1.1.2 Evaluation Objectives

13. The evaluation objective is to assess all categories of project progress using mixed methods. The analytical approach took into consideration the overall problem and barriers that this project was designed to support. The TE closely considered the logical framework (Annex 2) and the validation by stakeholders during the inception

meeting process to judge whether the expected results and implementation plan have indeed been the best strategy for implementation as vetted by partners.

- Assess the project's implementation strategy.
- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the interventions.
- Assess the project's processes, including budgetary efficiency.
- Assess the extent to which planned activities and outputs have been achieved.
- Identify the main achievements and impacts of the programmed activities.
- Identify the underlying causes and issues of non-achievement of some targets.
- Document lessons learnt.
- Make recommendations for the design of future projects.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

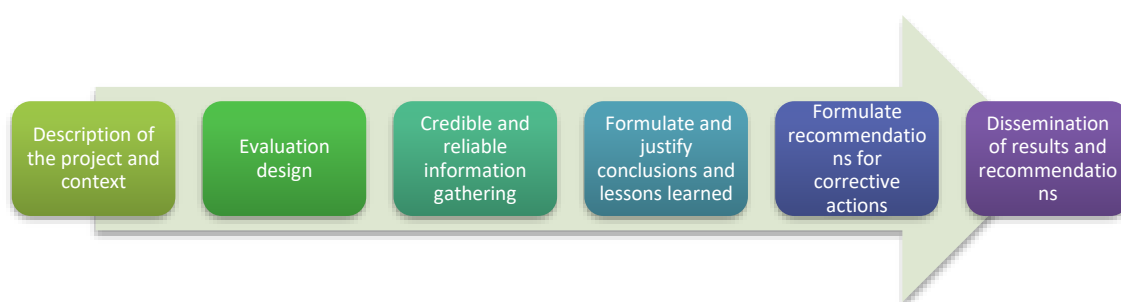
14. In general, the evaluation refers to the collection and systematic analysis of information on the characteristics and results of a project, which serves as a basis for improving its execution and effectiveness and informing decisions for current and future programming. This Terminal Evaluation is focused on results and how they were obtained. Thus, it allows the achievements of the project to be highlighted in the fulfillment of its logical framework, as well as to identify good practices and lessons learned in the design and implementation of the project. The thorough terminal evaluation covers the project implementation period from 2015 to 2021.

15. The Terminal Evaluation is guided by the ***Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects (2020)***. In accordance with the guide and the context of the project, the following tools were used:

- Documentation reviews
- Stakeholder interviews
- Questionnaires

16. In general, the evaluation was carried out according to the following in six steps:

Figure 1: Terminal Evaluation Process



Source: Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects, 2020

17. During the process, there was an active interaction between the evaluator, UNDP, the project management unit (PMU) and other interested parties, in order to accelerate the evaluation process and allow timely feedback of the findings.
18. Initially, on October 29th, 2021, a first meeting was carried out online. The objective was the presentation of the evaluator to the PMU, UNDP. and other stakeholders, as well as the definition of delivery times and coordination mechanisms between the consultant and the designated counterparts. At the meeting, aspects such as communication channels, direct supervision and coordination of information and product delivery were defined.
19. As of March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus spread rapidly to all regions of the world, limiting international and local travel. In this context, some limitations were encountered during the final assessment due to the new normal being experienced by the COVID-19 pandemic.
20. As this is a fully virtual assessment, the availability of stakeholders, and the capacity or willingness of key actors had to be taken into account. Additionally, consideration was given to the fact that internet/computer accessibility was an issue, which resulted in some difficulties in arranging for the participation of certain stakeholders, leading to the need to reschedule dates.
21. In order to reduce the risks mentioned above, and for the evaluation to be feasible, credible, and useful, special attention was paid to the different methods and methodologies applied in the evaluation. In this sense, possible solutions to these drawbacks were proposed throughout the methodology.

1.2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

22. As a starting point for the evaluation, the evaluator, in accordance with the Guide, evaluated the results and impacts of the project through the evaluation matrix. The matrix presented in Annex 5, identifies the key questions related to the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues, and how they were to be answered via the methods selected, desk review, interviews, and field visits. These are detailed below.

1.2.1.1 Secondary Information – Desk Review

23. The evaluator reviewed the project documentation provided by the PMU and the implementing partners. In accordance with the Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects (2020), 27 documents were considered key for this evaluation. The documents include the Project Document (ProDoc), Annual Work Plans (AWPs), Combined Delivery Report (CDR), Annual

Project Report (APR) and Project Implementation Review (PIR), Consolidated Quarterly Progress Reports, Site-level Quarterly Progress Reports, Mid- and Year-end Assessment Reports, Audit Reports and project products. Of the list of information requested, not all has been received; the status of the documents can be consulted in Annex 4.

24. Based on this review, the evaluator carried out a detailed description of the project, covering the identified problem and establishing objectives and their respective activities. A broader context was based on other national documents and reports, including official information from government and donor agencies, such as project documents, capacity building assessments, country reports or profiles. This information provided a measure of the baseline situation prior to project implementation, as well as its perceived contribution or impact.

1.2.1.2 Interviews with Stakeholders

25. As suggested by the Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects (2020), the evaluation followed a consultative approach that included conducting interviews. This activity enriched the vision of the context through direct contact with the most representative actors in the implementation of the project, thus receiving first-hand testimonies about the progress and barriers encountered.
26. The interviews targeted a diverse array of stakeholders, including project beneficiaries, government representatives, civil society organizations, academia, the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), The UNDP Country Office, the private sector, local government officials, and national agency officials including the GEF OFP. This allowed the generation of reflections, and to obtain first-hand information about the different stages of the project life cycle, resulting in a comprehensive vision of the evaluation process. The benefits of applying this method were:
- Allowed to obtain information and perceptions of the people who managed, implemented, or are beneficiaries of the project.
 - The questions were clear and specific, which makes it easier to obtain useful information.
 - The organization of the interviews according to the evaluation criteria allowed classifying the answers to facilitate the elaboration of conclusions.
 - Allowed to have information to compare with the findings of the documentary review.
27. In the context of the new normal, the field mission was not possible, and it was necessary to maintain a coordinated and organized work between the evaluator and

the project team to carry out the interviews. Many project stakeholders were limited in their availability to participate and as a mitigation measure for remote evaluation and to ensure the quality of the evaluation findings, it was proposed to expand the list of potential key stakeholders to be interviewed.

28. Together with the PMU, a universe of potential interviewees is identified (public institutions, private parties, NGOs, and beneficiaries), who participated in different phases of the project (design, execution and closure). The names of the interviewees were provided after consultation with the PMU.
29. Subsequently, a prioritization of actors was carried out, evaluating their availability and representativeness in the project. A total of 20 interviews were conducted, the list of people interviewed is shown in Annex 3 of this report.
30. The execution of the interviews was designed based on an agenda so that representatives of the same institution were interviewed on the same day, avoiding creating confusion due to the perceptions of the different institutions.
31. For the interviews, a questionnaire was used, focused on the participation of the different actors according to their role in the implementation of the project. The list of questions for the evaluation followed the five criteria indicated in Annex 6 of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and were proposed by the evaluator based on the information of the project, evaluation criteria and the evaluator's experience.
32. All interviews were online, and the dates were coordinated with the PMU. The interviews lasted about 45 minutes each, were semi-direct and conducted individually, with diverse social actors, always indicating to the interviewees the confidentiality of their answers. Also, as the Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects (2020) suggests, to preserve independence as well as confidentiality, UNDP staff project team members, and Implementing Partner representatives did not participate in stakeholder or beneficiary meetings or interviews.
33. The different perceptions were sought on issues of interest, to “triangulate” responses and generate less subjective visions.
34. The interviews were formally requested by the PMU and once the invitations had been sent, the evaluator coordinated with the day, time and platform to use to carry out the interviews.

1.2.1.3 Evaluation Report

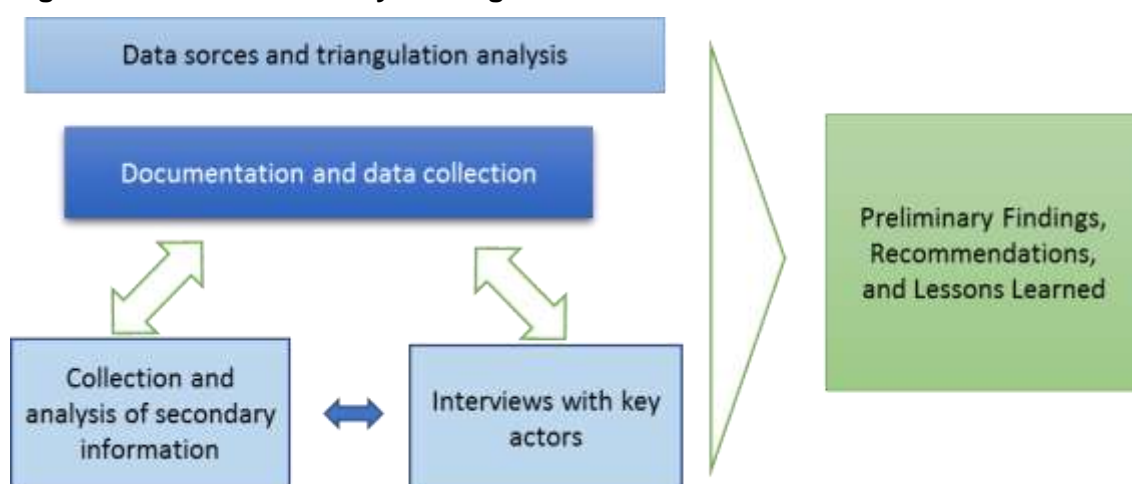
35. The TE report follows the Guidance for Conducting Terminal Reviews of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects (2020), it establishes the scope of the terminal

evaluation and covers all activities undertaken in the framework of the project. This refers to:

- Planned outputs of the project compared to actual outputs and the actual results as a contribution to attaining the project objectives.
- Problems and necessary corrections and adjustments to document lessons learned.
- Efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost efficiency.
- Likely outcomes and impact of the project in relation to the specified goals and objectives of the project.

36. Based on the information gathered, the evaluator has formulated a draft document that proposes recommendations that have a technical and practical nature, reflecting a realistic understanding of the project's achievements. It helps to identify the influential factors and the possibility of developing corrective measures that can lead to a better performance of the project and to comply with the objectives and results established in the logical framework (Annex 2). For the preparation of the final evaluation report and, in order to reinforce the credibility and validity of the findings, judgments and conclusions obtained, the evaluator used triangulation techniques to ensure technical quality. Triangulation involves double- or triple-checking the results from the data analysis by cross-comparing the information obtained via each data collection method (desk study and individual interviews) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Information Analysis Diagram



Source: José Galindo, 2021

37. The evaluation was strictly governed by the standards of good evaluations of utility, feasibility, accuracy, and neutrality. The final evaluation of the project was applied to the design, implementation, and results stages of the project.
38. **Planning:** Project formulation including the logical framework, assumptions, risks, indicators, budget, country context, national ownership, stakeholder participation in design, replicability, among others.
39. **Project implementation:** implementation approach, stakeholder participation, quality of execution by each institution involved and in general, financial planning, monitoring and evaluation during implementation
40. **Results:** Effects, impacts, catalytic effect of the results obtained, their integration with other UNDP priorities, such as poverty reduction, better governance, prevention and recovery from natural disasters and gender, as well as their sustainability in terms of resources financial, socio-political, institutional framework, governance and environmental.
41. For the TE, five criteria were assessed: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Results, and Sustainability. Each of them was used to assess project relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, as well as the quality of M&E systems and Outcomes. It is important to note that the rating scales differ for different criteria (Annex 7).
42. The Final Report considers all comments to the draft report, including clarifications or modifications. At all times, the consultant respected the consistency with the evidence gathered through direct observations or triangulation of different sources.

1.3 Ethics

43. The evaluation was conducted in adherence to the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations' and GEF and UNDP policies on monitoring and evaluation. As needed, measures have been applied to protect the rights and confidentiality. The evaluator has signed a Code of Conduct form, which is attached here as Annex 8.

1.4 Cross-cutting issues

44. According to the Guidance for Conducting Terminal Reviews of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects (2020), the TE considered to what extent the project design and implementation took into account key cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality, rights-based approach, capacity development, poverty alleviation, climate change mitigation, and adaptation. These cross-cutting issues built on the synergies of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) address critical gaps in their delivery.

45. To achieve this, during data collection and analysis, the evaluator found evidence of how key cross-cutting issues for the project were addressed throughout project design and implementation, aiming to identify what specific measures or strategies were taken, and to what extent it was possible to mainstream these issues across project interventions. From an inclusive approach, the TE evaluated if vulnerable groups were identified, how their integration was facilitated by the project, and if these processes contributed to their empowerment and exercise of their rights.
46. Beyond the review of key project documents and reports, the assessment included specific questions to address cross-cutting issues (Annex 6). The assessment also analyzed what extent the project monitoring and evaluation addresses its impact on gender and intercultural relations, considering the participation of stakeholders and the benefits derived from it.
47. Regarding the quality of the engagement process, the TE sought to ensure that the selection of people who participated in interviews and focus groups was adequate and included a diversity of technical actors, authorities, representatives of indigenous peoples and / or other informants who maintain the memory of the processes and were able to share information and perceptions about the project.

1.5 Limitations to the Evaluation

48. Regarding limitations related to the COVID-19, field visits to carry out interviews did not materialize. In this sense, for the evaluation to be viable, credible, and useful, special care was taken and methods were applied to reduce information gaps.
49. Due to travel restrictions, the evaluator was not able to travel, therefore all his stakeholder consultations were undertaken remotely by internet conferencing.
50. Regarding the provision of the information required for the evaluation, there were information gaps between what was requested and what was delivered. The evaluator contacted the PMU several times to request the information.

1.6 Structure of the evaluation report

51. The Terminal Evaluation report is structured in three levels, beginning with this introductory chapter to the evaluation and its methodological process. A second level, covering chapters 2, 3 and 4, presents the evaluation results for each stage of the project life cycle. The main findings and analysis of the evaluation are summarized in the final chapter, presenting conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project start and duration, including milestones

52. The project officially received the GEF resources in January 2016 and it was originally supposed to last five years. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and political turnovers, which caused changes on implementing partner's team, activities were in significant delay. For these reasons, a project extension request was approved for 12 additional months in April 2020. The new operational and financial closures date would be June 2021. After this, a second Covid-related extension was also granted from June 12, 2021 to December 08, 2021. The key dates and project milestones are detailed in the Project Information Table presented in the Executive Summary.

2.2 Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope

53. Areas Susceptible to Desertification (ASD) in Brazil occupy an area of 1.34 million km² and are home to 17% of its population. As result of LD, ASDs had lost around 44% of their natural vegetation by 2008 and soil losses are estimated between 11 and 15 t/ha/year, which was leading to nutrient and water losses over large land extensions. The state of Sergipe represents, on a workable scale, all the issues that Brazil's ASDs have to face. Sergipe, with an area of 21,918 km², has 74.2% of its land (16,269 km²) classified as areas susceptible to desertification, covering 49 of the 75 municipalities. Its temperatures range from 26° to 32° Celsius and it has erratic precipitation levels and dry seasons lasting seven to eight months with considerable annual variation.

54. Vegetation loss and land degradation were at the highest levels in the northwestern part of Sergipe, in the state of Sergipe's Alto Sertão (SAS), where an area of 4,908 km² that covered 7 municipalities show a LD index from accentuated to severe in most of them. Although it was not clear how these areas would to be affected by climate change, it was known that Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) are linked to changes in temperature and precipitation, losses in productivity of food crops, increase of evapotranspiration, dryness, and water availability.

55. During the construction of the ProDoc it was identified that the ASDs in Sergipe, especially in the SAS, has some of the worst human development indices based in

indicators of poverty, education, and mortality rates. Also, in the Northeast (NE), gender discrimination is a significant problem in comparison to urban areas.

56. The main crops of small farmer in the ASD are cassava, beans, maize and various vegetables and they represent 40% of the total production areas of the eight states in the semiarid region. Agrarian reform programs in Sergipe were concentrated in the SAS (95 programs). They established landless workers in settlements and provide them with land; this includes women. In Sergipe, the main agricultural crop is sugarcane in large plantations near the coast, while the main activity in the ASD is livestock. However, maize crops have become important for poultry feed and now represent 35% of Sergipe's annual crops with expansion towards ASDs.
57. The main government institutions responsible for the environment in Sergipe are the State Environmental Administration (ADEMA), which is within the state Secretariat of Environment and Water Resources (SEMARH) and the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD) of the Secretariat of Extractivism and Sustainable Rural Development (SEDR) within MMA. For the SAS, the relevant watershed committee is the São Francisco River Watershed Committee (CBHSF). By 2015, the commission to combat desertification in Sergipe is the Standing Group to Combat Desertification (GPCD). Some municipalities, including five in the SAS, were developing Municipal Action Plans (PAMs) against desertification. At federal level, agricultural development is responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA) for agribusiness and the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) for family farmers. The Bank of the Northeast (BNB) works with micro-credit. Small businesses are supported by the Brazilian Service to Support Micro and Small Business (SEBRAE), connected to the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Commerce (MDIC).
58. There were various civil society networks that embrace or could include SLM in their activities. The Semiarid Association (ASA), The National Agroecology Network (ANA) and the Movement of Peasant Women (MMC).
59. The policy and legal framework had some limitations to wild collection and marketing of any such non-agricultural products. Few municipalities in Brazil had the capacity to issue environmental licenses and these ones have to be approved for all the activities from farm level activities to major public construction works. Sergipe established a simplified processes for agrarian reform settlements and licensed 37 of them. Requirements for obtaining licenses vary and are stricter for large companies that cause greater impact. Failure to comply with agreed conditions can lead to administrative, civil, and even criminal liability. Given shared responsibilities

in land use governance, the licensing process was complex in Brazil and required a sophisticated system to ensure that it is complementary.

60. Food products are subject to numerous and complex federal, state and municipal regulations and inspection systems which make security legislation not appropriate for family farmers and their associations. It also can block agricultural production and marketing by poor smallholders.

2.3 Problems that the project sought to address, threats and barriers targeted

The project's objective seeks to address the following key barriers:

- a) Traditional family farming practices are becoming unsustainable by not giving enough time for soil to recover, using fire in an uncontrolled manner that can cause deforestation, and causing soil erosion because cultivation on slopes
- b) Large-scale commercial agriculture that causes removal of native vegetation to plant pastures for cattle-raising, causing soil erosion. Excessive use of chemicals as herbicides and also water for irrigation which can have negative impacts on LD.
- c) Overexploitation of wood to provide energy. In Sergipe, there are 80 brick and tile industries using fuelwood to manufacture bricks and tiles from raw clay.
- d) Hunting as a result of low-income levels, where families have to hunt in order to eat, disturbing the ecological balance.
- e) Infrastructure development for Sergipe's economic growth, leading to land use conflicts and exacerbating LD.
- f) Climate change presents new challenges since it influences desertification processes and expands the areas of occurrence, intensifying aridity and thus worsening the environmental problems of the region.

2.4 Immediate and development objectives of the project

61. The present project's objective is to address land degradation in the state of Sergipe by optimizing and coordinating existing programs to engender sustainable land management, reverting land degradation, strengthening the environmental governance framework and addressing the main drivers of land degradation and desertification. It focuses on the escalating conflict of land uses and unsustainable agriculture practices.

2.5 Expected results

Outcome 1: Strengthened governance framework contributes to avoiding, reducing, and reverting land degradation in Sergipe ASD

- Output 1.1: Sergipe's state policy and planning framework supports integration of SLM in ASD.
- Output 1.2: State land use licensing processes stimulate appropriate measures to reduce LD.
- Output 1.3: Monitoring land use optimized for SLM implementation in ASD.
- Output 1.4. Knowledge management and national-level governance framework strengthened to increase adoption of SLM in Sergipe and facilitate replication in NE.

Outcome 2: Uptake of SLM/SFM practices increased in Alto Sertão of Sergipe (SAS), with replication in rest of the State's ASD

- Output 2.1. SLM best practices implemented in SAS provide guidance for licensing process so as to revert LD processes.
- Output 2.2. State extension services incorporate SLM guidelines for ASDs and provide targeted support to SAS.
- Output 2.3 State and national access to diverse funds improved for uptake of SLM in ASDs.

2.6 Main stakeholders

Actor	Roles and responsibilities
Department to Combat Desertification (DCD), Secretariat of Extraction and Sustainable Rural Development (SEDR), Ministry of Environment - MMA	DCD/SEDR/MMA is responsible for the design, development, legal framework, and integration of public policies in order to guarantee sustainability in actions and activities to combat desertification and land degradation in ASD. DCD facilitated the promotion of uptake of SLM practices with support from various government agencies. The Project was technically coordinated by DCD through its National Technical Director and the National Technical Coordinator who worked with the PMU. This implementing partner was key to all Outputs and participated in the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).
Sergipe State Secretariat of Environment and Water Resources (SEMARH)	SEMARH plays a key role in the state environmental governance and licensing processes. It has strong buy-in and support from other sectors and levels of government. Consequently, SEMARH was a key stakeholder for this project due to its responsibilities in sustainable development of Sergipe and as a member of NCCD. The main state environmental programs are under its umbrella, which includes the implementation of PAE-Sergipe, which promotes SLM adoption in Sergipe. In this way, the project carried out institutional strengthening of SEMARH in licensing and oversight processes. It was a relevant player for all Outputs, participating at the PAC.
National Commission to Combat Desertification (NCCD)	NCCD is the consultative and deliberative collegiate body that decides on the implementation of the national policy to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. Due to its competence and as a member of the Project Advisory Committee, the NCCD contributed to the project as a consultative forum and decision-making instance for creating consensus on combating desertification, empowering social stakeholders involved and including minority groups. Moreover, NCCD supported the design of new

	guidelines, methodologies and related regulations regarding licensing procedures and adoption of SLM under the national framework in partnership with DCD, CONAMA, SFB and IBAMA. It was particularly relevant in the implementation of Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, and at participating at the PAC.
Task Force to Combat Desertification (GPCD)	GPCD is responsible for the coordination of actions to combat the causes and effects of desertification in Sergipe as foreseen in the PAE/SE. Its mandate includes the development and implementation of projects which provide financial and technical support for increasing capacity for sustainable coexistence with drought. GPCD promoted networking among state stakeholders as a forum for consensus building and strengthening of SLM adoption in Sergipe, working as a channel for flow of information and lessons learned in the project to the NCCD. Moreover, the GPCD supported the formulation of plans to combat desertification in SAS, being a key stakeholder for Output 1.1.
Brazilian Institute for Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA)	IBAMA is the authority responsible for implementation of the National Environmental Policy (NEP) and other environmental policies relating to federal responsibilities for environmental licensing regulation, environmental quality, authorization for use of natural resources and environmental inspection, monitoring and control, subject to the guidelines issued by the MMA. In this way, IBAMA was responsible for assistance in monitoring and supervision of project activities supporting the development of methodological guidelines, regulations, and resolutions, as well as providing technical inputs related to supervision and monitoring to promote the adoption of SLM in ASD. It was a relevant stakeholder for Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2 and at participating at the PAC.
Brazilian Forest Service (SFB)	SFB is mandated to promote economic and sustainable use of forests in Brazil. It was responsible for encouraging and supporting the adoption of SLM as a strategy to combat desertification and promote the sustainable use and conservation of forestry resources in ASD, providing technical support for implementation of the National Forest Inventory in Sergipe and supporting training for SLM practices. It was a relevant player for Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.
Public Environmental Funds	The public environmental funds are tools to support the implementation of environmental public policies in the country. These funds play a key role in the implementation of project field activities to enhance and encourage the adoption of SLM in Brazil's ASD as a strategy for recovery of environmental quality of degraded areas and sustainable management of landscapes. Concerning the project activities, the environmental funds played an important role supporting project interventions in Sergipe. Moreover, they encouraged and supported the development of studies and projects about combating desertification as a tool for adaptation and increased resilience of communities to climate change, as well as sensitivity assessment to enhance of SLM, APLs, Supply Chains, PES, and other instruments that promote sustainable use of environmental resources and sustainable rural development in ASD. They were particularly relevant for Output 2.3.
Sergipe Environmental Agency (ADEMA)	ADEMA is the Sergipe State Authority (linked to SEMARH) responsible for environmental licensing and monitoring of activities with potential for causing environmental impacts and pollution. It is responsible for the implementation of CAR and related activities in Sergipe. As a member of the Project Technical Committee, ADEMA undertook actions to collaborate in the design of procedures for licensing of SLM (alternative use and forest management), providing guidance for optimizing and strengthening procedures for licensing and monitoring. Consequently, ADEMA embraced project outcomes and lessons learned in the processes of licensing, monitoring and oversight of projects applying SLM, and took part in training activities of its staff. It was a relevant stakeholder for Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 and 2.2) and participated at the PAC.
Sergipe State Secretariats	The Sergipe government institutions that have responsibility for supporting rural development were involved as stakeholders in the project. They

(SEAGRI, SEDETEC)	worked in partnership with the other stakeholder to encourage the development of sustainable local production arrangements (APLs) and business plans in the ASD incorporating SLM guidelines resulting from the project, to support scientific-technical development related to project activities and to support the training of stakeholders. Furthermore, they were urged to absorb the project outcomes in decision-making processes. These institutions were relevant for all outputs.
Alto Sertão Municipal government environmental authorities	The environmental authorities of municipal governments facilitated and supported the implementation of project activities, developed local action plans to combat desertification and consolidated their Environmental Systems (councils, regulation and environmental funds). In parallel, they encouraged the participation of members of the GPCD as a state-level consultative forum on desertification and supported the development of technical capacity on desertification and LD. They were relevant for most of projects Outputs: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2.
Banking Institutions	The Banking institutions (federal, regional and state banks) with activities in rural development at all four scales of the project, were relevant stakeholders. They were partners in supporting the development of arrangements to increase the supply of financial resources for adoption of SLM in ASD. Moreover, they had substantial tasks in preparation of bank staff to evaluate proposals for SLM for rural credit programs, training of technicians and ATER agencies in designing projects involving SLM and stimulating the capillarity of the credit system in all municipalities to support SLM, among others. Relevant for Outputs 1.4, 2.2, 2.3.
Research, Education and Extension Institutions	The main federal and state research, educational and extension institutions in ASD (UFS, IFS, EFA, UNILAB, EMBRAPA, INSA) were key stakeholders in formation and training activities of the project. They supported the development of studies on SLM to combat desertification in ASD, supported the creation of methodological guidelines for SLM and promoted the flow of technical and scientific information and traditional knowledge. In parallel, the institutions participated in project forums to promote the uptake of project outcomes and best practices by the academic community in its research, education, and extension, seeking socio-environmental inclusion of project stakeholders through extension activities of the institutions. These institutions were relevant for Outputs 1.3, 2.1 and 2.2. The UFS participated at the PAC.
Agrarian Reform Institutions	INCRA (Federal) and PRONESE (State) are responsible for the implementation of and support for agrarian reform and related activities for promotion of sustainable territorial development with inclusion via income and rights. In this project, they will absorb project outputs and outcomes in the planning of new settlement projects, support project activities carried out in agrarian reform settlements and strengthen capacity-building activities in coordination with the technical assistance and rural extension services. They are relevant for Outputs 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. INCRA participates at the PAC.
Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Institutions (ATER Institutions)	The ATER institutions are essential strengthening family farming and expansion of agribusiness, promoting food security through technical assistance and rural extension, research, and diffusion of sustainable social-inclusive practices. They assessed the training needs and credit for rural farmers, facilitated dialogue with the grassroots stakeholders (settlers and other rural communities) and developed new strategies for monitoring of ATER projects. In parallel, they were responsible for supporting the training and qualification of ATER services and for collaboration in the project activities, in particular at field sites, in order to promote a synergy with ATER actions in the state and supporting the adoption of the SLM strategy to promote sustainable rural development so as to avoid land degradation. It was particularly important for Output 2.1 and 2.2.
Civil Society Organizations	The CSOs were represented in this project by ASA (Semi-arid Network). They supported the strengthening of civil society for building participatory processes for sustainable development and coexistence with

	the semiarid based on cultural values and social justice. Moreover, they supported the implementation of the project at field sites, coordination among key social stakeholders for project implementation and the training of network members on SLM in order to guarantee the dissemination of good practices and lessons learned generated by the project. They were involved in most of project's Outputs, namely, Outputs 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3
Local Communities	The Local Communities and Rural Settlements of ASD were the most important stakeholder of the project as its ultimate beneficiaries. They were involved in the implementation of field-level project activities and in the monitoring and maintenance of SLM plans. In parallel, they benefited from training on SLM practices as well as training to facilitate access to credit and other financial instruments, improving the adoption of SLM. Moreover, they had an important role to play in promoting replication of SLM practices to combat land degradation in ASD which includes participation in the NCCD and GPCD forums. Fundamental for project's undertaking on Outputs 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3
Public Prosecutors of the State of Sergipe (MP-SE)	As Public Prosecutors, the MP-SE is responsible for ensuring effective respect of public authorities and services for the rights guaranteed in the Constitution, taking the necessary measures to guarantee them. It strengthened the implementation of Environmental Systems in the seven SAS municipalities and participated in the organization of forums for exchanging knowledge, in particular on the experiences of SLM, PES and community empowerment. MP-SE participated at Outputs 1.1, 2.1, 2.2 of the project

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Project Design / Formulation

3.1.1 Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators

62. The project is considered relevant for Brazil at different intervention scales, as it clearly contributes to achieve national policies and state priorities, but also demands and needs expressed at the municipal and community levels.
63. The project addressed two main barriers that are preventing SLM in Sergipe: an insufficient governance framework to promote SLM and the capacity and finance constraints limiting the uptake of sustainable practices in the state.
64. The design was considered balanced, building policy and governance capacities, but also implementing sustainable agriculture good practices with direct contact and participation of communities benefited.
65. In general terms, stakeholders agree there was a robust project rationale with clear pathways and articulated logic, although the design did not develop a theory of change.
66. Particular weaknesses in design were identified in terms of knowledge management, strategic communications and mainstreaming gender. No concrete or specific activities nor earmarked budget were assigned to these.
67. Stakeholders mention low participation from local, municipal and state level stakeholders during project design. However, the perception may be influenced by political turnover both at state and federal level and consequent rotation of key staff.
68. Stakeholders perceive the design was not conducted optimizing local knowledge and capacities, resulting in weak formulation of indicators. The indicator baselines were found either absent or not accurate and some targets were widely identified as unrealistic or impossible to reach such as Indicator 1. 70,000 ha on 2,000 rural properties, or Indicator 3. Loss of vegetation coverage in SE-ASD (48 municipalities). In some cases indicators are difficult or expensive to measure such as Indicator 2. Average tree density in forest patches < 50 ha.
69. Out of 13 indicators, none of them follows the SMART criteria, in terms of time bound, measurable, specificity, and realism. Some of the targets proposed would only be realizable over decades such as the reduction of deforestation, increase of vegetation coverage or increase in tree density.

3.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

70. During project design, five risks were identified with a moderate to low impact and probability. The risks are organizational, operational, environmental, and political.
71. The project was designed under a different political and institutional context, resulting in sub-estimating risks and assumptions that overestimated political endorsement or the expected performance of enabling policies such as the expectation to improve the environmental licensing.
72. The identified assumptions are coherent with the project, effectively, they helped the project design to delimit its scope for Outcome 1, Output 1.1, regarding Sergipe's state policy and planning framework supports the integration of SLM in ASD.
73. On the other hand, the only externality included in the project is related to possible impacts exacerbating land degradation and increasing pressures on remaining soil and forest resources.

3.1.3 Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design

74. Lessons learned from other projects in the Caatinga, Cerrado and the Amazon were applied and replicated in this project. The Semiárid Association (ASA) had related projects in the NE. Likewise, the Brazilian Institute for Development and Sustainability (IABS) also had projects in the NE regarding social technology, coexistence with drought as an adaptation measure, aquaculture, tourism, and innovative use of mobile phones to support small-scale production.
75. There is one IABS project is the Xingó Center for Coexistence with the Semiárid, which carries out research, training and extension on socio-productive inclusion. Also, the program Mandacaru Award has provided financial awards for R\$2 million for innovative projects and practices for access to water and coexistence with the Semiárid.
76. The NGO called Advice and Management in Studies of Nature, Human Development and Agro-ecology (AGENDHA) provides technical support for sustainable use of native biodiversity, water catchment and storage in the whole region.

3.1.4 Planned stakeholder participation

1. To incorporate the inputs from different stakeholders and identify synergies for cooperation, the project established a Steering Committee which involved the Ministry of Environment (MMA), through the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD) of the Secretariat of Extractivism and Sustainable Rural Development

(SEDR), the Government of the State of Sergipe, through the Department of Environment and Water Resources of SEMARH, and UNDP, through its Country Office. The Steering Committee (SC) was established including MMA, SFB, NCCD, GPCD, SEMARH, ADEMA.

2. The stakeholder's plan was structured in order to identify the main actors for each output that the project sought to reach. Regarding strengthening Sergipe's structure to prevent, reduce and reverse land degradation, the main actors identified were the seven municipal governments of SAS. At the state level the institutions involved were SEMARH as the coordinator of GPCD, SEAGRI (Project Dom Távora) and EMDAGRO. These institutions, with competencies to implement SLM policies and to allocate resources for it, were key for building programs, financing them and also providing technical studies and best practices in SLM.
3. Regarding actions to strengthen the licensing process, key actors were MMA, ADEMA SEMARH and the technical and scientific support from MMA, SFB, IBAMA, INCRA and institutions of research and development.
4. In order for Sergipe to adopt SLM and for it to be replicated in NE, key stakeholders were identified at state and federal levels, including MMA as Executive Secretariat of NCCD, responsible for supporting processes of construction of resolutions related to the SLM.
5. For extension services to incorporate state SLM policies in risk desertification areas, key stakeholders were MMA and SEMARH, as responsible for implementing actions. They would work together with ATER companies operating in the region, educational institutions, and extension. Regarding structuring mechanisms to access funds and credit at state and national level, the main stakeholders would be banks (BNB, CEF, BB, and BANESE BNDES) and environmental funds (Fund on Climate Change, State Water Resources Fund (FUNERH), Resources Defense Fund Environment of Sergipe (FUNDEMA), The goal was to promote inter-institutional cooperation in tax incentives for combating desertification processes, to stimulate bank staff by training them for the analysis of projects that involve good SLM practices; and to strengthen small farmers and civil society's capacity to formulate project proposals.

3.1.5 Gender responsiveness of project design

77. During project design, it identified that the NE zone, the intervention site, was a stronghold of gender discrimination as compared to the rest of Brazil, where women have made significant advances, although change is underway. Therefore, the

project will strengthen the role of women in family agriculture, reinforcing the implementation of alternatives to unsustainable production practices, which are typical practices of women, thus improving their empowerment.

78. The design did not include a project gender analysis and plan, but it tried to adjust the inclusion and empowerment of gender. For this purpose, it was proposed to promote the participation of women in the project's activities, and the ProDoc also mentions that the project would make sure that women would actively share their opinions. As a means of verifying women's participation in meetings and training activities, it was proposed to follow up on the list of participants. The ProDoc proposes that the intervention would be accompanied by a participatory process to ensure women's commitment. It is verified that no budget or responsible parties were assigned to verify compliance with the above.
79. The project design does not contemplate a differentiated approach or disaggregation by gender in terms of indicators. However, it did include as direct benefits, due to the project intervention, the strengthening of the role of women in the production systems.
80. Although the project recognizes the existence of the Special Secretariat for Women's Policies (SEPMULHERES), it is not framed within any national gender policy. The ProDoc did not contemplate similar experiences with a gender approach to design.
81. Concerning the gender marker, it was not included in the ProDoc or in the PIRs 2016 to 2018. Only until 2019, the gender marker reported for the project corresponds to a rating of GEN-1: some contribution to gender equality.

3.1.6 Social and Environmental Safeguards

82. The ProDoc identifies Sergipe's growing economy as a risk, which would lead to an increase in pressures on the land, making this an environmental risk. In this sense, the proposed mitigation measure is that the project addresses the strengthening of environmental and social safeguards capacities defined for land use to reduce LD in the ASD. Beyond the above, there is no further elaboration on environmental and social risks.

3.2 Project Implementation

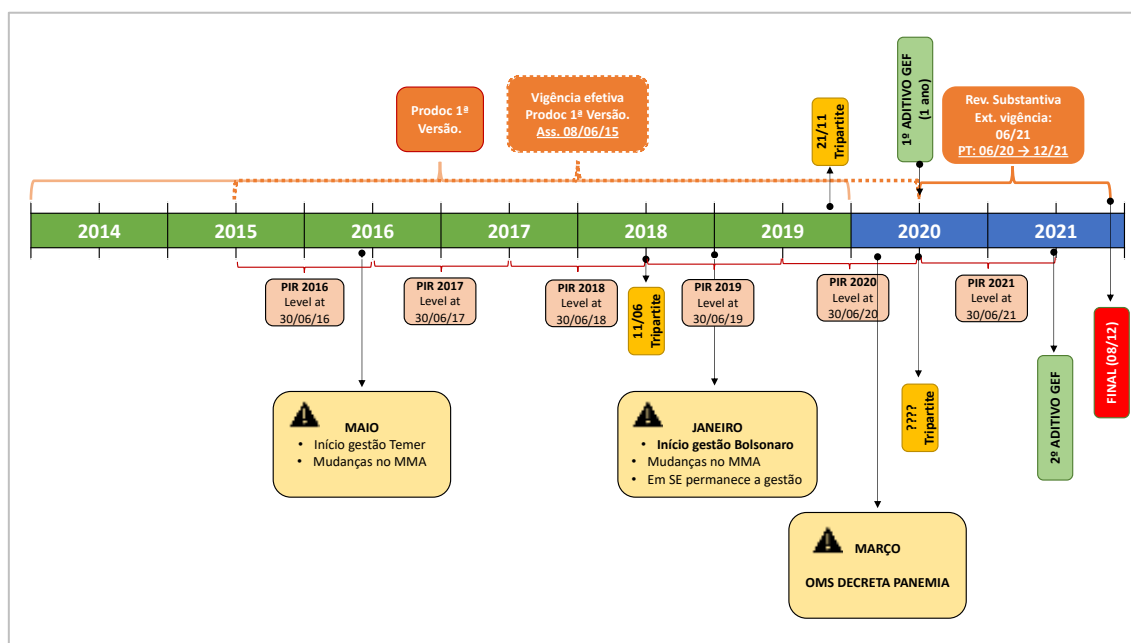
3.2.1 Adaptive management

83. The project faced a number of challenges which affected its fluid implementation. Stakeholders acknowledge the significant flexibility and adaptive capacity that

allowed the project to continue, even when no project director was appointed for a period of 12 months during 2019, forcing implementation to an almost full stop.

84. The political turnover at federal and state levels was acknowledged widely as the major challenge demanding adaptive management capacity. The new federal government came along with a political and institutional transition. Changing priorities affected certain project results such as mainstreaming SLM criteria in environmental licensing or IBAMA's environmental fine conversion initiative. On the other hand, the institutional reform led to the disappearance of the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD), which was the acting MMA unit behind the project's conception and leadership.
85. Constant rotation of key profiles such as project directors, counterparts and authorities led to institutional memory loss and intermittent participation, characterized by continuous challenges to modify project design, incorporate new activities and change the implementation strategy. The adaptive response included promotion of dialogue, induction to new authorities and counterparts to ensure a common understanding of the project.
86. Due to the accumulated delay in execution (Figure 3), the project requested and was granted two extensions totaling 18 additional months. A Substantive Revision of the project design was finalized in June 2020, allowing a participative assessment of project status and adjustments needed in terms of implementation strategy, and partner institutions.
87. It has been commented that the Substantive Revision allowed project targets to land in the context and real capacities of institutions involved. The strategy focus shifted towards promoting synergies with a wider range of local and state level stakeholders with ongoing initiatives as a means to gain scale.
88. The expected implementation of seven municipal SLM plans shifted towards one plan integrating all seven municipalities. Explicit communication activities were integrated and a team member was assigned to work and live in Sergipe.
89. However, COVID 19 related restrictions constituted severe barriers to move ahead with this plan, especially in terms of SLM implementation and scaling up. By the time this document is being prepared, a number of different activities are being implemented simultaneously.

Figure 3: Project timeline and major milestones



Source: PMU

3.2.2 Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

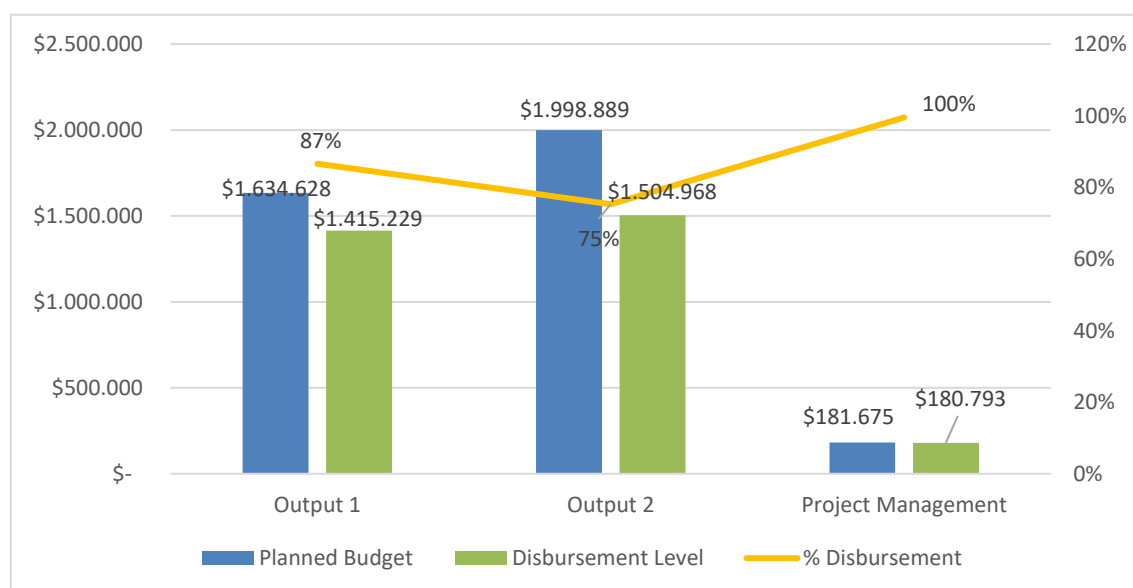
90. The inception workshop was organized in April 2016 with 35 participants representing all major project stakeholders. The project strategy and pluriannual work plan was presented and validated. However, just one month after the inception workshop, a new government took power posing the first challenge in terms of participation and stakeholders' engagement.
91. The Steering Committee was formalized in June 2017, two years after the project started. The first meeting was held in October 2017, however there is no memory or minutes resulting from it. Since then, meetings were held on a regular yearly basis.
92. It took time to consolidate the partnership arrangements and rotation in project leadership and reform at the MMA weakened institutionalized participation. Each new Project Director would bring his own understanding and directives, challenging the project logic and intervention.
93. The participation of state and local stakeholders during the project's Substantive Revision in 2020 increased state and municipal ownership and allowed a higher articulation with other state agencies to create synergies. Closer coordination and frequency of meetings has been reported in the years 2020 and 2021.
94. There is no evidence of the operation of a Technical Committee as proposed in the stakeholder engagement plan. However, in 2018 the project supported the National Conference on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) with over 100 participants trained

in LDN, monitoring indicators related to combating desertification. A Working Group of Specialists in Desertification (GTED) provided support to decisions regarding both project targets and LDN indicator monitoring. Also, the project supported the implementation of Units for the Recuperation of Degraded Areas and Climate Vulnerability¹ (URADs) consisting of a mix of social, environmental and production practices. These practices were implemented with the support of local NGOs which were hired based on competitive processes. during the first half of 2017.

3.2.3 Project Finance and Co-finance

95. The original project budget equals USD 3.8 million from the GEF for the implementation period. Until the third quarter 2021 the project disbursed USD 3.1 million, that is, 81% of the total available budget. Project Management reports the highest execution (100%), followed by Outcome 1 (87%). On the other hand, Outcome 2 report the lowest execution with 75%, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 4. Outcome Budget vs Disbursement



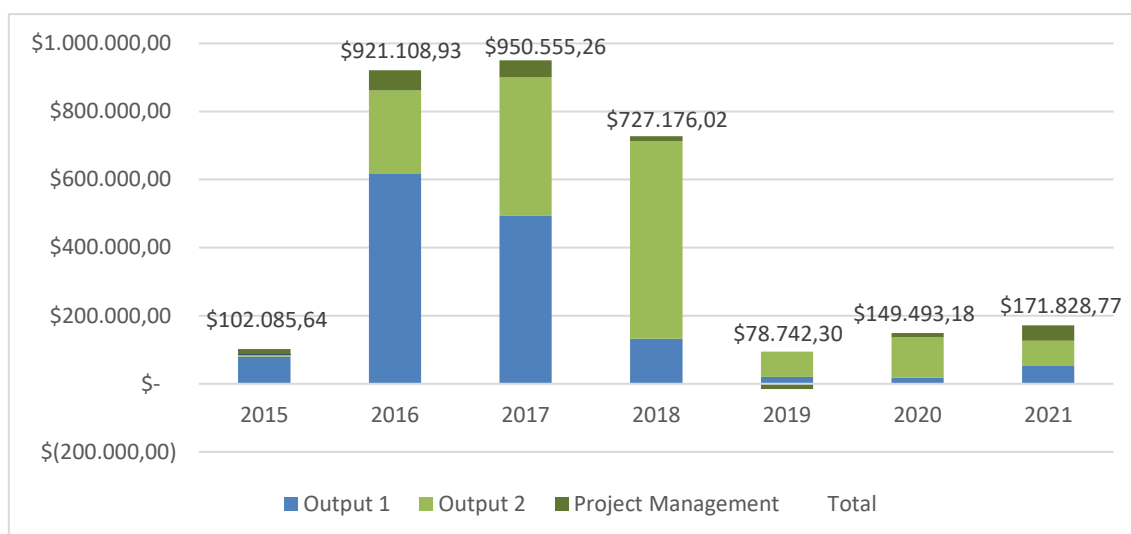
Source: Annual Progress Report, 2015 – 2021

96. Only three out of seven years report what can be considered as normal expenditures. During 2019 and 2021 budget execution decreased lower than USD 80,000, while in

¹ The URAD is a methodology developed by MMA focusing on three main pillars: social, productive and environmental interventions executed by institutions with participation and capacity building of the communities.

2015 and 2020 execution ranged between USD 100,00 and USD 150,000 per year. Most of the GEF funds were executed during 2016, 2017 and 2018 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Outcome Budget by year



Source: Annual Progress Report, 2015 – 2021

97. As part of the financial control, the project prepared progress reports, which included the CDRs, which showed the disbursement for each Outcome. Also, as part of the PIRs, the project presented the implementation progress report. The information shown corresponded to the comparison of its cumulative progress with the budget approved in ProDoc, in the Atlas system, and the general ledger expenditure. The reports do not show that any relevant management problems have arisen.
98. Besides, and in compliance with the M&E Workplan of ProDoc, the project contracted 4 external audits, whose results were satisfactory. Audit conclusions indicate that no significant issues were reported on changes or inconsistencies in the management and internal controls of the implementing agency.
99. In addition to the GEF funding, the project expected co-financing of USD 17,333,016, but the final amount mobilized was USD 15,584,241.45, mostly because of exchange rate variation but also due to several institutions being unable to meet their commitments. For example, INSA, AGENDHA, CEPIS, CFAC and F. Arripe did not actively participate in the project, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 2. Co-financing

Type/Source	Expected cofinancing (US \$)				Actual cofinancing (US \$)				Total	
	In cash	Loans /Concessions	In-kind Support	Others	In cash	Loans /Concessions	In-kind Support	Others	Planned	Actual
ADEMA (SEDURBS)	271,370.00				44,515.67				271,370.00	44,515.67
AGENDHA	90,457.00				0.00				90,457.00	0.00
BANESE		452,284.00				0.00			452,284.00	0.00
BNB		1,809,136.00				0.00			1,809,136.00	0.00
CEPIS	162,822.00				0.00				162,822.00	0.00
CFAC	1,944,821.00				0.00				1,944,821.00	0.00
EMDAGRO (SEAGRI)	904,569.00				7,857,355.41				904,569.00	7,857,355.41
F. Araripe	90,456.00				0.00				90,456.00	0.00
IBAMA	1,673,451.00				0.00				1,673,451.00	0.00
INCRA-SE	2,035,278.00				1,404,364.66				2,035,278.00	1,404,364.66
INSA	678,426.00				0.00				678,426.00	0.00
MMA	3,527,816.00				2,936,084.77				3,527,816.00	2,936,084.77
SEDETEC	1,356,852.00				0.00				1,356,852.00	0.00
SEMARH (SEDURBS)	2,035,278.00				955,795.94				2,035,278.00	955,795.94
UNDP	300,000.00				2,386,125.00				300,000.00	2,386,125.00
Total	15,071,596.00	2,261,420.00			15,584,241.45	0.00			17,333,016.00	15,584,241.45

Source: Cofinance Report, 2021

Table 3. Confirmed Sources of Co-Financing at TE Stage

Sources of Co-Financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (US\$)
Sergipe State Government	ADEMA (SEDURBS)	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	44,515.67
NGO	AGENDHA	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Private Sector	BANESE	Soft Loans	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Private Sector	BNB	Soft Loans	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Private Sector	CEPIS	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
NGO	CFAC	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Sergipe State Government	EMDAGRO (SEAGRI)	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	7,857,355.41
NGO	F. Araripe	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Federal Government	IBAMA	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Federal Government	INCRA-SE	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	1,404,364.66
Federal Government	INSA	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Federal Government	MMA	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	2,936,084.77
Sergipe State Government	SEDETEC	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	0.00
Sergipe State Government	SEMARH (SEDURBS)	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	955,795.94
GEF Agency	UNDP	Cash	Recurrent expenditures	2,386,125.00

Source: Cofinance Report, 2021

3.2.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

<i>Overall quality of monitoring and evaluation</i>	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
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M&E Design at entry

<i>M&E design at the beginning of the project</i>	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
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100. The project design establishes that the M&E will follow the procedures established by UNDP and GEF, thus the ProDoc includes Part IV. Monitoring framework and evaluation. This section includes the activities that the project must carry out to comply with M&E, which are common to GEF projects and correspond to:

- Project Inception Phase
- Monitoring Responsibilities and Events
- Project Monitoring Reporting (Project Inception Report, Annual Project Reports, Project Implementation Reviews, Specific Thematic Reports, Project Terminal Report)
- Technical Reports, Independent Evaluations (Mid-Term Review and Final Evaluation)
- Audits.

101. The activities described above, according to UNDP, correspond to the project's M&E Plan. This plan is described on Part IV of the ProDoc, it provides guidelines, a work plan and budget to implement these M&E activities.

102. One of the most relevant reports is the PIR, and thus the ProDoc establishes that once reviewed and approved by the project Steering Committee, it becomes an input for the final project operations report. The project coordinator is responsible for preparing and submitting it to the UNDP-CO and the UNDP-GEF Regional Steering Committee (RSC).

103. In relation to the indicators, it is verified that there is no tool that establishes the methodology, timing, assumptions, means of data collection, and those responsible for monitoring the indicators.

M&E: Implementation

<i>Implementation of the M&E Plan</i>	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
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104. During project execution, no M&E system was implemented to describe the methodology and responsibilities behind monitoring of indicators. In this sense, the monitoring of indicators was carried out based on what was established in the project results framework.

105. Likewise, the PIRs reflect that no adjustments were made to the indicators concerning gender disaggregation, nor was an impact monitored at the level of other relevant groups such as youth, indigenous people, etc.
106. It is verified that the budget allocated during the design for the implementation of the main activities was sufficient to carry them out. In this regard, the project shows evidence that the PIRs were developed from 2016 to 2021; as well as the inception workshop report; project board meetings (5); MTR (1); field missions (5 visits). On the other hand, there is no evidence of quarterly reports, as well as annual audits which in this case were not required according to UNDP. Lessons learned, the project terminal report and Terminal Evaluation are still pending, with the latter in progress.
107. About the collection of information to complete the GEF/LDCF/SCCF Tracking Tools/Core Indicators, it is evident that the information was updated for 2018 and 2021, the latter being the one that included greater detail in terms of actions and comments.
108. Regarding social and environmental risks, no new risks were identified for the years 2016 to 2019. However, for 2021 and 2021 COVID-19 was identified as a new social risk, which was negatively affecting project implementation and its ability to carry out activities in the field and achieve the upscaling required in its last stage. The project's response was appropriate and responded to the conditions of the moment, and it is worth noting that the project adapted its workplan to the new reality, for example: virtual meetings via the Zoom platform were held periodically between the PMU and the Ministry of Environment team; a local Technical Analyst was hired to work in Sergipe state; an emergency travel plan is being executed (with travel authorized only for local technicians); the capacity building trainings on the land degradation monitoring platform were adapted to be done virtually and all ToRs were designed including compliance with safety measures, among others.

3.2.5 UNDP implementation/oversight (*) and Implementing Partner execution (*), overall project implementation/execution (*), coordination, and operational issues

Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
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Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
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109. UNDP has played a leading role during project conceptualization, design and appraisal, facilitating stakeholder dialogue and involvement to ensure the project

reflects federal, state and municipal priorities. Testimonies confirm that the same role was also played during the project's Substantive Revision, with important results in terms of institutional engagement and appropriation.

110. During implementation, interviewees confirm UNDP has played a crucial role to keep this project on track, even when it was at risk of an early finalization. Stakeholders acknowledge UNDP's experience promoting dialogue as a mechanism to operate projects under complex political and institutional contexts. Stakeholder's highlight UNDP's continuous role in aligning new authorities with project objectives and strategies.
111. Stakeholders consider UNDP has provided adequate oversight, project assurance, and quality support to the Executing Agency. However, it has been commented that the project has not benefited from UNDP's global and national portfolio, and interviews consider that the installed capacities from UNDP Brazil are still limited to enhance coordination and synergies across different interventions.
112. A description of UNDP's role in terms of M&E, risk management and social and environmental safeguards are detailed in chapters 3.2.4 and 3.2.6.

Quality of Executing Agency MMA	3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)
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113. The MMA did not perform the expected role as the project's main institutional counterpart. In the general opinion of stakeholders, day-to-day activities and effective management were severely affected by political turnover, resulting in relatively high rotation of counterparts and Project Directors, and institutional instability due to the continuous reforms.
114. This context affected the project's focus on results and timeless, because it challenged some of the basic assumptions, such as the expected leadership and appropriation from the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD) within the MMA, which was dissolved and its competencies partially transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA). Issues related to desertification were not included in the MMA new organizational structure, which meant that the project did not fall into any of the newly created MMA secretariats.
115. In terms of technical oversight, it has been mentioned that the technical staff at the MMA was less affected by rotation and therefore it was possible to maintain fluid coordination and maintain the institutional memory. However, it has been mentioned that continuous changes in project leadership resulted in difficulties to align and commit each new Project Director with the original design and intervention strategies.
116. For a period of almost 12 months the project activities and consequently the execution of funds almost stopped, because there was no formal designation of the

Project's National Director. However, stakeholders comment that since the Substantive Review in July 2020, greater appropriation and support from the Executing Agency is perceived, resulting in an accelerated implementation rhythm to put the project back on track.

3.2.6 Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

117. The PIRs show that the project had to face several risks during the five years of implementation. On the one hand, some risks increased their impact; on the other hand, new risks were included.
118. The most representative implementation risk is the political one, related to institutional change due to state and national elections. Although it was identified in the ProDoc and the mitigation proposal is adequate, it turned out not to be sufficient for the reality, since the dissolution of the MMA and the partial transfer of its competencies to the MAPA was something that the project could not foresee. This risk remained present for five years.
119. Another unanticipated risk was the limitation of government institutions to provide rural assistance (personnel and resources). In 2018, this risk was exacerbated by the crisis faced by the country. This limitation affected the licensing processes. The solution given from UNDP was to maintain contact with government authorities to ensure the continuity of previously scheduled activities and minimize delays. The response was an attempt to provide a solution, but it was not sufficient because the issue went beyond the scope and mandate of the project.
120. For 2019, because of the economic crisis, which was a risk not identified in the PIR, the project faced the constraint that the co-financing partners were not meeting the agreed amounts. The project decided to monitor news and public policy decisions of interest to engage key stakeholders in alternative ways.
121. Finally, by 2020 and 2021 the project faced delays and challenges due to COVID-19. In response, work plans were adapted to the new reality, and a contingency plan was developed to continue field activities, and replace where possible with virtual activities. The response was commensurate with the situation.
122. It should be noted that the risks mentioned above were reported to the Project Board through the PIRs, which include a good level of detail on the problem and the proposed measures. This shows that the project adequately recorded the risks during the five years. Also, the PIRs are in line with the reality in terms of the rating of each risk.

123. In relation to environmental and social risks, there were no changes between 2016 and 2019, but for 2020 and 2021, the PIRs reported COVID-19 that affected the project due to mobility restrictions and participation in face-to-face events.

3.3 Project Results and Impacts

3.3.1 Progress towards objective and expected outcomes

3.3.1.1 Outcome 1: Strengthened governance framework contributes to avoiding, reducing, and reverting land degradation in Sergipe ASD.

124. Progress achieved in Outcome 1 is relatively modest; two indicators report partial progress while the other two were not accomplished. This performance is partially associated with weaknesses in project design, such as the assumption that the project would have the leveraging capacity to influence the licensing process, or the overestimated capacities from seven municipalities to undertake Municipal Action Plans (MAPs).

125. Interviews confirm the most important achievement reported for Outcome 1 has been the publication of the State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe on November 6th, 2020. State authorities and stakeholders acknowledge the project contribution towards this achievement and consider it as an important legacy for the state.

126. Instead of 7 individual MAPs, the project developed one single plan which involve the seven municipalities. At the end of the project, the plan has finished and published. It is also noted that the project has completed the revision of the PAE, resulting in a publication that includes a series of measures and initiatives aimed at sustainable development in the Sergipe area.

127. Likewise, the percentage of rural licensing that adhere to SLM criteria does not show results as proposed. Only two Sustainable Forest Management Plans, supported by the project, are still expecting approval to obtain licenses.

128. Regarding improving governance and capacities, creating a nucleus for SLM and LD issues reports an adequate level of success, but the remaining task would be to include key ASD municipalities and representatives of IBAMA and ADEMA in the training related to SLM issues: LDN (land degradation neutrality), implementation of URAD (social, environmental and production practices), monitoring indicators related to combating desertification, and the MapBiomás Árida platform and Árida Web application.

Table 4 Progress towards results Outcome 1

Indicator	End of project target level	Cumulative progress and comments
<p>Improved norms and directives on SLM at State level.</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>LD norms and technical directives are not in place at state level.</p> <p>01 State level Action Plan to Combat Desertification (PAE) and no municipal Action Plans (MAP) at the SE-ASDs.</p>	<p>LD norms and technical directives developed and submitted to NCCD.</p> <p>Revised PAE and 07 MAPs at the SE-ASDs prepared, approved with operational plans and budget for implementation.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>The State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe, Law No. 8785 was published on November 6th, 2020, with the support of the project.</p> <p>The project has concluded with the preparation and publication of the State Action Program to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought (PAE). The Regional Action Plan to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation in the Alto Sertão Sergipe Territory was also finished.</p>
<p>Level of capacity of staff at SEMARH, key municipalities in SE-ASD and IBAMA, were appropriate, related to: SLM and LD issues; licensing of agriculture/livestock and forest management activities; and land use oversight/enforcement.</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Number of staff who are knowledgeable on SLM practices is nearly null.</p>	<p>Nuclei of SLM and LD issues established and trained in SEMARH, with participation of key municipalities in SE-ASD, IBAMA and ADEMA.</p>	<p>Partially accomplished</p> <p>A technical Nucleus for SLM and LD issues at SERHMA / Sedurbs was created. By the end of the project, the goal will be fully achieved by training key ASD municipalities and representatives of IBAMA and ADEMA in SLM issues: LDN (land degradation neutrality), implementation of URAD (social, environmental and production practices), monitoring indicators related to combating desertification, and the MapBiomass Árida platform and Árida Web application.</p>
<p>Number of state licenses taking into account SLM criteria and practices for Alto Sertão Sergipano (SAS)</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Existing licenses do not take due account of SLM criteria in SAS.</p>	<p>By end year 2: revised licensing criteria for multiple uses designed and proposed to ADEMA, GPCD and NCCD. By end year 4: revised licensing criteria for forest use designed and proposed to IBAMA, ADEMA, GPCD and GPCCD.</p>	<p>Not accomplished</p> <p>This goal is not accomplished due to interventions on the issue of environmental licensing criteria going beyond the project's scope, as indicated by MMA.</p>

Percentage of compliance with rural licensing processes in 2 SAS municipalities.	10% increase in licenses with SLM criteria per year, post year 3	Not accomplished 0% increase 2 'Sustainable Forest Management Plans' were supported by the project, and they are expecting approval from ADEMA and then, the documents for environmental licenses for the production and sale of certified firewood will be issued.
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3.3.1.2 Outcome 2: Uptake of SLM/SFM practices increased in Alto Sertão of Sergipe (SAS), with replication in rest of SEASD

129. Outcome 2 reports better performance than Outcome 1, with two indicators already or close to be achieved, one partially achieved, and one indicator without significant progress.
130. The project performed a good job on implementing actions with farming households in SAS, for them to adopt SLM practices. The indicator that shows the number of farmers that implemented these practices is on track (98.15% compliance).
131. Likewise, agricultural extensionists that are active in SAS and that can give support with SLM directives were trained by the project, accomplishing the target proposed.
132. On one hand, there is common agreement that the performance reported reflects a weakness in terms of the formulation of unrealistic indicators and goals, such as the case of the Indicator related to “Reduced land degradation over 8,000 ha in 4 field sites”.
133. The impact of the project interventions on reduction of land degradation in SAS could not be measured as the project proposed at the design. However, actions implemented like Zero Base Dams (BBZ), and stone barriers helped to reduce degradation on 72 ha, a modest area but that sets a precedent in the project intervention areas.
134. The influence of the project on increasing the percentage of investments in SLM in Sergipe was weak. Results do not show a significant impact on strengthening alternative means for financing SLM. Nevertheless, some resources are secured in the Annual Budget Law 20021-2021 (LOAs) implementation framework.

Table 5 Progress towards results Outcome 2

Indicator	End of project target level	Cumulative progress and comments
<p>Number of farming households implementing sustainable subsistence and commercial agricultural practices, improved grazing systems and integrated SLM practices in SA</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Fewer than 50 farms with recommended SLM practices adopted in SAS. Legal requirements for LRs and APPs not enforced.</p>	<p>At least 2,000 farming households in SAS adopt sustainable agricultural practices, improved grazing systems and integrated SLM practices by end of project.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>1,963 (98,15%) rural properties/farming families where SLM practices are implemented in Sergipe and in the replication areas.</p> <p>By December 2021, the project aims to reach 5,678 rural properties/farmer families, in 63 agrarian settlements in ASS, implementing SLM practices.</p>
<p>Reduced land degradation over 8,000 ha in 4 field sites.</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Nearly 50% of the land area in 4 field sites is under accentuated and/or severe land degradation (soil loss by water erosion = 10 t/ha; and loss of soil carbon = 3 t/ha)</p>	<p>By the end of year 3: 500 families in 4 field sites with SLM strategies developed & implemented. By end of project, 25% of land degradation in these 4 field sites (2,000 ha) reduced (soil loss by water erosion < 5 t/ha; and loss of soil carbon < 2 t/ha)</p>	<p>Not accomplished</p> <p>168 families (number of families that reside in the 4 field locations) continue to implement SLM strategies.</p> <p>Numbers on the reduction of land degradation in the 4 field sites are not available since the means of verification chosen for this indicator are not sensitive to changes in vegetation cover for the scale of the 4 field locations. However, it was possible to verify that the BBZs and stone barriers were efficient in reducing soil loss in 72 ha.</p>
<p>Percentage of agricultural extensionists active in SAS delivering targeted support that includes recommended SLM directives</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Practically none (0%)</p>	<p>100% of extensionists active in SAS deliver targeted support that includes recommended SLM directives, with replication in SEASD</p>	<p>Accomplished</p> <p>The project trained 100% of SAS agricultural extensionists in SLM practices: 19 professionals: 3 agronomists, 12 agricultural technicians and 4 technicians in household economics who are EMDAGRO's professional staff.</p>
<p>Investments in SLM practices in Sergipe</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p>	<p>20% increase in investment in SLM practices in Sergipe.</p>	<p>Partially accomplished</p> <p>There is no advance in using INCRA's credit lines and the instrument for converting</p>

<p>Financing through commercial banks without SLM criteria.</p> <p>US\$18Million in financing through PRONAF to SAS in 2012 (nearly 12 thousand contracts) with limited SLM criteria.</p> <p>US\$995k through environmental funds to Sergipe (0.2% of total investment).</p>	<p>By year 2: SLM technical guidelines to support decision making by credit agents.</p>	<p>environmental fines to raise funds.</p> <p>It is expected to strengthen alternative means for other sources.</p> <p>Available resources are guaranteed in the Letter of Agreement (LoAs) 2020-2021 due to the inclusion of actions to combat desertification in the Multiyear Plan. These are the exact figures:</p> <p>a) LOA 2020 - Implementation of the State Plan to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought: R\$ 200,000 (US\$ 40,000); b) LOA 2021 - Implementation of the State Plan to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought: R\$ 100,000 (US\$ 20,000); c) LOA 2020 - Support for Social Technologies for Access to Water in Rural Areas (TREASURY= R\$165,000; USD 33,000) (OTHER SOURCES = R\$9,275,000; USD 1,855,000) (TOTAL= R\$9,440,000) (US\$ 1,888,000)</p>
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3.3.1 Relevance

Relevance	5 (Satisfactory)
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135. The project is considered relevant for Brazil at different intervention scales, as it clearly contributes to achieving national policies and state priorities, but also demands and needs expressed at the municipal and community levels.
136. Its relevance is also highlighted because it was acknowledged as a concrete contribution to the implementation of the Land Degradation and Decertification Convention (UNCCD) in Brazil.
137. Stakeholders perceive the project is more relevant now than several years ago when it was originally designed. This could be explained because of the critical situation of drought in the region together with the growing awareness and concern

towards land degradation and its association with food security, internal migration and other development issues.

3.3.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
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138. Most impact indicators show that at the design phase, it was not clear how results should be achieved and reported, since different methods had to be identified and adopted for that. Also, one indicator is not reported due to lack of information, an issue that was not considered at the design phase. Regarding average tree density in forest patches; 50 ha, it is worth mentioning that this indicator differs from the one in the ProDoc, since the ProDoc mentions that the density had to be analyzed in patches of less than 50 ha, which differs from the one in the PIMS and Platform which is: Average tree density in forest patches; 50 ha, making this indicator difficult to report. Also, it is important to mention that project intervention actions were not focused on densifying vegetation in forest patches but in previously degraded areas. However, it was estimated that the existing forest patches in regions of ASD-SE and the 4 areas of intervention of the URADs, have a density greater than 1,500 trees/ha. For this information to be accurate it is necessary that technicians use the APP Arida Web Collect.
139. Verification of indicators 2, 3 and 4 is being carried out by means provided by the MapBiomás Árida platform. It was developed within the MAPBIOMAS/APNE Letter of Agreement framework to monitor degradation of lands and risk of desertification. Likewise, the application Árida Web was developed to record information on ecological attributes on site. Since these tools are to be used by technicians from the institutions responsible for environmental management in Sergipe, training was carried out in December 2020 with 32 participants from 20 different institutions.
140. Likewise, the reduction of deforestation rate was not reported since the technology used by the app that would allow reporting on this indicator is not sensitive for small areas, thus it would be necessary to expand them. However, data shows that the deforestation rate varied from 2015/17/18 when it was below 0.14% and for the period 2015-2020, when the accumulated loss of vegetation cover was 2.2%.
141. Regarding the area of properties in Sergipe where SLM practices are implemented, the target is about to be reached and results are expected to surpass the target by the end of the project.
142. On the other side, data that indicates increases of production on small-scale farms is not available for the four field sites and it is not possible to report this

indicator. Although actions to improve productivity were taken, results will not be measured in the project timeline.

143. Regarding the results of the LD Tracking Tool, in general, there is no evidence of major changes between the start-up tracking tool and the end of the project; however, it should be noted that by 2021, 30.8 Tons/ha of crop productivity is reported versus 0.91 Tons/ha at the beginning of the project. Regarding the average annual household income from forest and tree products, the tracking tool does not present information.

Table 6 Progress towards impact indicators

Indicator	End of project target level	Cumulative progress and comments
<p>Area (ha) of rural properties in which recommended SLM practices are implemented in Sergipe.</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>No recommended SLM practices disseminated to date.</p>	<p>70,000 ha on 2,000 rural properties, including replication areas.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p>1,963 (98.15%) rural properties/farmers' families where SLM practices were implemented, covering an area of 26,975.90 ha (38.27%) in Sergipe and in replication areas.</p> <p>The final target for this indicator will be reached by the end of the project with 5,678 rural properties / farmers' families implementing SLM practices in an area of 97,100.50 ha.</p>
<p>Average tree density in forest patches; 50 ha</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>800 tree/ha.</p>	<p>1,500 tree/ha</p>	<p>Results show that the existing forest patches in regions of ASD-SE and the 4 areas of intervention of the URADs, have a density greater than 1,500 trees/ha.</p> <p>URAD intervention areas:</p> <p>a) Florestan Fernandes: 213 trees/ha; b) João Pedro Teixeira: 581 trees/ha; c) Modelo: 678 trees/ha; d) Flor da Serra/Serra da Guia: 113 trees/ha.</p> <p>However, all interventions for the project (URADs and work plan 20/21) were intended for the recovery of previously degraded areas but did not consider densifying vegetation in forest patches.</p>

		<p>Accurate results for this indicator will be obtained by the technicians from the units once they use the app Arida Web Collect, developed in the framework of the LoA MAPBIOMAS/APNE.</p> <p>Within the MAPBIOMAS/APNE Letter of Agreement, the Platform MapBiomás Árida was also developed and the training for its use was held in December 2020. It was held with 32 participants from 20 different institutions</p>
<p>Loss of vegetation coverage in SE-ASD (48 municipalities).</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Projected rate of deforestation without the project 0.29% per year.</p>	<p>Rate of deforestation reduced to 0.14% per year</p>	<p>Not accomplished</p> <p>The deforestation rate is calculated by the difference between the vegetation cover of a given year and the previous year. To determine the impacts of the project interventions, it would be necessary to expand the time scale and spatial coverage of the intervention areas since satellite sensors are not sensitive for small areas.</p> <p>However, data from MapBiomás shows an accumulated loss of vegetation cover of 2.2% for the period 2015 -2020 while the deforestation rate was below 0.14% for 2015, 2017 and 2018.</p>
<p>Production of small-scale farms for the four field sites.</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>Projected rate of productivity 0.7 t/ha of main subsistence crops (manioc, beans, corn).</p>	<p>30% increase of productivity of crops by end of project.</p>	<p>There is no information available about the productivity of crops in the four field locations on the MapBiomás Árida platform.</p> <p>Data available show a productivity decrease of 2,8 ton/ha between 2014 and 2019 in the municipalities of Canindé do São Francisco and Poço Redondo, the regions where the 4 sites are located.</p>

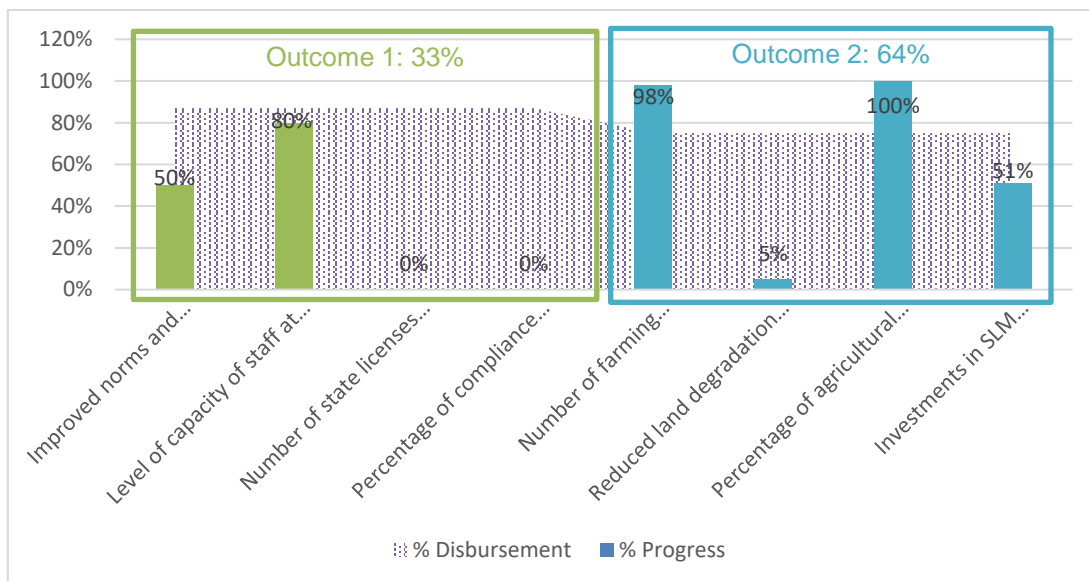
		<p>Actions related to production were taken, including the acquisition, distribution, and planting of 140,000 Gliricidia sepium tree seedlings and 150,000 seedlings of Palma, and a consultant was hired for the engineering planning of water recycling systems. However, it will not be possible to measure results of these interventions by the end of the project.</p>
<p>Increase in the general score of LD Tracking Tool.</p> <p>BASELINE LEVEL</p> <p>General score of LD Tracking Tool: 1</p>	<p>General score of LD Tracking Tool: 3</p>	<p>Not accomplished</p> <p>This indicator was substantially impacted by changes on political nature especially from June 2019 and June 2020.</p> <p>The new strategy adopted in the 20/21 work plan allows the project to expand its area of intervention as well as the nature of the activities.</p>

3.3.3 Efficiency

Efficiency	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
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144. In terms of efficiency, in general, the project was not efficient. As shown in Figure 6, Outcome 1, despite spending 87% of its financial resources, made only partial progress on two of its four indicators. Of the remaining two, while one indicator is beyond the project scope, the other shows no progress at all.
145. On the other hand, Outcome 2 shows the best performance its overall progress is 64% and just spent 75% of its resources. In this case, two indicators show close to 100% progress, one has advanced to 51%, and only one is lagging at 5%.

Figure 6 % Disbursement vs % Outcome Indicators Advance



146. The project faced several delays due to external situations, such as a change of government and COVID-19. For this reason, the project requested a 12-month extension, which was approved in April 2020, as well as a subsequent 6-month extension due to Covid 19.

147. From the analysis of gender and empowerment issues (section 3.3.7), it is evident that the project was aware of the role and importance of women and made significant advances, but these would have had a bigger impact if the project had planned specific activities and allocated the necessary resources.

148. In terms of M&E, most of the milestones described in the ProDoc's M&E plan were achieved. However, some indicators were not sufficiently followed up or measured.

3.3.4 Overall Outcome

Overall Project Outcome Rating	4 (Moderately Satisfactory)
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3.3.5 Sustainability

Overall likelihood	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
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Financial sustainability	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
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149. The project managed to realize the first earmarked budgetary allocation the LOAs 2020-2021, thanks to the State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe, Law No. 8785 published on November 6th, 2020. Although the volume mobilized is

still modest in comparison with the original expectation, stakeholders acknowledge this as the most important achievement in terms of financial sustainability.

150. However, over the mid- and long-term special attention should be played in terms of shifting political priorities affecting public allocations, considering externalities such as post COVID 19 recovery and the global financial crisis.

151. The project failed to mainstream SLM in decision making for public and private credit allocation, limiting scalability and replication opportunities. This may limit sources of funding to state allocations and cooperation projects.

<i>Socio-economic sustainability</i>	3 (Moderately Likely)
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152. The project was able to test a package of social technologies and SLM practices, which proved to be successful. Project benefits will continue to flow to participating families, with a profound effect on their wellbeing and overall development, such as the case of access to water and increased agricultural productivity.

153. Participating families from Sergipe were encouraged to actively participate in knowledge transfer and replication of best practices in other states. Testimonies confirm that this empowerment may lead to greater appropriation and engagement, leading into reasonable sustainability perspectives.

154. However, without active support and continued investment, there is an important risk that farmers and participating families will lose interest to continue implementing SLM practices.

<i>Institutional framework and governance</i>	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
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155. At the national level, due to the institutional reform at the MMA, perspectives of institutional sustainability and governance are not high. On the other hand, greater appropriation and the State Policy to Combat Desertification in Sergipe present a more promising sustainability perspective.

156. The Substantive Revision allowed a greater level of integration and coordination with different initiatives and stakeholders at the state and municipal level, thanks to the possibility to participate and presents their opportunities and needs.

157. However, the Substantive Revision came late and did not allow sufficient time to institutionalize the project intervention. At the time this report is prepared, a number of different consultancies and results are still underway, leaving no space to transfer and engage stakeholders to continue.

<i>Environmental sustainability</i>	2 (Moderately Unlikely)
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158. Environmental sustainability is still uncertain, as SLM processes takes decades to realize and the impact of the different interventions has not been adequately assessed.
159. Besides the impact generated at a demonstrative level of participating farms, the project has not reached the scale needed to suggest environmental sustainability at the state level.

3.3.6 Country ownership

160. Even though the project design reflected national priorities and sectoral development plans, country ownership has not been consistent due to the political turnover and resulting institutional reforms. The GoB was not able to meet the expected role in terms of project leadership and co-finance commitments.
161. A relatively high involvement has been reported during project start up and inception process, but it lasted less than one year, as the new government initiated in May 2016, just weeks after the inception workshop took place.
162. The following 3 years were marked by continuous rotation of stakeholders and profound institutional transformations, affecting continuity and implementation rhythm. During this period, it took a lot of effort to engage national counterparts, and maintain project orientation towards expected results.
163. The project was designed and nested within an institutional framework that does not exist anymore, after the disappearance of the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD) at the MMA. Therefore, appropriation at the federal level may be lower now than when the project was originally designed.
164. However, greater participation and adequate levels of appropriation are found at the state level, especially after the project's Substantive Revision in 2020. Greater participation from state and municipal stakeholders has been reported, and the State Policy to Combat Desertification in Sergipe confirms their longstanding commitment.

3.3.7 Gender equality and women's empowerment

165. The project developed a gender analysis for 2018, with support from the UNDP-Brazil Gender Officer. The analysis was conducted in partnership with GEF projects: BRA/14/G31; BRA/14/G33; BRA/12/G32; BRA/067/G32. With this analysis, for the first time in the 2019 PIR, the gender rating marker of the project was provided, which is GEN1: some contribution to gender equality.
166. The analysis provided recommendations for the implementation of actions in the field focused on the processes of mobilization and empowerment of the farming

families, reinforcing the role of women in social and productive activities. These recommendations were adapted for the 2020 and 2021 work plans and presented for the first time to the Steering Committee in 2020.

167. Possibly, one of the most representative achievements of the project in the long term is related to its success in incorporating the gender perspective in the State Policy to Combat Desertification, which ensures that the participation and empowerment of women are taken into account in the actions for the protection and recovery of areas susceptible to desertification in Sergipe.
168. On the other hand, even without a gender analysis, between 2016 and 2018, the project reported that 46% of the participants in the training courses were women. Likewise, by 2019 in the implementation of URAD interventions, 54% of the 667 participants of all training activities offered by the project were women. Both achievements turn out to be long-term results since they build the capacities of the beneficiaries. During 2020, there was no major progress in gender issues, and the Steering Committee was balanced with the participation of 11 women (50%).
169. Thus, the project contributed to gender equity mainly through: i) Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance; and, ii) Targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women. According to the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale, the gender effectiveness and quality of the project is considered to be "Gender Targeted", which means that the project's results focused on the number of woman, men and marginalized populations that were targeted.

3.3.8 Cross-cutting Issues

170. The project had a positive effect on the local populations; according to the PIR reports, the intervention directly involved 168 families in the municipalities of Canindé de São Francisco and Poço Redondo. With the intervention of the project, the families now use SWM practices in their properties, in addition, they have 8 recovered springs, 97 successive dams to contain the sediments resulting from soil erosion and avoid their transport to rivers and reservoirs, as well as areas for the integration of crop, livestock, and forest (ILPF, in Portuguese) and Agroforestry Systems (AFS). They also received 105 ecological stoves, 90 cisterns for capturing and storing water for human consumption and also for production, and 125 sanitary units with septic tanks were also built and/ or recovered.
171. The project, through the implementation of the URADs, not only built capacity on best practices for sustainable land management and the use of environmental assets, but also received solutions on apiculture, agroforestry systems, and crop-

livestock-forestry integration systems that were meant to provide producers with tools to increase crop productivity. In this way, the project contributed to the inclusion of sustainable livelihoods and income improvement.

172. The project objectives are in line with several priorities of the Country Program Document (CDP). These are: People: Inclusive and equitable society with extensive rights for all men and women; Planet: Sustainable management of natural resources for present and future generations; and Prosperity: Prosperity and quality of life for everyone.

3.3.9 GEF Additionality

173. The weaknesses described in M&E do not allow a clear and verifiable understanding of the additional outcome that can be directly associated to the GEF investments. However, there is general acknowledgement of the incremental value of project investments in terms of environmental, legal and institutional additionality.
174. The project supported Brazil as a signatory to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to move forward and accelerate its national implementation.
175. In this sense, GEF funding was instrumental to overcome key barriers and accelerate the practical implementation of the UNCCD in the State of Sergipe.
176. The GEF facilitated investments that otherwise would not have been possible to realize from other governmental or non-governmental sources.

3.3.10 Catalytic/Replication Effect

177. The experience acquired implementing initiatives in Sergipe contributed later to the dissemination and replicability in other areas facing land degradation and drought in the states of Bahia, Maranhao, and Piaui, using federal allocations in cooperation with Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).
178. It has been said during interviews that the project failed to communicate and mobilize larger audiences with SLM best practices. However, it was able to promote exchange of experiences and interaction aimed to reach synergies with similar policies and programs. Beneficiaries participating in SLM practices were later invited to share their experience and exchange knowledge acquired to scale up in the four states.

3.3.11 Progress to Impact

179. The original design foresaw that the project would contribute to the reduction of the deforestation rate to 0.14%. Also, through Outcome 2, it was expected to reduce

land degradation by 2,000 ha in the four intervention sites, measured by the reduction of soil loss due to erosion; in addition, it was expected to achieve a carbon sequestration level of 8 t/CO₂ e/ha.

180. In practice, the project was able to reverse the degradation of 72 ha in the 4 intervention sites, and with this it is expected to have an impact on carbon sequestration. This impact has not yet been measured because the regeneration of plants is required to demonstrate the real impact.
181. On the other hand, through the URAD interventions, a desertification reversion process started. The potential achieved has not yet been measured, and it is expected to be confirmed through a time series of data.
182. Another significant impact was the project's support for the elaboration of the State Policy to Combat Desertification - PECD for Sergipe. The Policy was published as Law No. 8785, on November 6, 2020, and establishes the mechanisms to combat, prevent and reverse desertification processes and mitigate the effects of drought.

4 MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

4.1 Main Findings

Project Design

183. The project is considered relevant for Brazil at different intervention scales, as it clearly contributes to achieve national policies and state priorities, but also demands and needs expressed at the municipal and community levels.
184. The design was considered balanced, building policy and governance capacities, but also implementing sustainable agriculture good practices with direct contact and participation of communities benefited.
185. Stakeholders perceived that the design was not conducted optimizing local knowledge and capacities, resulting in weak formulation of indicators. Out of 13 indicators, none of them follows the SMART criteria, in terms of being time bound, measurable, specificity, and realism.
186. The project was designed under a different political and institutional context, resulting into sub-estimating risks and assumptions that overestimated political endorsement.
187. Lessons learned from other projects in the Caatinga, Cerrado and the Amazon, were applied and replicated in this project.

188. The design did not include gender analysis and plan of the project, but it tried to adjust the inclusion and empowerment of gender through the promotion of women's participation in meetings and training activities.

Project Implementation

189. The project faced a number of challenges which affected its fluid implementation. Stakeholders acknowledge the significant flexibility and adaptive capacity that allowed the project to continue. The political turnover at federal and state levels was acknowledged widely as the major challenge demanding adaptive management capacity.
190. It took time to consolidate the partnership arrangements, and rotation in project leadership and reform at the MMA weakened institutionalized participation.
191. There is no evidence of the operation of a Technical Committee as proposed in the stakeholder's engagement plan. However, in 2018 the project supported the National Conference on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) with over 100 participants trained in LDN and in the implementation of URADs.
192. The original project budget equals USD 3.8 million from the GEF for the implementation period. Until the third quarter 2021 the project disbursed USD 3.1 million, that is, 81% of the total available budget.
193. The project expected co-financing of USD 17,333,016, but the final amount mobilized was USD 15,584,241.45 due to several institutions being unable to meet their commitments.
194. The project design establishes that the M&E will follow the procedures established by UNDP and GEF, thus the ProDoc includes Part IV. Monitoring framework and evaluation.
195. During project execution, no M&E plan was developed, nor was an M&E system in place to provide the methodology or persons responsible for monitoring indicators. Likewise, the PIRs reflect that no adjustments were made to the indicators concerning gender disaggregation, nor was an impact monitored at the level of other relevant groups such as youth, indigenous people, etc.
196. UNDP has played a leading role during project conceptualization, design and appraisal, facilitating stakeholder dialogue and involvement to ensure the project reflects federal, state and municipal priorities.
197. The MMA did not perform the expected role as the project's Executing Agency; day-to-day activities and effective management were severely affected by political

turnover, resulting in relatively high rotation of counterparts and Project Directors, and institutional instability due to the continuous reforms.

198. The PIRs show that the project had to face several risks during the five years of implementation. On the one hand, some risks increased their impact; on the other hand, new risks were included.

Project Results and Impacts

199. Progress achieved in Outcome 1 is relatively modest; two indicators report partial progress while the other two were not accomplished. This performance is partially associated with weaknesses in project design, such as the assumption that the project would be able to leverage capacity to influence the licensing process, or the overestimated capacities from seven municipalities to undertake MAPs.
200. Outcome 2 reports better performance than Outcome 1, with two indicators already or close to be achieved, one partially achieved, and one indicator without significant progress.
201. The project is considered relevant for Brazil at different intervention scales, as it clearly contributes to achieve national policies and state priorities; it is also highlighted because it was acknowledged as a concrete contribution to the implementation of the Land Degradation and Decertification Convention (UNCCD) in Brazil.
202. In general, the project was not efficient. Outcome 1, despite spending 87% of its financial resources, only made partial progress on two of its four indicators. On the other hand, Outcome 2 shows the best performance; its overall progress is 64% and it just spent 75% of its resources.
203. The project managed to realize the first earmarked budgetary allocation the LOAs 2020-2021, thanks to the State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe, although the volume mobilized is still modest in comparison with the original expectation.
204. The project was able to test a package of social technologies and SLM practices which proved to be successful. Participating families from Sergipe were encouraged to actively participate in knowledge transfer and replication of best practices in other states.
205. Even though the project design reflected national priorities and sectoral development plans, country ownership has not been consistent due to the political turnover and resulting institutional reforms.

206. Possibly, one of the most representative achievements of the project in the long term is related to its success in incorporating the gender perspective in the State Policy to Combat Desertification, which ensures that the participation and empowerment of women are taken into account in the actions for the protection and recovery of areas susceptible to desertification in Sergipe.
207. The project had a positive effect on the local populations; the intervention directly involved 168 families, in the municipalities of Canindé de São Francisco and Poço Redondo.
208. The project supported Brazil as a signatory to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to move forward and accelerate its national implementation. In this sense, GEF funding was instrumental to overcome key barriers and accelerate the practical implementation of the UNCCD in the State of Sergipe.
209. The experience acquired implementing initiatives in Sergipe, contributed later to the dissemination and replicability in other areas facing land degradation and drought in the states of Bahia, Maranhao, and Piaui, using federal allocations in cooperation with IICA.
210. The original design foresaw that the project would contribute to the reduction of the deforestation rate to 0.14%. Also, it was expected to reduce land degradation by 2,000 ha; in addition, it was expected to achieve a carbon sequestration level of 8 t/CO₂ e/ha. In the implementation the project was able to reverse the degradation of 72 ha in the 4 intervention sites and with this it is expected to have an impact on carbon sequestration.

4.2 Conclusions

211. The project is highly relevant for Brazil because it is a concrete step towards implementing the UNCCD. The project is perhaps more relevant now than seven years ago when it was originally designed, considering the longstanding drought and the institutional challenges derived from the extinction of the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD) at the MMA.
212. The project addressed two main barriers that are preventing SLM in Sergipe, an insufficient governance framework and the capacity and finance constraints limiting the uptake of sustainable practices in the state. The design did not optimize local knowledge and capacities, resulting in weak formulation of indicators. Weaknesses were identified in terms of knowledge management, strategic communications and mainstreaming gender.

213. The project was conceptualized under an institutional and political context which was very different from the one faced during implementation, resulting in sub-estimating risks and assumptions. The design needed to be revised and updated in year 2020 to align with new priorities and institutional context.
214. The project faced a number of challenges which affected its fluid implementation. Stakeholders acknowledge the significant flexibility and adaptive capacity that allowed the project to continue, even when no project director was appointed for a period of 12 months during 2019, forcing implementation to almost full stop.
215. The political turnover at federal and state levels was acknowledged widely as the major challenge demanding adaptive management capacity. The new federal government came alone with a political and institutional transition. Changing priorities affected certain project results such as mainstreaming SLM criteria in environmental licensing or IBAMA's environmental fine conversion initiative. On the other hand, the institutional reform led to the disappearance of the Department to Combat Desertification (DCD), which was the acting MMA unit behind the project's conception and leadership.
216. Due to the accumulated delay in execution, the project requested and was granted two extensions totaling 18 additional months. A Substantive Revision of project design was finalized in June 2020, allowing a participative assessment of project status and adjustments needed in terms of implementation strategy.
217. It took time to consolidate the partnership arrangements and rotation in project leadership and reform at the MMA weakened institutionalized participation. Each new Project Director would bring his own understanding and directives, challenging the project logic and intervention.
218. The original project budget equals USD 3.8 million from the GEF for the implementation period. Until the third quarter 2021 the project disbursed USD 3.1 million, that is, 81% of the total available budget. 97. In addition to the GEF funding, the project expected co-financing of USD 17,333,016, but the final amount mobilized was USD 15,584,241.45.
219. In terms of progress achieved in Outcome 1, two indicators report partial progress while the other two were not accomplished. Interviews confirm the most important achievement reported for Outcome 1 has been the publication of the State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe on November 6th, 2020. State authorities and stakeholders acknowledge the project's contribution towards this achievement and consider it as an important legacy for the state.
220. Outcome 2 reports better performance than Outcome 1, with two indicators already or close to be achieved, one partially achieved, and one indicator without

significant progress. The project performed a good job in implementing actions with farming households in SAS, for them to adopt and appropriate SLM practices. The indicator that shows the number of farmers that implemented these practices is on track (98.15% compliance). Likewise, agricultural extensionists that are active in SAS and that can give support with SLM directives were trained by the project, accomplishing the target proposed.

221. Sustainability perspectives at the state level are reasonable both in institutional and financial terms. The project managed to realize the first earmarked budgetary allocation the LOAs 2020-2021, thanks to the State Policy to Combat Desertification – PECD for Sergipe, Law No. 8785 published on November 6th, 2020.
222. However, it failed to mainstream SLM in decision making for public and private credit allocation. Without the active support and continued investment, there is an important risk that farmers and participating families will lose interest to continue implementing SLM practices

4.3 Recommendations

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Sustainability		
A.1	Stakeholders would like to see a second phase of the project, to allow an adequate closure of project activities and to ensure institutions are able to assimilate the important level of investment deployed since the project's Substantive Revision. There is interest from northeastern states and capacities in place to continue the preservation and sustainable management of the Caatinga biome.	UNDP MMA	Mid term
A.2	It is recommended to follow up on budget plans at the state level. The challenge now lies in the capacity of the institutions to ensure good spending and documented impact.	MMA	Mid term
A.5	It is important to build an institutional route that provides clarity on the competencies of the MMA, and that allows scaling up to the national level what has been worked on at the regional level through the project and other interventions.	MMA MAPA	Mid term
A.6	For future projects it is important to evaluate the possibility to incorporate state governments as responsible parties to execute some project activities in order to further build institutional capacities and deconcentrate risk from federal agencies.	UNDP	Long term
A. 7	Future projects implementing activities at the state and municipal scales, should consider a more balanced distribution of the PMU between	UNDP	Long term

	Brasilia and the state or place where activities are implemented.		
A.8	Cofinancing should be monitored systematically, with tools that allow periodic reporting of the progress in terms of resource mobilization against original commitments.	UNDP	Long term
B	Category 2: Outcomes		
B.1	It is recommended that the implementation of Law No. 8785 (State Policy to Combat Desertification - PECD) be monitored to verify compliance, otherwise there is a risk that it will remain on paper.	MMA	Short term
B.2	It is important to follow up on the status of the INCRA credit lines and the environmental fines conversion instrument promoted by the project.	MMA UNDP	Mid term
B.3	Since the project developed material for online training, it is recommended to take advantage of the inputs generated to continue capacity building remotely with farmers and interested families in Sergipe.	MMA UNDP	Short term
C	Category 3: Exit strategy		
C.1	It is essential that the closure of the project is used to generate a repository of all the information generated, and that a way is found to ensure that it can continue to be used and made available after project closure.	MMA UNDP PMU	Short term
C.3	Often, an accelerated project closure process means that many activities implemented at the end may have a low capacity for assimilation by partners and beneficiaries. It is necessary for UNDP to accompany the closing processes of pending consultancies and to commit state authorities to assume key roles and responsibilities are in place to ensure sustainability.	UNDP PMU	Short term
C.4	Regarding the exit strategy that has been developed, it is important to formalize the follow up commitments of actors or partners to fund and technically support the implementation of SLM practices or the implementation of the State Policy to Combat Desertification in Sergipe.	UNDP PMU	Short term

4.4 Lessons Learned

223. It is essential that during the start-up phase, specific effort is made to revise, update and clearly define and interpret the project indicators as defined by the Manual for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Results for UNDP Projects. Indicator monitoring and follow-up require specifying their interpretation and baseline, proposing their measurement methodology, timing, means of verification and the responsible person or institution.

224. Until before the sixth replenishment, GEF-funded projects did not require a gender action plan, however, the project managed to include these issues, and its impact on women and girls has been noticeable. The project leaves a great learning experience, and despite not having a gender plan, it managed to develop and implement actions with great gender impact.
225. The design of future projects should consider with greater priority and detail the treatment of political, economic and financial risks, since they end up being decisive for the success or failure of a project.
226. Another lesson learned from the project is related to the shared management between different projects within the same UNDP portfolio. The fact that the same consultant was hired to develop the gender analysis has been identified as a positive factor, so that the recommendations generated had a comprehensive approach to the different projects under execution.
227. One of the key factors that all projects should consider is the integration of the different levels of government. The involvement, through dialogue, of the three spheres of state, federal and municipal government was key to making progress in certain activities.

5 ANNEX

5.1 Annex 1: TE ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

Terms of Reference (ToR)

RC 35433

Terminal Evaluation – Project BRA/14/G32 – Sustainable Land Use Management in the Semiarid Region of Northeast Brazil (Sergipe)

BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION

Location: Brazil
 Application Deadline: September 13th, 2021
 Category: Land Degradation
 Type of Contract: Individual Contract (IC).
 Assignment Type: International Consultant.
 Languages Required: Portuguese (basic) and English.
 Starting Date: September 20th, 2021.
 Duration of Initial Contract: 60 days.
 Expected Duration of Assignment: 60 days.

BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full- and medium-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of the project. This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the TE of the full-sized project titled *BRA/14/G32 – Sustainable Land Use Management in the Semiarid Region of Northeast Brazil (Sergipe)* (PIMS ID #3066 / GEF ID #5276) implemented through the **MMA** (Ministério do Meio Ambiente - Ministry of Environment). **The project started on the June 08th 2015 and is in its 6 year of implementation. The TE process must follow the guidance outlined in the document ‘Guidance For Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects’:**
http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf.

2. Project Description



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Brazil's semiarid and dry sub-humid areas are considered Areas Susceptible to Desertification (ASD). These correspond closely to the Caatinga biome, occupy an area of 1.34 million km² and are home to **17% of Brazil's population over 11 states, nine of which** are in the Northeast (NE). The region has the **world's greatest concentration of population in semiarid areas and houses 85% of Brazil's poor. The NE** Brazil has always been subject to periodic drought. The main anthropogenic drivers of land degradation (LD) in the NE-ASD are deforestation, driven principally by large and small scale agriculture, and the use of unsustainable farming and ranching practices. This is exacerbated by climate change- the NE of Brazil being the most vulnerable in South America according to IPCC scenario.

The objective of the Project BRA/14/G32– **“Sustainable Land Use Management in the Semiarid Region of Northeast Brazil (Sergipe)”** is to address land degradation (LD) in the state of the Sergipe in the Brazilian Northeast with a view to scaling up to the entire Semiarid region. It is designed to optimize and coordinate existing programs to engender sustainable land management (SLM), reverting land degradation in a state where 74.2% is susceptible to desertification and only 13% the original Caatinga vegetation remains.

The project proposes to strengthen the environmental governance framework to better address the main drivers of land degradation and desertification, focusing primarily on the escalating conflict of land uses and unsustainable agriculture practices where LD is causing soil erosion, soil nutrient depletion, damaging hydrological system integrity and undermining ecosystem services.

Key elements to be strengthened include land use planning and appropriate environmental licensing and oversight to avoid, reduce and mitigate land degradation. Through strengthened institutional and smallholder capacities and facilitation of access to funding, uptake of SLM practices will be increased and on-the-ground actions will be tried and tested in the Areas Susceptible to Desertification (ASD) in Sergipe state, where land degradation is highest. This territory is a state priority and is targeted nationally in a program to reduce hunger and poverty.

By reducing land degradation and maintaining vital ecosystem services, the project aims at improving livelihoods in an area with high poverty and social hardship, particularly in agrarian reform settlements. Strategic action at the national level through the Ministry of Environment's will enable this state's SLM governance model to be disseminated to other states, thereby facilitating replication across the entire Brazilian Semiarid region and evoking further global environmental benefits the middle and long term.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused the suspension of all field activities since March 2020, and as the Project has a strong local implementation component, it had a major impact on the activities planned. In light of that situation, the project is implementing a series of mitigation, prevention and awareness-raising actions. However, all this effort came up against a major bottleneck which is local internet access, given the remote locations with low human development levels and scarce infrastructure, including energy, sanitation and internet access.

In terms of the overall national Covid-19 situation, Brazil is currently one of the world's epicenters, having recently reached 500,000 deaths with a high contamination rate. Vaccination is proceeding at a slow pace, and this means that we do not have forecasts in the field until at least the end of the year.



3. *TE Purpose*

The TE report will assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.

The results of the TE Report, including the analysis of the indicators and lessons learned, will serve the implementing partner (MMA/Government) and UNDP for the elaboration and contribution in future projects and public policies. In addition, the Project has built a solid network of partners and beneficiaries who will also be able to use these results in formulating their post-project work plans.

The scope and objectives of the TE must include aspects such as the impact of the results obtained by the project, they are: strengthening governance frameworks to combat land degradation processes, replication of SLM practices, recovery of degraded areas and **increase in income and food security of the beneficiaries' families, which will prove that**, in addition to conserving biodiversity, the project has directly contributed to the livelihood of our target audience.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on project outcomes will also be an important aspect of the TE.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4. *TE Approach & Methodology*

The TE must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The TE team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP) the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The TE team will review the baseline and midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at the CEO endorsement and midterm stages and the terminal Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed.



The TE team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), Implementing Partners, the UNDP Country Office(s), the Regional Technical Advisors, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to executing agencies, senior officials and task team/component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project beneficiaries, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, due to the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil, there will be no field missions in this TE. However, the Project Management Unit will support and facilitate contacts and platforms for interviews with the stakeholders in each territory where the project operates.

The specific design and methodology for the TE should emerge from consultations between the TE team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the TE purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The TE team must, however, use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and **women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues** and SDGs are incorporated into the TE report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the TE team.

The final TE report should describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. As external field missions are suspended in the Project, the TE team should develop a methodology that takes this into account to conduct the TE virtually and remotely, including by using remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the TE Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit.

As the TE is to be entirely carried out virtually, considerations should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national

counterparts may be working from home. These limitations must be reflected in the final TE report.

If a data collection/field mission is not possible, then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International consultants can work remotely with national technical advisor support in the field if it is safe for them **to operate and travel. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.**

5. Detailed Scope of the TE

The TE will assess project performance against expectations set out in the project's Logical Framework/Results Framework (see TOR Annex A). The TE will assess results according to the criteria outlined in the Guidance for TEs of UNDP-supported GEF-financed Projects http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf.

The Findings section of the TE report will cover the topics listed below.

A full outline of the TE report's content is provided in ToR Annex C.

The asterisk "(*)" indicates criteria for which a rating is required.

Findings

- i. Project Design/Formulation
 - National priorities and country driven-ness
 - Theory of Change
 - **Gender equality and women's empowerment**
 - Social and Environmental Safeguards
 - Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators
 - Assumptions and Risks
 - Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design
 - Planned stakeholder participation
 - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
 - Management arrangements
- ii. Project Implementation
 - Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
 - Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements
 - Project Finance and Co-finance
 - Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (*), implementation (*), and overall assessment of M&E (*)
 - Implementing Agency (UNDP) (*) and Executing Agency (*), overall project oversight/implementation and execution (*)
 - Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards



iii. Project Results

- Assess the achievement of outcomes against indicators by reporting on the level of progress for each objective and outcome indicator at the time of the TE and noting final achievements
- Relevance (*), Effectiveness (*), Efficiency (*) and overall project outcome (*)
- Sustainability: financial (*), socio-political (*), institutional framework and governance (*), environmental (*), overall likelihood of sustainability (*)
- Country ownership
- **Gender equality and women's empowerment**
- Cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, improved governance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster prevention and recovery, human rights, capacity development, South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism, etc., as relevant)
- GEF Additionality
- Catalytic Role / Replication Effect
- Progress to impact

iv. Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- The TE team will include a summary of the main findings of the TE report. Findings should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data.
- The section on conclusions will be written in light of the findings. Conclusions should be comprehensive and balanced statements that are well substantiated by evidence and logically connected to the TE findings. They should highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project, respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to project beneficiaries, UNDP and the GEF, **including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.**
- Recommendations should provide concrete, practical, feasible and targeted recommendations directed to the intended users of the evaluation about what actions to take and decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation.
- The TE report should also include lessons that can be taken from the evaluation, including best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success that can provide knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (programmatic and evaluation methods used, partnerships, financial leveraging, etc.) that are applicable to other GEF and UNDP interventions. When possible, the TE team should include examples of good practices in project design and implementation.
- It is important for the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the TE report to include results related to gender equality and empowerment of women.

The TE report will include an Evaluation Ratings Table, as shown in the ToR Annex.

6. Expected Outputs and Deliverables



The TE *consultant/team* shall prepare and submit:

- TE Inception Report: TE Consultant clarifies objectives and methods of the TE. TE Consultant submit the Inception Report to the Commissioning Unit and project management after the document analysis. Approximate due date: September 27th, 2021.
- Draft TE Report: TE Consultant submits full draft report with annexes *within 3 weeks* of the end of the TE interviews. Approximate due date: October, 18th, 2021.
- Final TE Report* and Audit Trail: TE Consultant submit revised report, with Audit Trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final TE report, to the Commissioning Unit *within 1 week* of receiving UNDP comments on draft. Approximate due date: October 29th, 2021.

The final TE report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

All final TE reports will be quality assessed by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). Details of the IEO's quality assessment of decentralized evaluations can be found in Section 6 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.²

7. TE Arrangements

The Commissioning Unit and the Project Team will provide support to the operationalization of virtual / remote meetings and will provide the TE Consultant with an updated list of interested parties with contact details (phone and email), in addition to providing all online documentation as well as setting up stakeholder interviews for the TE Consultant.

8. Duration of the Work

The total duration of the TE will be approximately (average 25-35 working days) over a time period of 60 days starting September 13, 2021 and shall not exceed 90 days from when the TE consultant is hired. The tentative TE timeframe is as follows:

- September 13, 2021: Application closes
- September 20, 2021: Selection of TE consultant
- September 23, 2021: Prep the TE consultant (handover of project documents)
- September 27, 2021: Document review, preparing and submit the TE Inception Report
- September 27 to October 15, 2021: Stakeholder meetings and interviews
- October 18, 2021: Preparing and submit of draft TE report
- October 18 to October 22, 2021: Circulation of draft TE report for comments
- October 25 to October 29, 2021: Incorporation of comments on draft TE report into Audit Trail & finalization of TE report
- November 01, 2021: Submit final TE report
- November 01 to November 12, 2021: Circulation of final TE report and approval

² Access at: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-6.shtml>



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The expected start date of contract is September 20, 2021.

9. Duty Station

The TE Consultant will work home-based, with the remote support of the Commissioning Unit, who will provide support in the agendas with stakeholders and interviews with the beneficiaries in the territories.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

10. TE Team Composition and Required Qualifications

A team of one independent consultant will conduct the TE with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally. The consultant cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of **the Project Document**) and **should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities**.

The consultant must comply with the following:

Mandatory criteria:

- Minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience;
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge;
- Competence in adaptive management;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender;
- Fluency in English with excellent writing skills;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Project evaluation/review experience within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.

Qualifying criteria:

- Post-Graduate in related areas of the TOR;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system
- Experience of working on GEF evaluations;
- Work experience in field evaluations of with traditional peoples and communities;
- Experience working in Latin America;
- Fluency in written English and Knowledge of Portuguese.

Consultant Independence:



The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a **conflict of interest with project's related activities**.

11. Evaluator Ethics

The TE team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the **principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'**. **The evaluator must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data.** The evaluator must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

12. Payment Schedule

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft TE report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%

- The final TE report includes all requirements outlined in the TE TOR and is in accordance with the TE guidance.
- The final TE report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

In line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the Commissioning Unit and/or the consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the TE, that deliverable or service will not be paid.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.

APPLICATION PROCESS

13. Scope of Price Proposal and Schedule of Payments

Financial Proposal:



- Financial proposals must be “all inclusive” and expressed in a lump-sum for the total duration of the contract. The term “all inclusive” implies all cost (professional fees, travel costs, living allowances etc.);
- The lump sum is fixed regardless of changes in the cost components.

14. Recommended Presentation of Proposal

- a) Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability using the [template](#) provided by UNDP;
- b) CV or Personal History Form ([P11 form](#));
- c) Brief description of approach to work/technical proposal of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)
- d) Financial Proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc.), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the [Letter of Confirmation of Interest template](#). If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

All application materials should be submitted to the address (insert mailing address) in a sealed envelope indicating the following reference “Consultant for Terminal Evaluation of (project title)” or by email at the following address ONLY: (insert email address) by (time and date). Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

15. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer

Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP’s General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

16. Annexes to the TE ToR

- Annex 1. Project Logical/Results Framework
- Annex 2: Project Information Package to be reviewed by TE team
- Annex 3: Evaluation Report Clearance Form
- Annex 4. UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators
- Annex 5. TE Audit Trail
- Annex 6. Sample Evaluation Criteria Matrix
- Annex 7. TE Report Content Review Checklist
- Annex 8. Summary of Actions for all TE Phases
- Annex 9. Summary of Rating Scales



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5.2 Annex 2. Project Logical/Results Framework

This project will contribute to achieving the following Country Programme Outcome as defined in CPAP or CPD: Capacities for integrating sustainable development and productive inclusion for poverty reduction.
Country Programme Outcome Indicators: Capacities for integrating sustainable development and productive inclusion for poverty reduction
Primary applicable Key Environment and Sustainable Development Key Result Area (same as that on the cover page, circle one): Environmental considerations are mainstreamed in sector and local-level strategies and plans.
Applicable GEF Strategic Objective and Program: LD 1: Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services sustaining the livelihoods of local communities; LD 3: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape
Applicable GEF Expected Outcomes: Outcome 1.2: Improved rangelands/livestock management; Outcome 1.3: Sustained flow of services in agro-ecosystems Outcome 3.1: Cross-sectoral enabling environment for integrated landscape management (in support of SLM); Outcome 3.2: Integrated landscape management adopted by local communities; Outcome 3.3: Increased investments in integrated landscape management
Applicable GEF Output Indicators: 1.2 Types of innovative SL/WM introduced at the field level; 1.3 Suitable SL/WM interventions to increase vegetative cover in agro-ecosystems; 3.1 Integrated land management plans developed and implemented; 3.2 INRM tools and methodologies developed and tested 3.3 Appropriate actions to diversify financial resource base; 3.4 Information on INRM technologies and good practices disseminated

Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Targets (End of Project)	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
Project Objective: Strengthening SLM governance frameworks to combat land degradation processes in Sergipe ASD in NE Brazil	1. Area (ha) of rural properties in which recommended SLM practices are implemented in Sergipe.	1. No recommended SLM practices disseminated to date.	1. 70,000 ha on 2,000 rural properties, including replication areas.	1. Project reports, LD monitoring and evaluation system, data from ADEMA and ATER services.	New federal and state administration taking office in 2015 less supportive of strengthening SLM governance frameworks. Data disaggregated by municipality unavailable on yearly basis
	2. Average tree density in forest patches < 50 ha.	2. < 800 tree/ha.	2. >1,500 tree/ha	2. Data from ATER services.	
	3. Loss of vegetation coverage in SE-ASD (48 municipalities).	3. Projected rate of deforestation without the project 0.29% per year.	3. Rate of deforestation reduced to 0.14% per year.	3. INPE remote sensing deforestation rates; data from Rural Environmental Registry (CAR).	
	4. Production of small-scale farms for the four field sites.	4. Projected rate of productivity 0.7 t/ha of main subsistence crops (manioc, beans, corn).	4. 30% increase of productivity of crops by end of project.	4. Annual IBGE production data by municipality (PAM, PPM, PEVS) and/or data from ATER services.	

Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Targets (End of Project)	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
	5. Increase in the general score of LD Tracking Tool.	5. General score of LD Tracking Tool: 1	5. General score of LD Tracking Tool: 3	5. GEF LD Tracking Tool	
Outcome 1: Strengthened governance framework contributes to avoiding, reducing and reverting land degradation in Sergipe ASD.	1. Improved norms and directives on SLM at State level.	1. LD norms and technical directives are not in place at state level.	1. LD norms and technical directives developed and submitted to NCCD.	1. NCCD resolutions, project reports	Turnover of staff within SEMARH, key municipalities and IBAMA reduces impact of project capacity-building actions. Political disputes undermine development of MAPs for INRM Political resistance and bureaucratic delays and unforeseen legal issues
	2. Level of capacity of staff at SEMARH, key municipalities in SE-ASD and IBAMA, where appropriate, related to: SLM and LD issues; licensing of agriculture/livestock and forest management activities; and land use oversight/enforcement.	2. 01 State level Action Plan to Combat Desertification (PAE) and no municipal Action Plans (MAP) at the SE-ASDs.	2. Revised PAE and 07 MAPs at the SE-ASDs prepared, approved with operational plans and budget for implementation.	2. MAPs presented to State Permanent Working Group to Combat Desertification (GPCD) and NCCD. Sergipe PPA.	
	3. Number of state licenses taking into account SLM criteria and practices for Alto Sertão Sergipano (SAS)	3. Number of staff who are knowledgeable on SLM practices is nearly null.	3. Nuclei of SLM and LD issues established and trained in SEMARH, with participation of key municipalities in SE-ASD, IBAMA and ADEMA.	3. Training program certificates and Administrative Rule with Nuclei Creation.	
	4. % of compliance with rural licensing processes in 2 SAS municipalities.	4. Existing licenses do not take due account of SLM criteria in SAS. Baseline for compliance will be determined when final deliberation on CAR is made.	4. 10% increase in licenses with SLM criteria per year, post year 3. By end year 2: revised licensing criteria for multiple uses designed and proposed to ADEMA, GPCD and NCCD. By end year 4: revised licensing criteria for forest use designed and proposed to IBAMA, ADEMA, GPCD and NCCD.	4. ADEMA and/or IBAMA and/or GPCD and/or NCCD records on licensing	
Output 1.1: Sergipe state-level policy and planning framework supports integrated SLM in its ASD					
Output 1.2: State land-use licensing processes stimulate appropriate measures to reduce LD					
Output 1.3: Monitoring land use optimized for SLM implementation in ASD					
Output 1.4: Knowledge management and national-level governance framework strengthened to increase adoption of SLM in Sergipe and facilitate replication in NE					
Outcome 2: Uptake of SLM/SFM practices increased in Alto Sertão of Sergipe (SAS), with	1. Number of farming households implementing sustainable subsistence and commercial agricultural practices, improved grazing systems and integrated SLM practices in SAS	1. Fewer than 50 farms with recommended SLM practices adopted in SAS. Legal requirements	1. At least 2,000 farming households in SAS adopt sustainable agricultural practices, improved grazing systems and	1. Project reports, LD monitoring and evaluation system, data from rural extension institutions	Drought or severe climatic conditions impede uptake of some SLM practices.

Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Baseline	Targets (End of Project)	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
replication in rest of SEASD		for LRs and APPs not enforced.	integrated SLM practices by end of project.		Staff turnover reduces delivery of SLM guidance to producers; difficulty obtaining data on rest of SEASD Banking rules and regulations or alleged lack of technical parameters Ministerial reorganization in new federal administration affects resources or priorities for allocation
	2. Reduced land degradation over 8,000 ha in 04 field sites.	2. Nearly 50% of the land area in 04 field sites is under accentuated and/or severe land degradation (soil loss by water erosion = 10 t/ha; and loss of soil carbon = 3 t/ha)	2. By the end of year 3: 500 families in 4 field sites with SLM strategies developed & implemented. By end of project 25% of land degradation in these 04 field sites (2,000 ha) reduced (soil loss by water erosion < 5 t/ha; and loss of soil carbon < 2 t/ha* ; **)	2. Soil loss and carbon stock data in 04 field sites. Project Surveys.	
	3. Percentage of agricultural extensionists active in SAS delivering targeted support that includes recommended SLM directives	3. Practically none (0%)	3. 100% of extensionists active in SAS deliver targeted support that includes recommended SLM directives, with replication in SEASD	3. Reports of training workshops of extensionists, rural extension agency plans.	
	4. Investments in SLM practices in Sergipe	4. Financing through commercial banks without SLM criteria. -US\$18Million in financing through PRONAF to SAS in 2012 (nearly 12 thousand contracts) with limited SLM criteria. -US\$995k through environmental funds to Sergipe (0.2% of total investment).	4. 20 % increase in investment in SLM practices in Sergipe. By year 2: SLM technical guidelines to support decision making by credit agents.	4. Bank credit lines and other funds descriptions and project reports	
Output 2.1: SLM best practices implemented in SAS provide guidance for licensing so as to revert LD processes					
Output 2.2: State extension services incorporate SLM guidelines for ASDs and provide targeted support to SAS					
Output 2.3: State-level and national access to diverse funds improved for uptake of SLM in ASDs					

5.3 Annex 3: List of interviews

Name	Position / Organization
Ministry of Environment / Department of Climate / Secretariat of Climate and Institutional Relations	
Paulo Alexandre de Toledo Alves	Diretor Nacional do Projeto
Ana Carla Leite de Almeida	Coordenador Nacional (Gerente de Projeto MMA/Diretor Substituto)
Valdineide Barbosa de Santana	Analista Ambiental
Marcos Oliveira Santana	Analista Ambiental
UNDP "IMPLEMENTATION/EXECUTION	
Alexandra Fischer	UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser
Luana Assis de Lucena Lopes	CO Focal Point
Vânia Trajano	Technical Adviser
Paula Silveira	Project Manager
Thiago Vieira	Analista Técnico (reside em Sergipe)
Implementation Partners	
Frans Pareyn	Director Northeast Plants Association APNE/Map BIOMAS - MONITORING SYSTEM
Paulo Amílcar	Deputy Superintendent Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources - IBAMA / SE
Roberto Lucas Freire	Deputy Superintendent National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform - INCRA/SE
André Luiz Bonfim Ferreira	Former Secretary of State of Agriculture, Agrarian Development and Fishing Secretary of State of Agriculture, Agrarian Development and Fishing - SEAGRI
Izildinha Dantas	Coordinator of Livestock Sergipe Agricultural Development Company – EMDAGRO
Ailton Francisco da Rocha	Special Superintendent of Water Resources and Environment SEDURBS/SERHMA - Secretary of State of Urban Development and Sustainability / Special Superintendency of Water Resources and Environment
Evanildes	Environmental Analyst SEDURBS/ADEMA - Secretary of State for Urban Development and Sustainability / State Administration for the Environment
Beneficiaries	
Egídio	Settlement representative
Evaldo	Planting, URADs
Clea	Settlement representative

5.4 Annex 4: List of Documents Reviewed

#	Item (electronic versions preferred if available)
1	Project Identification Form (PIF)
2	UNDP Initiation Plan
3	Final UNDP-GEF Project Document with all annexes
4	CEO Endorsement Request
5	UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and associated management plans (if any)
6	Inception Workshop Report
7	Mid-Term Review report and management response to MTR recommendations
8	All Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
9	Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual or annual, with associated workplans and financial reports)
10	Oversight mission reports
11	Minutes of Project Board Meetings and of other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
12	GEF Tracking Tools (from CEO Endorsement, midterm and terminal stages)
13	GEF/LDCF/SCCF Core Indicators (from PIF, CEO Endorsement, midterm and terminal stages); for GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects only
14	Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions
15	Co-financing table data with expected and actual contributions broken down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures
16	Audit reports
17	Electronic copies of project outputs (booklets, manuals, technical reports, articles, etc.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomassa para energia no Nordeste: Atualidade e perspectivas • Importância atual e potencial do uso da biomassa para energia em Sergipe • Manejo do uso sustentável de terras no semiárido do Nordeste brasileiro • Relatórios técnicos do projeto
18	Sample of project communications materials
19	Summary list of formal meetings, workshops, etc. held, with date, location, topic, and number of participants
20	Any relevant socio-economic monitoring data, such as average incomes / employment levels of stakeholders in the target area, change in revenue related to project activities
21	List of contracts and procurement items over ~US\$5,000 (i.e., organizations or companies contracted for project outputs, etc., except in cases of confidential information)

22	List of related projects/initiatives contributing to project objectives approved/started after GEF project approval (i.e. any leveraged or “catalytic” results)
23	Data on relevant project website activity – e.g. number of unique visitors per month, number of page views, etc. over relevant time period, if available
24	UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)
25	List/map of project sites, highlighting suggested visits
26	List and contact details for project staff, key project stakeholders, including Project Board members, RTA, Project Team members, and other partners to be consulted
27	Project deliverables that provide documentary evidence of achievement towards project outcomes
28	M&E Plan and System

5.5 Annex 5: Evaluation Design Matrix - Questions, Data Sources and Collection

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance			
Does the project's objective align with the priorities of the local government and local communities?	Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of local stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local stakeholders - Document review of local development strategies, environmental policies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
Does the project's objective fit within the national environment and development priorities?	Level of coherence between project objective and national policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents	National policy documents, such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Capacity Self-Assessment, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - National level interviews
Did the project concept originate from local or national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development?	Level of involvement of local and national stakeholders in project origination and development (number of meetings held, project development processes incorporating stakeholder input, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project staff - Local and national stakeholders - Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
Does the project objective fit GEF strategic priorities?	Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities (including alignment of relevant focal area indicators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GEF strategic priority documents for period when project was approved - Current GEF strategic priority documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
Was the project linked with and in-line with UNDP priorities and strategies for the country?	Level of coherence between project objective and design with UNDAF, CPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP strategic priority documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
How relevant and effective has this project's strategy and architecture been? Is it relevant? Has it been effective? Does it need to change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links to international commitments and national policy documents, relationships established, level of coherence between project design and implementation approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - National policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners - Data collected throughout the mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk study - Interview with project staff - Observation - Focus groups

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
What are the decision-making processes -project governance oversight and accountabilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles and Responsibilities of stakeholders in project implementation. - Partnership arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - National policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners - Data collected throughout the mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk study - Interview with project staff - Observation - Focus groups
What extent does the project contribute towards the progress and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)?	Project alignment with the SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk study
What extent does the Government support (or not support) the Project, understand its responsibility and fulfill its obligations?	Meetings of the Project Board, Technical Team, Consultation Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes - Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk study
Effectiveness			
Are the project objectives likely to be met? To what extent are they likely to be met?	Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
What are the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement?	Level of documentation of and preparation for project risks, assumptions and impact drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
What are the key risks and barriers that remain to achieve the project objective and generate Global Environmental Benefits?	Presence, assessment of, and preparation for expected risks, assumptions and impact drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met?	Actions undertaken to address key assumptions and target impact drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
What has been (to date) this projects progress towards the expected results and log frame indicators? How do the key stakeholders feel this project has progressed towards the outcome level results (as stated in the original documents- inception report)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress toward impact achievements - Results of Outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Consultation with Project Board Members - PMU - Field Observation and discussion with beneficiaries
What has been the progress to date and how has it led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...). How cross cutting areas been included in the project are results framework and monitored on an annual basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder involvement effectiveness - Gender gap - Plans and policies incorporating initiatives - Record of comments and response of stakeholders - Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Consultation with Project Board Members - PMU - Field Observation and discussion with beneficiaries
What does the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline indicate when compared with the one completed right before the Terminal Review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GEF Tracking Tools status at the closure of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
What are the remaining barriers to achieving the expected results as told by stakeholders interviewed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of barriers in the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
What aspects of this project s implementation approach (pilots) (enabling activities) has been particularly successful or negative (as told by consults) and how might the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of project achievements - Progress toward impact achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
stakeholders further expand or correct these benefits.			
Do the results framework indicators have a SMART focus?	Results framework indicators	M&E reports	- Desk review
Are the mid-term and end-of-project goals achievable?	% of results and results achieved: Progress towards the results framework	- M&E reports - ProDoc	- Desk review
Efficiency			
Is the project cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and adequacy of financial management procedures (in line with UNDP, UNOPS, and national policies, legislation, and procedures) - Financial delivery rate vs. expected rate - Management costs as a percentage of total costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	- Desk review
Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms?	Cost of project inputs and outputs relative to norms and standards for donor projects in the country or region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with project staff - Desk review
Is the project implementation approach efficient for delivering the planned project results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequacy of implementation structure and mechanisms for coordination and communication - Planned and actual level of human resources available - Extent and quality of engagement with relevant partners / partnerships - Quality and adequacy of project monitoring mechanisms (oversight bodies' input, quality and timeliness of reporting, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - National and local stakeholders - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national and local stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Is the project implementation delayed? If so, has that affected cost-effectiveness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project milestones in time - Planned results affected by delays - Required project adaptive management measures related to delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews with project staff
What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?	Level of cash and in-kind co-financing relative to expected level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews with project staff
To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources?	Amount of resources leveraged relative to project budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews with project staff
What is project related progress in the following 'implementation' categories?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of project achievements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews with project staff
Management Arrangements and Implementation Approach (including any evidence of Adaptive management and project coordination and km with pilots)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project management and coordination effectiveness - Number of project achievements in pilots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Interviews with project staff
How has the finances been managed, delivered and spent per outputs per year. What percentage is delivered to date? Is it low?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Percentage of expenditures in proportion with the results - Financial Systems and effectiveness transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review
Results			
Have the planned outputs been produced? Have they contributed to the project outcomes and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation - Existence of logical linkages between project outputs and outcomes/impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective?	Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review
Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental indicators - Level of progress through the project's Theory of Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review
Sustainability			
To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial requirements for maintenance of project benefits - Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits - Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review
Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of "ownership" of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained?	Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review
Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained?	Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review
To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?	Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review
To what extent are the project results dependent on issues	Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
relating to institutional frameworks and governance?			
Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?	Existence of environmental risks to project benefits	- Project documents	- Desk review
What are the financial risks to sustainability?	Financial risks;	- Project documents	- Desk review
What are the Socio-economic risks to sustainability?	Socio-economic risks and environmental threats.	- Project documents	- Desk review
Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability?	- Institutional and individual capacities	- Project documents	- Desk review
Gender equality and women's empowerment			
How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?	Level of progress of gender action plan and gender indicators in results framework	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
In what ways did the project's gender results advance or contribute to the project's biodiversity outcomes?	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Were women's groups, NGOs, civil society orgs and women's ministries adequately consulted and involved in project design? If not, should they have been?	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Were stakeholder engagement exercises gender responsive?	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
For any stakeholder workshops, were women-only sessions held, if appropriate, and/or were other considerations made to ensure	Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
women's meaningful participation?			
Cross-cutting and UNDP Mainstreaming Issues			
How were effects on local populations considered in project design and implementation?	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Extent to which the allocation of resources to targeted groups takes into account the need to prioritize those most marginalized.	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations (e.g. income generation/job creation, improved natural resource management arrangements with local groups, improvement in policy frameworks for resource allocation and distribution, regeneration of natural resources for long term sustainability).	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Extent to which the project objectives conform to agreed priorities in the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and other country programme documents.	Links between the project and the priorities of the UNDP Country Program.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Whether project outcomes have contributed to better preparations to cope with disasters or mitigate risk	Risk mitigation	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review
Extent to which poor, indigenous, persons with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged or	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	- Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders	- Desk review

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
marginalized groups benefited from the project			
The poverty-environment nexus: how the environmental conservation activities of the project contributed to poverty reduction	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project documents - Project staff - Project stakeholders 	- Desk review

5.6 Annex 6: Questions to PMU and project board members and other stakeholders

Relevance

1. Does the project's objective align with the priorities of the local government and local communities?
2. Does the project's objective fit within the national environment and development priorities?
3. Did the project concept originate from local or national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development?
4. How relevant and effective has this project's strategy and architecture been? Is it relevant? Has it been effective? Does it need to change?
5. What are the decision-making processes -project governance oversight and accountabilities?

Effectiveness

6. Are the project objectives likely to be met? To what extent are they likely to be met?
7. What are the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement?
8. What are the key risks and barriers that remain to achieve the project objective and generate Global Environmental Benefits?
9. Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met?
10. How do the key stakeholders feel this project has progressed towards the outcome level results (as stated in the original documents- inception report)?
11. How cross cutting areas been included in the project are results framework and monitored on an annual basis?
12. What are the remaining barriers to achieving the expected results as told by stakeholders interviewed?

Efficiency

13. Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
14. Is the project implementation approach efficient for delivering the planned project results?
15. Is the project implementation delayed? If so, has that affected cost-effectiveness?

16. What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
17. To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources?
18. What is project related progress in the following 'implementation' categories?

Results

19. Have the planned outputs been produced? Have they contributed to the project outcomes and objectives?
20. Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective?
21. Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are they likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?

Sustainability

22. To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?
23. Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of "ownership" of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained?
24. Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained?
25. To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors or on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance or environmental?

Gender equality and women's empowerment

26. How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?
27. In what ways did the project's gender results advance or contribute to the project's biodiversity outcomes?

Cross-cutting and UNDP Mainstreaming Issues

28. How were effects on local populations considered in project design and implementation?

5.7 Annex 7: Rating Scales

Rating scale used:

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution	Sustainability ratings	Relevance ratings	Impact Ratings
6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS): there were moderate shortcomings 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): the project had significant shortcomings 2: Unsatisfactory (U): there were major shortcomings in the achievement of project objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings	4: Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3: Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2: Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1: Unlikely (U): severe risks	2: Relevant (R) 1: Not relevant (NR)	3: Significant (S) 2: Minimal (M) 1: Negligible (N)
Additional ratings where relevant: Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)			

5.8 Annex 8: Evaluation consultant code of conduct agreement form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: José Fernando Galindo Zapata

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at Quito Ecuador on 20/10/2021

