

**TERMINAL EVALUATION (TE) OF THE FIFTH OPERATIONAL
PHASE OF THE GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM IN COSTA RICA**

FINAL REPORT

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I. OPENING PAGE

Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project

Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Program in Costa Rica

UNDP and GEF project ID#s.

Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report

The evaluation was carried out between February and March 2015. The field visit happened In February 2015. The Inception Report was sent on February 20, 2015. The Draft Final Report is dated March 1st, 2015. This Final Report was issued March 12, 2015.

Region and countries included in the project

The Project was implemented in Costa Rica; it was focused on key Biological Corridors of the country and Buffer Zones of prioritized Protected Areas.

GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program

The Project had components related to the Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change and Land Degradation areas.

Implementing Partner and other project partners

The Implementing Partner of the Project was UNOPS. Other Project Partners include the organizations receiving the small grants, the accompanying organizations and other national organizations (Governmental, academic and civil) participating in different steering and advising structures. In total, these other partners are far more than one hundred

Evaluation team members

The evaluation was carried out by Alejandro C. Imbach.

Acknowledgements

The evaluator would like to thank for the support provided to this evaluation process by the members of the SGP National Coordination team (Eduardo Mata, Paula Zúñiga and Ingrid Sanchez), the UNDP Project Officer (Kifah Sasa), the Global Coordinator for SGP Country Programs at SGP-UNDP CPMT (Nick Remple) and all persons from the community groups, the SGP National Steering Committee and many other different organizations providing time for interviews and visits and valuable information.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Summary Table

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE				
Project Title:	Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Program in Costa Rica			
GEF Project ID:	PIMS 4560		<i>at endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>at Terminal evaluation (Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	00079305	GEF financing:	4,398,148.-	3,864,050.-*
Country:	Costa Rica	IA/EA own:	1,100,000.-	380,000.-
Región:	LAC	Government:	638,400.-	1,442,090.-
Focal Area:	MFA (Multifocal)	Other:	2,886,600.-	3,723,256.-
Operational Program:	Biodiversity Climate Change Land Degradation	Total co-financing:	4,625,000.-	5,545,346.-
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:	9,023,148.-	9,409,396.-
Other Partners involved:	NSC*, MINAE, MAG,	PRODOC Signature (date Project began):		July, 1st, 2011
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: June 30, 2015	Actual: December 31, 2015 (requested)

* Figure included in PIR 2014

Project Description

The project objective is to secure global environmental benefits through community-based initiatives and actions that address habitat fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity in twelve biological corridors linking eight Protected Areas and their buffer zones.

The project is achieving global environmental benefits by supporting community-based initiatives that will collectively contribute to overcome organizational and individual capacity barriers to mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management in the production landscapes and to mitigate climate change. Four interrelated outcomes are pursued: (i) Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use mainstreamed into production landscapes in biological corridors and PA buffer zones; (ii) GHG emissions reduced and carbon stocks increased through community-based actions; (iii) Conservation of productive lands and restoration of degraded lands contributing to sustainability and improved local livelihoods; and (iv) Community-based organizations and their members with improved capacities and knowledge management for replication and up-scaling of best practices.

The project was executed by UNOPS as Implementing Partner using the existing mechanism of the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) in Costa Rica, including grant approval by the National Steering Committee and day-to-day management by the Country Program Team under the leadership of the Country Program Manager (National Coordinator). The project collaborated

with a large number of partners including national Governmental institutions, national and local NGOs and scientific institutions.

This Project had its MTR in 2014. All MTR Recommendations were properly addressed by the Project.

Evaluation Rating Table

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation		2. IA& EA Execution	
	<i>rating</i>		<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry	6 (HS)	Quality of UNDP Implementation	NA
M&E Plan Implementation	6 (HS)	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	6 (HS)
Overall quality of M&E	6 (HS)	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	6 (HS)
3. Assessment of Outcomes		4. Sustainability	
	<i>rating</i>		<i>rating</i>
Relevance	2 (R)	Financial resources:	3 (ML)
Effectiveness	6 (HS)	Socio-political:	4 (L)
Efficiency	6 (HS)	Institutional framework and governance:	3 (ML)
Overall Project Outcome Rating	6 (HS)	Environmental :	4 (L)
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	3 (ML)
5. Project Impact			
	<i>rating</i>		
Assessment of Project impact	3 (S)		

Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

After reviewing documents, interviewing a broad range of stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, and visiting and observing several field locations of SGP activities, the main conclusions of this Terminal Evaluation are:

1. The current SGP Costa Rica GEF full size Project, corresponding to the 5th Operational Phase of the GEF (GEF OP5) is relevant to the objectives with what it must maintain consistency (GEF and country).
2. The project has completed the planned activities and, in the light of the completed projects (44 of 118) and the progress of those still running, is successfully reaching the proposed indicators, exceeding many in significant proportions.
3. The project has operated within the historical average efficiency of SGP projects. Some previous studies have shown that its level of efficiency is good in relation to the general population of GEF funded projects financed.
4. The project has achieved, throughout his history including the evaluated phase, numerous impacts that are evidenced in part by what is stated in section 3.3.6. These impacts at the level of the working sites have multiplied and far exceed the initial investment and scope of their activities. In this sense, the project has worked as a real "incubator" of initiatives that developed and prospered far beyond the SGP support

5. The sustainability of funded initiatives is good and varies according to the sites as stated in Section 3.3.7. In many sites sustainability is very strong while there are other sites where the processes are younger and have not been completed. In these cases continuing with the support should be considered for the next phase (OP6) in order to prevent different processes to be truncated halfway. The risk of remaining truncated not necessarily imply that the results achieved are going to be lost; it basically means that it will be much harder for different groups and processes to move forward until they can reach full maturity and sustainability of their processes.
6. The completion of this stage of SGP in Costa Rica (OP5) and ideas circulating about its possible scope in GEF OP6 highlight an issue that is appearing for the first time in SGP Country Programs and that should be considered in different levels both within the SGP (especially CMPT), UNDP and GEF. The issues turns around the question of what is the acceptable level of influence of national governments in the GEF Small Grants window aimed at civil society and community organizations as it was in the origins of SGP as a corporate program of the GEF. By including the SGP Country Programs in the GEF STAR allocation this original spirit is lost, since the distribution of STAR funds are made by the government and not necessarily in consultation with civil society and community groups. Taking the hypothesis to an end, in the current scheme the government can decide not to award funds to the GEF Small Grants (SGP) and just close a window the same GEF established to specifically target CBOs and NGOs many years ago. This is not a specific problem of Costa Rica, but a systemic issue that should be addressed at that level and not be left only to the particular decisions of governments of each country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

1. To include the M&E system designed and tested in OP5 in new SGP proposals. At the end of OP5 the Costa Rica SGP has good and comprehensive M&E system that should be used fully in new projects since the beginning. Moreover, the full adoption of the M&E System will allow the SGP to choose Project and Outcome indicators that they can actually measure using the existing system and then eliminating the problems linked to the cancelation of indicators that were not well chosen at project design.
2. To maintain active the discussion at the NSC level and the SGP Country Programs in general about the potential problems caused by the existence of multiple reporting lines for the National Coordination. This situation may lead to conflict among different supervising organizations and, eventually, to serious problems for the design, implementation and evaluation of future SGP projects.
3. To define the size of the National Coordination Team based on the implementation requirements of the new OP. This sizing must be based on both the needs for guiding and supervising the SGP small grants and to meet the many demands for SGP presence in numerous local, regional and national processes to which SGP is invited to contribute. These demands offer significant opportunities for incidence in different processes without large expenditures, providing SGP with many opportunities to influence processes beyond the limits of its financial ability to provide small grants.

4.2.2 Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

4. To maintain the existing forms of operation of the Costa Rica SGP. They have proven effective and efficient to achieve the proposed results. Overall, the Costa Rica SGP project is ran in an outstanding way and so the first recommendation for follow up is to keep the good work.
5. The most important action for maintaining, reinforcing and continuing the development of the sites and lines of work that are not yet sustainable is to maintain the SGP Country Program in Costa Rica as a GEF full-size project for OP6. As presented in Section 3.3.6 Impact, the Costa Rica SGP has a successful long-term impact strategy. Some local processes in different sites are in varied stages of the process towards sustainability (many of them have already completed it). Therefore, the continuity of the SGP Costa Rica Country Program is essential to keep running the processes that will take all the initiatives to the final desired stage of sustainability.

4.2.3 Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

6. To maintain the concentration of activities on land degradation in the Jesus Maria river basin at least until gathering convincing evidence about its significant impact (or lack thereof) in the territory. Initial results from OP5 tend to demonstrate that the concentration of activities in a relatively small area can make a significant difference in terms of reducing land degradation, increasing sustainable agricultural production, reducing the sediments load of water courses, etc. Persisting in this approach will allow for gathering complete, strong and outright evidence about its benefits, as long as the final situation is consistent with the early trends emerging at the end of OP5.

4.2.4 Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

A program with a history of 20 years as the Costa Rica SGP had many opportunities to improve and adjust its operations, and it is evident that they have been using them to advance an operation that performs very well.

Therefore, even when there are minor things to be improved here and there, none of them are relevant enough to be included at the same level of relevance of the group previously presented in this chapter. Most of these minor things are mentioned along the different sections of this Report such as the need to have specific gender and youth indicators incorporated in the Project Results Framework, to better choose Project Objective indicators in a way that is simpler to report to the GEF Tracking Tools using the results of the M&E system, to assign a higher priority to the political incidence work to gain more visibility at the governmental level and to update the website that seems slightly outdated. As said, all minor aspects that do not tarnish the brilliant performance of the Costa Rica SGP in OP5.

III. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACICAFOC	Farmers and Indigenous Coordinating Association of Central America
ACTUAR	Costa Rican Community-based Rural Tourism Association
APR	Annual Project Report
APR/PIR	Annual Project Review/Project Implementation Review
ASADA	Community-based Associations for Water Administration
ASIREA	Association for the Sustainable Development of the Atlantic Region
AyA	National Water Utility (Water and Sewerage)
BC	Biological Corridor
BCNP	Biological Corridors National Program
BD	Biodiversity
CADETI	Advisory Commission on Land Degradation
CBD	Convention of Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CO	Country Office
CO₂	Carbon Dioxide
COA	Chart of Account (ATLAS)
CONAI	National Commission of Indigenous Affairs
CONIFOR	Costa Rican National Commission Against Wildfires
CP	Country Program
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
CPD	Country Program Document Framework
CPMT	Central Program Management Team
CPS	Country Program Strategy
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRUSA	Foundation for Development
DARAO	Department of Accreditation and Registry in Organic Agriculture
EE	Energy Efficiency
EEG	UNDP Energy and Environment Group
ERC	Evaluation Resource Center
ESPP	Environmental Services Payments Program
FIDERPAC	Integral Foundation for the Rural Development of the Central Pacific
FONAFIFO	National Forest Financing Fund
FSP	Full Size Project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GoCR	Government of Costa Rica
Ha	Hectare
ICE	Costa Rican Institute of Electricity
ICT	Costa Rican Institute of Tourism
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
INA	National Learning Institute
INBio	National Institute for Biodiversity
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISV-CR	International Student Volunteer-Costa Rica
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
IW	International Waters
kWh	Kilowatt-hour
LAC	Latin American and the Caribbean
LD	Land Degradation
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis

LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MINAE	Ministry of Environment and Energy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNI	Indigenous Peoples National Roundtable (Mesa Nacional Indígena)
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MSP	Medium-Sized Project
NAP	National Action Plan on Land Degradation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCCS	National Climate Change Strategy
NGO	Non-government Organization
NP	National Park
NDP	National Development Plan
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP	Operational Program
PA	Protected Area
PAC	Project Approval Committee
PES	Payments for Environmental Services
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Program Management Unit
PO	Purchase Order (ATLAS)
PPR	Project Progress Reports
QPR	Quarterly Project Review
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit for LAC
RE	Renewable Energy
REQ	Requisition (ATLAS)
RR	Resident Representative
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SINAC	National System of Conservation Areas
SGP	GEF Small Grants Program
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
STA	Senior Technical Advisor
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TOR	Terms of Reference
UCR	University of Costa Rica
UN	United Nations
UNA	National University (Universidad Nacional)
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNED	Distance Learning University
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Program on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

This evaluation has the following purpose:

1. To evaluate the achievement of the Project results during OP5
2. To draw lessons from the implementation of this phase to help improve the sustainability of benefits generated during the implementation and to improve overall programmatic capabilities (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) of SGP and UNDP
3. To provide some inputs for the formulation of the SGP proposal for the GEF Sixth Operational Phase in Costa Rica

1.2 Scope & Methodology

Scope

The Final Evaluation assessed the main key areas related to project performance, impact and sustainability.

The addressed areas were:

- a. Relevance
- b. Effectiveness
- c. Efficiency
- d. Sustainability of Results
- e. Impact

Methodology

Based on the evaluation purpose and scope, an evaluation matrix including evaluation questions, indicators, sources of information and methods to obtain information was developed and used to guide the evaluation. This matrix was included in the Evaluation Inception Report submitted to the different stakeholders before the beginning of the evaluation.

This matrix is presented as Annex 6

The evaluation process was carried out according to the following steps:

1. Reading and analysis of existing documentation (including those documents listed in the TOR and the UNDP guidelines for these evaluations*, as well as websites and information available online and documents provided directly by the visited organizations and institutions). The list of documents analyzed is included as Annex 5.
2. Development of data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides and field visits, observation and other protocols).

3. Field visit to collect primary information through interviews, observations, field visits and meetings. The itinerary of this visit is included as Annex 2. A brief summary of the experiences and small projects visited during the evaluation is included as Annex 3. The list of persons interviewed for this evaluation is included as Annex 4.
4. Preparation of a Debriefing Report immediately after the field visit. This Report was distributed to the key stakeholders for verification of information accuracy.
5. Preparation of the Draft Final Report and distribution to users established for feedback and comments.
6. Reception of comments and feedback and preparation of the "audit trail"
7. Preparation and submission of the Final Report , including verification of the facts on the basis of comments on drafts , incorporating new materials and adjustments to the Draft Final Report

1.3 Structure of the evaluation report

The contents for the report were organized on the basis of the Table of Contents included in the TOR. This Table of Contents complies and is consistent with the guidelines established in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Project start and duration

The Project started on July 1st, 2011 and was planned for 4 years to be finished by June 30, 2015. Currently an extension for six months is under preparation; this extension will not contemplate additional resources.

At this point it is important to highlight that this is not the typical 4-year project starting from scratch and aiming to achieve agreed specific products and results. Despite being labeled as a “project” to fit within the GEF operational structures of the STAR allocation, the SGP is a program that was established in the early 90s and is reaching 20 years of continuous operation in Costa Rica.

Therefore, when assessing its different aspects it is necessary to remember that the current 4-year-project is the continuation of a long program that built processes and results in a consistent way throughout this time. This aspect will be addressed later in the different sections of this Report to show how this long history influenced the results of this particular phase.

2.2 Problems that the project sought to address

Costa Rica (51,100 km² of land area and 589,000 km² of territorial sea) is considered one of the 20 most bio-diverse countries in the world. Its geographical position in the tropics, its two coasts and its mountain systems generate numerous and a wide variety of microclimates that explain this natural wealth in both species and ecosystems. More than 500,000 species found in this small country represent nearly 4% of the estimated total number of species worldwide despite covering just 0.03% of the world terrestrial area.

To protect this wealth of biodiversity of global importance, the country has allocated over 25% of its territory to be protected under different categories of Protected Areas. This effort is extended with the support of private initiatives that establish private reserves dedicated mainly to ecotourism and research.

For the last 10 years, Government and non-governmental organizations active in biodiversity conservation in Costa Rica, have been engaged in an ambitious two-phase program known as GRUAS I & II, to identify and define a national network of biological corridors to improve the ecological connectivity among national protected areas and between these and PA of neighboring countries. Through the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor Project, the GEF was instrumental in helping establish the basis for the biological corridor system in Costa Rica. The studies under GRUAS were completed in 2009, at a very detailed geographical scale, with broad participation of national and local actors. GRUAS I & II were the basis for selecting the biological corridors and protected areas’ buffer zones where SGP Costa Rica focuses its work concentrating its activities around eight Protected Areas and 12 biological corridors linking these areas

The areas selected for SGP’s project interventions include the five largest undisturbed blocks of forest: rain forests, dry forests, páramo, mangrove and wetlands, where the most important Protected Areas of Costa Rica are found. These areas harbor species of endangered fauna,

which are very good indicators of ecosystem health: the Ocelot (*Leopardus tigrinus* and *Leopardus pardalis*), Causel (*Leopardus wiedii*), Puma yaguarondi (*Puma concolor*), Danta (*Tapirus bairdii*), Chanco de monte (*Tayassu tajacu*) and the Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*). The three Biosphere Reserves and the World Heritage Sites of the country are among the eight prioritized PAs.

The contribution of Costa Rica to the total global GHG emissions is very low (less than 0.1%), however, the country made a commitment to become carbon-neutral by 2021. The country's decision to avoid net carbon emissions has led to the preparation of an integrated National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) for achieving a C-neutral economy by 2021, which will include actions on mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The mitigation strategy will have a three-pronged approach: 1) GHG emissions reduction by sources; 2) capture and storage of CO₂; and 3) carbon market development.

As mentioned above, GRUAS I & II carried out an in-depth analysis of the current status of biodiversity and threats to each of the PA and biological corridors in Costa Rica. The main common threat is the existing fragmentation of ecosystems due to historic forest clearing to expand the agricultural frontier, to changes to monoculture crops of agricultural systems that maintained forest cover, commercial timber extraction, and other agricultural and land use practices that do not take into account biodiversity and carbon stocks. Although Costa Rica has been successful in halting deforestation nationally there are still areas where land use change and forest ecosystem degradation are happening. For example, pineapple monoculture has increased by 20,000 hectares between 2008 and 2010.

There is also concern for expanding mining operations in the northern part of the country. Forest fires are also an important cause of concern for several protected areas. Land degradation is a further driver of biodiversity loss in most biological corridors. Indeed, land degradation is affecting Diria, Paso de la Danta, Paso de las Lapas, San Juan-La Selva, Pájaro Campana and Colorado-Tortuguero biological corridors in various degrees. The Jesus Maria watershed located in the biological corridor of "Montes del Aguacate" is the most degraded watershed in the country. Climate change will exacerbate ecosystem degradation in areas where soil erosion and other land degradation processes are already present.

Despite Costa Rica's strong commitment towards the protection and sustainable use of its natural base and its previous investments in biodiversity conservation, a number of barriers still need to be addressed to enable communities to contribute more effectively to address the threats:

- Lack of legislation regulating land use and activities in buffer zones. In the absence of these laws, local communities living around protected areas manage their farms and conduct other economic activities without due consideration of the effects these may have on ecosystems and species.
- Insufficient capacity at community level for land use planning in buffer zones and corridors. Even if communities are willing to mainstream biodiversity in their land use decisions, they do not have the information, tools and resources to undertake adequate land use planning. This is often compounded by weak institutional presence in these areas and, therefore, unavailability of technical assistance from government entities for many communities.
- Weak governance mechanisms for the implementation of biological corridor management plans. While community participation has been an important consideration in the BC management plans and communities are part of Local

Councils for biological corridors, their enhanced participation in and contribution to the operation of the Councils is an essential ingredient for the successful implementation of the plans. Local leaders that represent communities in the Councils lack financial support and technical resources to reach out to the rest of the population within the corridors.

- Lack of information, skills and knowledge on agricultural production technologies that help maintain ecological connectivity, such as agro-forestry and organic agriculture.
- Absence of economic incentives for changing unsustainable community practices and /or lack of knowledge about incentive mechanisms such as payments for environmental services that exist in Costa Rica. Costa Rica is a pioneering country concerning incentive mechanisms to help maintain environmental services but, despite the positive track record, there are still many communities that have not been able to benefit from these financial incentives. While SGP's previous efforts to enable indigenous peoples to receive PES have been successful, coverage of significant number of indigenous communities has yet to be achieved.
- Low public awareness of the need to conserve critical areas to maintain ecosystem services.

Regarding climate change mitigation, of the total annual GHG emissions of the country (8,779 million tons of CO₂e per year) the agriculture and livestock sector accounts for half of total emissions, that is, 4,603 million tons. In particular, slash-and-burn agriculture is still widespread in some regions of Costa Rica, including those targeted by this project. The use of fuelwood for meeting household energy needs as well as those of rural agro-processing enterprises represents another source of GHG emissions at community level. There are about 50,000 households located in buffer zones and biological corridors without access to the public electricity grid. Forest fires in the country are a significant contributor to GHG emissions and a threat to ecosystems. Such wild fires occur because of lack of fire management in slash-and-burn agriculture and as a result of other anthropogenic causes. Although in accordance with the Costa Rican National Commission Against Wildfires (CONIFOR) fire occurrence has been down to 13,900 hectares per year in the last three years from 32,500 hectares, it still represents an average emission per year of 1.9 million tons of CO₂ equivalent. Land use change from forest use to agricultural use, and from integrated agricultural systems to monoculture crops is affecting at least 25,000 hectares per year.

The following barriers have been identified by the SGP to address climate change mitigation at community level in rural areas:

- Weak access to information at community level on government policies and regulations on climate change;
- Absence of viable alternatives to unsustainable land use change for poor rural communities;
- Lack of access to clean and efficient rural energy technologies;
- Deficient access to credits for clean technology investment in rural areas. There are not enough lines of credit for it and / or the communities are unaware of the existence of the few ones available.
- Lack of skills and know-how to phase-out slash-and-burn practices in agriculture.
- Lack of equipment and financial and technical resources by many communities adjacent to PA to prevent and combat forest fires in a timely manner.

Finally, but not less important, regarding community barriers to adopt sustainable land management approaches, unsustainable agricultural production practices have made the Jesus Maria Basin (with an extension of 37,000 ha) one of the most degraded watersheds in the country according to the CADETI Advisory Commission on Land Degradation. Livestock and agricultural activities in areas with steep slopes and poor vegetation cover have led to its deterioration. The watershed requires immediate changes in production systems and improved management of small-scale livestock activities to arrest soil erosion and further degradation, and to start recovering its soil productivity. To achieve this, the following barriers at the community level need to be overcome:

- Limited capacity of local communities to participate in watershed management bodies and for sustainable land management (SLM) policy advocacy at the local level.
- Lack of knowledge and skills to apply sustainable land management methods to their farms;
- Insufficient information on and difficulty to access technologies for soil and water conservation and to benefit from financial resources available for SLM in various government and non-government programs.

2.3 Immediate and development objectives of the project

The development objective of the Project is “*to conserve critical ecosystems of Costa Rica and mitigate climate change by supporting the implementation of national policies on biodiversity conservation and carbon neutrality, while also contributing to communities’ sustainable livelihoods.*”

The Project objective is “*Global environmental benefits secured through community-based initiatives and actions that address habitat fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity in twelve biological corridors linking 8 Protected Areas and their buffer zones.*”

The project has four immediate objectives (or outcomes in the project strategic framework)

Outcome 1: Community-based actions mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes in biological corridors and PA buffer zones

Outcome 2: GHG emissions reduced and carbon stocks increased through community-based actions

Outcome 3: Conservation of productive lands and restoration of degraded lands contribute to sustainability and improved local livelihoods

Outcome 4: Community-based organizations and their members with improved capacities and knowledge management for replication and upscaling of best practices

2.4 Baseline Indicators established

Indicators and baseline situation is defined in the Project Document (PRODOC) as summarized in the following table.

Project Goal: To conserve critical ecosystems of Costa Rica and mitigate climate change by supporting the implementation of national policies on biodiversity conservation and carbon neutrality, while also contributing to communities' sustainable livelihoods.	
Project Objective: Global environmental benefits secured through community-based initiatives and actions that address habitat fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity in twelve biological corridors linking 8 Protected Areas and their buffer zones	
Indicator	Baseline
Increased area of sustainably managed production landscapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 biological corridors • Buffer zones of 8 PAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32,000 ha under sustainable management by communities in the geographic areas of the project
Reduced degraded areas in the Jesus Maria watershed and increased vegetation cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD. Watershed baseline assessment under preparation
Reduced GHG emissions resulting from rural production activities, use of fuelwood, and from forest fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 254,000 tCO₂ e/year due to forest fires (equivalent to approx. 1,778.96 ha/year burnt) • Other values for project area will be determined during inception phase
Carbon stocks increased through protection of forests and reforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon stock values to be determined for project area at inception
Replication of successful initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None among communities in project areas
Outcome 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based actions mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes in biological corridors and PA buffer zones 	
Indicator	Baseline
Increased number of biological corridor management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 biological corridor management plan (Pajaro Campana BC)
Increased percentage of community-based initiatives that obtain certification with national or international standards	10% currently achieve certification. The following certifications have been achieved by communities nationally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic production certification: 14 • Tourism sustainability certificate by ICT: 4 • "Blue Flag" ecological certification: 3 • Fair trade certification: 5
Increased number of community conservation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no community conservation areas in the project geographic regions
Increased number of communities benefiting from Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 communities supported by SGP currently receive PES
Increased number of families generating income from sustainable livelihood activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 families supported by SGP obtain income from sustainable livelihood activities

Outcome 2: GHG emissions reduced and carbon stocks increased through community-based actions	
Indicator	Baseline
Increased renewable energy capacity installed: - By SGP - From replication	Existing capacity at community level in project area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biogas: 300 • Solar dryers: 5 • Micro-hydro: 0 • PV panels: 10
Increased electricity and heat produced from renewable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27,600 kWh
Improved energy efficiency in rural productive activities - By SGP - From replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rural community tourism venture (30 rural hostels) currently applies EE practices • Efficient electric engines in project area: 0 • CFL: 0
Improved credit availability for RE and/or EE in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit availability and conditions to be determined for project geographic area at project inception
Increased number of crews in the rural areas able to prevent and manage forest fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 fire fighting crews trained and equipped
Increased number of communities trained and with seedlings to undertake reforestation in degraded areas or to increase biomass in agricultural lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no communities undertaking reforestation in the project areas
Outcome 3: Conservation of productive lands and restoration of degraded lands contribute to sustainability and improved local livelihoods	
Indicator	Baseline
Increased number of communities contributing to the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Desertification in the Jesus Maria Watershed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Plan has been developed but no communities in the project area are implementing actions identified in the Plan
Reduced degraded area in community lands in the Jesus Maria basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD. Watershed status assessment underway
Increased sources of investment at local level for SLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no investment in SLM in the project area
Increased family income resulting from SLM activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average rural family income is \$300 monthly
Outcome 4: Community-based organizations and their members with improved capacities and knowledge management for replication and upscaling of best practices	
Indicator	Baseline
Increased community contributions to national policy and legislation related to project thematic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGP-related groups are actively promoting 2 law proposals (Laws promoting Organic agri-culture and Rural Community Tourism) in Congress
Increased number of eligible projects demonstrating community understanding of global environmental issues and their local solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 30% of projects received are eligible • Most communities within the Jesus Maria watershed and BC lack understanding of global environmental issues
Rate of successful community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of SGP-funded projects achieve project objectives
Increased number of contributions from SGP Costa Rica to local and national publications and media, as well as to knowledge products of the Global SGP and UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SGP results and activities are published, announced or quoted by the media at local and national levels at least twice a year

Analyzing this table it becomes evident that the results logic is good but perhaps there are too many indicators for a project who implements through funding proposals submitted on a voluntary basis by other organizations.

2.5 Main stakeholders

GEF/SGP-CR has formed mutually beneficial long-standing relationships with national and community level initiatives and partners (public and private sector), and will continue to seek synergies in the coming operational phase. Local communities located in the buffer zones of the selected PAs and biological corridors are the most important partners for SGP. Of these, the population in 24 indigenous territories, some 63,876 people, accounts for approximately 1.7% of the total population. SGP-CR coordinates with the associations that serve as Local Government within indigenous territories, recognized by indigenous law as the organizations responsible for internal and external affairs of the community. SGP also coordinates at the national level with CONAI- the National Commission of Indigenous Affairs and the *Mesa Nacional Indígena*. It should be noted that SGP-CR has worked in 22 of the 24 indigenous territories in previous program phases.

The main project stakeholders and partners and their roles are presented in the table below.

Institution/stakeholder	Role/type of coordination
Ministry of the Environment (MINAE) - National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), Biological Corridors National Program	This is the office, within SINAC, responsible for implementation of the Biological Corridors System, where SGP funded activities will be located. SGP grant activities will be coordinated with them. The Biological Corridors National Program will also provide co-financing and technical assistance to SGP grantees.
MINAE - CADETI-Advisory Commission on Land Degradation	This organization is the national focal point for Land Degradation, and is the organization with which SGP will coordinating actions on sustainable land management.
National Biodiversity Institute (INBio)	INBio is a key national biodiversity research and policy institution and it also implements projects. It is an SGP partner, providing co-financing, technical assistance and applied research support to grantees. INBio also works on climate change issues, in particular on ecosystems-based adaptation.
State Universities: University of Costa Rica, National University, and Distance Learning University	These organizations are key SGP partners as they carry out research on SGP-related subjects and locations throughout the country. They are also active in providing training at the local level on subjects relevant to SGP and its grantees.
Costa Rica Organic Production Movement (MAOCO)	SGP and MAOCO have a very well established partnership jointly funding many community-based initiatives related to organic production, pesticides use reduction, land conservation, etc.
National Network of Biological Corridors	This is a network of organizations (Governmental, NGOs, CBO, etc.) active on different aspects of conservation and sustainable use of resources in the officially designated biological corridors of the country. It is basically a coordination structure, but different joint initiatives, co-financing, technical assistance and training actions are implemented by SGP with this Network partners.
“Marine and coastal biodiversity, capacity development and adaptation to climate change (BIOMARCC)” initiative	BIOMARCC is part of the “Costa Rica Forever” initiative and is co-funded by the German Government. BIOMARCC has interventions in critical coastal zones where SGP has been active supporting local fishing communities, and therefore, collaboration between the two programmes has already taken place. Examples of this collaboration are the implementation of pilot projects aimed at supporting sustainable fishing practices, oyster harvesting, and mangrove conservation. Under this SGP/FSP collaboration with BIOMARCC is particularly relevant to the coastal areas of targeted biological corridors, such as Talamanca-Caribe, Paso de la Danta, and AMISTOSA.

IUCN	IUCN is a member of the SGP NSC. SGP will coordinate actions with three IUCN initiatives: IUCN-DPCL Partnership Promoting Sustainable Environmental Alliances, Environmental Law Fund, and a recent project on watersheds and micro-watersheds, in Sixaola bi-national watershed, with German funds.
National Commission of Indigenous Affairs (CONAI), Mesa Nacional Indígena and National Indigenous Board	CONAI and MNI are members of the SGP NSC, and are responsible for carrying out the technical analysis of project proposals to be implemented in indigenous territories. SGP actions with indigenous development associations are coordinated with CONAI.

2.6 Expected Results

The expected results of the Project are also included in the Project Strategic Results Framework (SRF). The following table presents a summary of the project expected results.

Project Goal: To conserve critical ecosystems of Costa Rica and mitigate climate change by supporting the implementation of national policies on biodiversity conservation and carbon neutrality, while also contributing to communities' sustainable livelihoods.	
Project Objective: Global environmental benefits secured through community-based initiatives and actions that address habitat fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity in twelve biological corridors linking 8 Protected Areas and their buffer zones	
Indicator	Targets End of Project
Increased area of sustainably managed production landscapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 biological corridors • Buffer zones of 8 PAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An additional 180,000 ha of community lands under sustainable management
Reduced degraded areas in the Jesus Maria watershed and increased vegetation cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,300 ha with reforestation and forest regeneration • 29,500 ha under sustainable management by CBOs that administer water in the river basin
Reduced GHG emissions resulting from rural production activities, use of fuelwood, and from forest fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,000 tCO₂ e avoided in four years through EE and RE activities (see table in Annex F attached) • 12,500 tCO₂ e/year mitigated (approx. 50,000 tCO₂ in 4 years) from avoided forest fires, equivalent to 87.5 ha of forest fires avoided/year (142.78 tCO₂ e/ha) See Annex F
Carbon stocks increased through protection of forests and reforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83,237 tCO₂ e sequestered in 3 years through reforestation of 2,300 ha (12.06 tCO₂ e ha/year) and through the protection of 60,000 ha of native forests.
Replication of successful initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 types of successful interventions (e.g., silviculture, organic agriculture, ecotourism, RE, etc.) replicated by at least 6 communities each within biological corridors and PA buffer zones

Outcome 1:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based actions mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes in biological corridors and PA buffer zones 	
Indicator	Targets End of Project
Increased number of biological corridor management plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 biological corridor management plans that include PA buffer zones developed
Increased percentage of community-based initiatives that obtain certification with national or international standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 50% of community sustainable livelihood initiatives supported by SGP obtain environmental certification
Increased number of community conservation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 new community protected areas increase by at least 2,000 ha community conservation areas in Costa Rica
Increased number of communities benefiting from Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 additional communities in the project area receive PES
Increased number of families generating income from sustainable livelihood activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 800 additional families will generate income from sustainable production practices (eg., sustainable use of species for handcraft production, ecotourism, agroforestry, organic apiculture, etc.)
Outcome 2:	
GHG emissions reduced and carbon stocks increased through community-based actions	
Indicator	Targets End of Project
Increased renewable energy capacity installed: - By SGP - From replication	Additional capacity at community level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodigestors: SGP 300, through replication 600 Solar dryers: SGP 4, through replication 16 Micro-hydro: SGP 6, through replication 20 PV panels: SGP 5, through replication 10
Increased electricity and heat produced from renewable sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8,054,600 kWh more produced from renewable sources
Improved energy efficiency in rural productive activities - By SGP - From replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% reduction of energy consumption in 30 rural hostels Energy efficient electric engines: SGP 50, through replication 100 CFL: SGP 500, through replication 1,500
Improved credit availability for RE and/or EE in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three financial institutions providing credit for RE and EE to communities in project area and a minimum of 5 credits approved during lifetime of project
Increased number of crews in the rural areas able to prevent and manage forest fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 additional crews trained, equipped, and active
Increased number of communities trained and with seedlings to undertake reforestation in degraded areas or to increase biomass in agricultural lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 communities reforesting priority areas indentified by biological corridors' management plans and planting trees in their agricultural lands
Outcome 3:	
Conservation of productive lands and restoration of degraded lands contribute to sustainability and improved local livelihoods	
Indicator	Targets End of Project
Increased number of communities contributing to the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Desertification in the Jesus Maria Watershed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan adopted and under implementation by 8 communities within the watershed 40 leaders in the 8 communities trained in techniques related to integrated watershed management 12 representatives participating actively in the Watershed Management Commission
Reduced degraded area in community lands in the Jesus Maria basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29,500 ha in the Jesus Maria watershed managed for environmental sustainability
Increased sources of investment at local level for SLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 new communities in the Jesus Maria watershed receive PES At least 50% of SLM community initiatives financed by SGP receive support from national government institutions for their continuity
Increased family income resulting from SLM activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% increased income for families involved in sustainable production activities 50% increased income for women participating in SLM activities 75% increased income for indigenous communities participating in SLM activities

Outcome 4: Community-based organizations and their members with improved capacities and knowledge management for replication and upscaling of best practices	
Indicator	Targets End of Project
Increased community contributions to national policy and legislation related to project thematic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 additional national policies and legislation related to project thematic priorities passed during FSP execution.
Increased number of eligible projects demonstrating community understanding of global environmental issues and their local solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of projects are eligible after implementation of capacity development activities • 100 communities participating in SGP-funded projects able to articulate the relevance of their project goals and activities to related global environmental issues
Rate of successful community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate of success of SGP-funded projects during GEF-5 remains 90% or higher
Increased number of contributions from SGP Costa Rica to local and national publications and media, as well as to knowledge products of the Global SGP and UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 knowledge products published or quoted by the media during the lifetime of the project

3. FINDINGS

3.1 PROJECT DESIGN / FORMULATION

3.1.1 Understanding the SGP nature as a Project

A first key aspect that should be kept in mind when analyzing the SGP OP5 Project in Costa Rica is that this is an unusual project. A typical Project defines results to be achieved, inputs to be used to generate outputs to reach the results (all evidenced by indicators) and the required resources (funding an time) to perform the activities. The SGP Project does not work this way.

The SGP was created by GEF as a funding window to support projects from CBOs (community based organizations) and small and medium NGOs. It was established to balance the portfolio of full-size and medium-sized projects aimed at Governmental organizations and, to some extent, large NGOs (national and international).

Because of this origin, the SGP was established as a GEF corporate program located in UNDP and a few implementing organizations (originally UNDP, UNEP and World Bank). This GEF-UNDP SGP has a centralized unit at UNDP Headquarters and from there the national SGPs (as the Costa Rica SGP) were coordinated and funded. The national SGPs, in turn, channeled small funds (usually less than US\$ 50,000) to CBOs and NGOs in the form of small grants with specific requisites.

This initiative was highly successful as documented in different evaluations and it was renewed with each one of the different GEF OPs. Therefore, and given both its continuity and *modus operandi* these national SGPs became programs, in the sense of long-term interventions based on the demands from local communities and civil society.

The SGP success led to increased demand from the countries, quick program growth and the expected problems of managing a program in dozens of different countries with a limited budget. Therefore, at the end of OP4 there was a decision to shift the most successful and best established national SGPs to a different category. The chosen way to accommodate these new graduated SGPs was to incorporate them as full-size projects within the GEF national portfolios under the STAR Allocation starting with GEF OP5.

Therefore, at the end of OP5, these so called “projects” are evaluated in a similar way to the traditional GEF full-size projects. Obviously, it is necessary to briefly recall the SGP history to understand that this type of full-size projects have some very specific characteristics that should not be forgotten at evaluation time.

A key aspect to be considered is that SGP Projects do not implement directly. They don't have staff, resources, equipment or mandate for direct implementation of activities leading to results and fulfillment of agreed indicators. These projects work by opening calls for proposals from CBOs and NGOs with a scope of areas of work based on the Project Document; therefore, the implementation of activities and achievements of results depends on the interest and willingness of other organizations to submit proposals within the defined scope of actions. If the organizations do not submit proposals the calls go unanswered and there are no actions made, money spent or results achieved.

Considering these aspects it is easy to understand that different aspects of the planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle are significantly affected by these conditions of operation and they need to be considered when assessing the different components and parts of the project cycle.

3.1.2 Analysis of Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)

The analysis of the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) is divided in two aspects: SRF Logic and structure, and SRF Indicators and targets

SRF Logic and structure

The analysis of the Strategic Results Framework in terms of logic and structures led to the following results, supported by the observations and interviews carried out during the field visits:

1. The project's objectives and components were clear, practicable and reasonably feasible within the established timeframe.
2. The capacities of the executing institution (UNDP) and the local counterparts were properly considered at project design.
3. Lessons from other relevant projects were incorporated in the project design.
4. The partnership arrangements were properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval.
5. Counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements were in place at project entry.

SRF Indicators and Targets

The SRF includes 24 Indicators and 32 Targets to be achieved in four years on the basis of more than a hundred different projects implemented by different organizations whose objectives, indicators and targets are proposed by the project planners with these projects being selected on the basis of an open call.

It is clear from the above paragraph that there are two different realities whose matching needs to be improved. On the one hand, there is the usual structure of a GEF full-size project (usually implemented by one organization that spends the funds directly or through contracts). This model is consistent with the existing SRF as the implementing organization has all the means required to achieve the targets.

On the other hand, there is the SGP implementing structure that works on the base of call for proposals aimed to CBOs and NGOs. These calls define the GEF-SGP areas of interest for the proposals but sometimes there are no proposals for some areas or themes of the calls, or the presented proposals are not adequate or, most frequently, the indicators and targets of those proposals do not match precisely the SGP targets.

This situation led to the allocation of a significant amount of work to tracking, monitoring and evaluating projects, and then to aggregate the information in a meaningful way to be able to report to UNDP and GEF. The SGP Costa Rica was able to deal with this task, even in the area of climate change where a whole set of new measurements was specifically devised to comply with the reporting needs.

A direct consequence of the efforts demanded by this process is a clear work overload for a very small National Coordination team (two persons) that was extended to a third just to be able to comply with the basic administration requirements including M&E; more on these subjects at the following pertinent sections.

3.1.3 Assumptions and Risks

Assumptions and risks were properly considered at project design.

Risks

The main risks identified and rated in the PRODOC were:

1. Running a grants program with civil society organizations that have a low level of technical and management capacity. RATING: Low
2. Climate variability fueled by the climate change process. RATING: Medium
3. Weak governance systems may delay or impede adequate land use planning and management in the biological corridors. RATING: Medium
4. Difficulty for communities in accessing markets for goods and services produced with SGP support. RATING: Medium-low
5. Other exogenous risks (economic crisis, political instability, etc.). RATING: Low

The evidence gathered at the TE about these risks and their rating corroborated what was established in the PRODOC. Perhaps those rating as “medium” were slightly over-rated because none of them posed serious threats to the implementation of SGP projects, with a very few exceptions that led to the cancelation of projects.

Assumptions

They are included in the Strategic Results Framework. At the Project Objective level, the most important assumption is that the deforestation rate in Costa Rica will remain close to 0% during the lifetime of the project, and therefore, habitat fragmentation will not increase in the project geographic areas. This is a very important assumption, because project activities are designed to improve ecological connectivity rather than avoiding new habitat fragmentation.

3.1.4 Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design

This SGP Project incorporates lessons and experiences gained from all previous phases of the process. The current SGP project inherits around 20 years of experience in working with CBOs, NGOs and other organizations and several aspects learned from that experience were used to design this project.

There are a number of previous GEF initiatives that have contributed to advancing ecosystem conservation in Costa Rica in the areas prioritized by SGP. The GEF “Ecomarket Project” allowed extending payment for ecosystem services (PES) to indigenous territories and communities in biological corridors. Other previous GEF initiatives are Conservation International’s Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund activities in Costa Rica, and ACICAFOC, which supported integrated ecosystem management actions in Tortuguero, La Amistad, Osa, Corcovado and Chirripó National Parks. Prior GEF investment in Costa Rica’s protected areas has been concentrated in La Amistad, Chirripó and Corcovado NP, specifically in infrastructure and equipment, and in the establishment of trust funds in Chirripó and Corcovado to finance conservation activities in buffer zones.

Among the lessons gained from own and other projects experience it is useful to highlight the evolution of project regionalization. At the initial stages the calls for proposals were organized for the entire region,; from there the process evolved into a regionalization by political division (State, Municipality) and from there to the current system of Large Ecosystems.

Other important lesson is the importance of requesting organizations interested in participating in the calls for proposals to register properly with the SGP before launching the pertinent calls.

The monitoring and evaluation system has also evolved and achieved a sophisticated level of operation. It will continue evolving during the new phases in order to adapt to the changing requirements of GEF, UNDP and the partner organizations.

3.1.5 Planned stakeholder participation

In a large and complex project such as SGP there are different stakeholders who participate in different ways using different mechanisms.

A key stakeholder participation mechanism is the National Steering Committee (NSC) composed of individuals from organizations independent from SGP and the partner and executing organizations. The NSC members are appointed by the UNDP Resident Representative with clearance by the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor.

The NSC is integrated by government and non-government organizations with a non-government majority, a UNDP representative, and individuals with expertise in the GEF Focal Areas. It is responsible for grant selection and approval, and for deciding the overall strategy of the SGP in the country. The Government is usually represented by the GEF Operational Focal Point or by another high level representative of relevant ministries or institutions. The National Coordination reports to the NSC on Country Program progress, to the UNDP RR as

primary supervisor, and to CPMT regarding the SGP Operational Guidelines. Therefore, several key stakeholders are involved through the NSC.

Other mechanisms are the informal partner organizations, labeled as “informal” because they operate jointly with the SGP on the basis of local opportunities and needs and without specific formal agreements. This group includes NGOs, different units and programs in academic organizations, cooperatives, different Governmental agencies operating in rural areas in specific tasks, etc. who provide technical advice and assistance to different CBOs complementing SGP activities and/or providing support to keep processes working after the SGP grants are finished.

All these mechanisms, formal and informal, seem to be fairly efficient in disseminating SGP calls and lines of action and also to bring information, interests and priorities from local organizations and CBOs to the SGP, directly through the National Coordination or to the NSC. In any case, this flow of information is very useful and used by the NSC in their decision making and orientation to the SGP.

3.1.6 Replication approach

The project emphasizes replication and up-scaling within the selected geographical areas where it is active. SGP financed field interventions are selected by the NSC based on their replication potential.

Moreover, the Project Results Framework includes an overall indicator and target concerning replication results. It is expected that each of 5 different types of interventions tested with SGP support will be replicated by at least 6 other communities within the various biological corridors.

In terms of promoting replication, activities under Component 4 include policy development, knowledge management, networking, and capacity development of community organizations and their members, which are all essential for replication and upscaling.

The strengthened capacities of SGP stakeholders contribute to policy and legislation development related to the Project’s thematic priorities improving conditions for community-based conservation and carbon-neutral rural development. SGP provides a unique avenue for testing national policies and norms on the ground and to identify policy gaps or issues that impede policy implementation. Improved access to existing financial incentives such as PES is another way to foster replication and upscaling of successful interventions.

SGP also helps to identify best practices and make this information available to other communities and development practitioners to enhance uptake by other communities within the project target areas and beyond.

In terms of contributions to aggregated country-level information, the SGP reports on carbon (CO₂) production and sequestration will feed data into the Costa Rica carbon balance and the progress towards achieving Carbon neutrality; it also helps to get relevant lessons about how local small actions contribute to larger impacts on climate change mitigation.

3.1.7 UNDP comparative advantage

The UNDP Country Office is the business unit in UNDP for the SGP project and is responsible for ensuring that the project meets its objective and delivers on its targets. The Resident Representative signs the grant agreements with beneficiary organizations. The Country Office should also make available its expertise in various environment and development fields. It should also provide other types of support at the local level such as infrastructure and financial management services, as required. UNDP is also represented in the NSC, and should participate actively in NSC activities (SGP orientation, grant allocation and monitoring, etc.).

In the specific case of SGP Costa Rica the absence of UNOPS in the country led to the delegation of some of the UNOPS tasks to UNDP. While this is not an arrangement exclusive to Costa Rica, it is something to be highlighted as it represents a small departure from the original arrangement for SGP upgraded programs because UNDP is taking a larger administration role than planned.

While some of the listed activities and duties can be performed by other organizations, it is evident that UNDP has some comparative advantages in some aspects relevant to SGP. Among them its specialization in development issues, its relationships with the whole range of Governmental organizations related to environment and development and its access to specialized networks of conservation and development experts.

A UNDP shortcoming in relation to SGP is that most of UNDP activities take place at high political and institutional levels, and this implies a large gap in relation to the community-based focus and activities of SGP. UNDP usually has a number of large projects operating in the field, but in most cases the focus of the key stakeholders of these projects are not CBOs. So, even when these UNDP projects are helpful in bridging the mentioned gap, there is always a risk for misunderstandings, different views and priorities, etc. This seems to be a systemic issue and probably not exclusive of the situation in Costa Rica.

3.1.8 Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

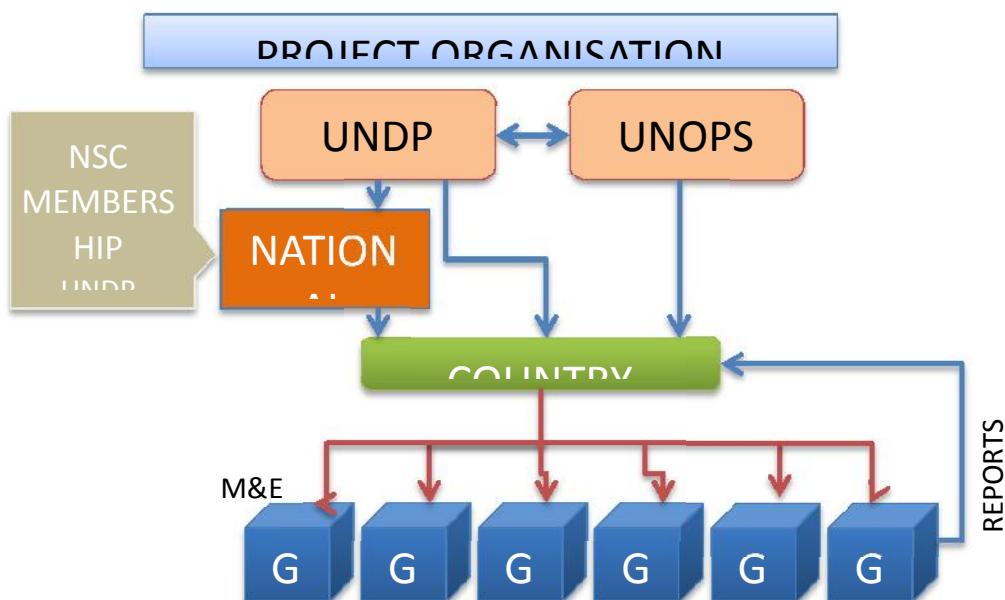
The links between the SGP and other related interventions in the regions are summarized in the following table.

Institution / Project	Initiative/ Program	Type of coordination
GEF Project - UNDP / Ministry of the Environment - Conservation Areas National System (SINAC)	Removing Barriers to Sustainability of PA	This is a 5-year GEF Full Size project that started in early 2010 focused on removing administrative, financial and organizational barriers constraining Protected Areas sustainability. Most of the components of this Project are aimed to Protected Areas and the institution itself (SINAC) with limited attention to actions outside Protected Areas. SGP will complement this Project through its actions focused in buffer zones, mainly in indigenous territories and in biological corridors exclusively.

FONAFIFO- National Fund for Forestry Financing	Eco-markets	FONAFIFO is the national institution in charge of the implementation of the PES Program in Costa Rica. SGP coordinates with FONAFIFO the involvement of local communities, indigenous peoples, and the Jesus Maria Basin to access this type of environmental incentive, mainly in two directions: i. forest conservation and ii. Improve connectivity of the biological corridors.
UN-REDD and Forest Carbon Partnership Initiatives	Various	Costa Rica is part of these two initiatives. SGP will therefore seek to cooperate with the national institutions in charge of these initiatives to ensure there is adequate coordination and to explore possibilities to leverage resources to achieve the project objectives both in the biodiversity focal area and for forest carbon. It should be noted that the SGP Country Program Manager participated during the consultations to develop the REDD+ support program to be funded by the World Bank and will continue participating during its implementation.

3.1.9 Management arrangements

The following figure shows the project organizational structure. The roles and responsibilities of the various components are summarized immediately after.



According to the approved Project Document, the management arrangements for the SGP OP5 projects are as follows:

1. UNDP provides overall program oversight and take responsibility for standard GEF project cycle management services beyond assistance and oversight of project design and negotiation, including project monitoring, periodic evaluations, troubleshooting, and reporting to the GEF. UNDP also provides high level technical and managerial support through the recently established Communities Cluster within EEG, and from a UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) and other members of the regional teams, who are responsible for project oversight for all upgraded country program projects. SGP Central Project Management Team (CPMT) monitors for compliance of upgraded country programs with SGP core policies and procedures.
2. In accordance with the global SGP Operational Guidelines that guide overall project implementation in Costa Rica, and in keeping with past best practice, the UNDP Resident Representative appoints the National Steering Committee (NSC) members. The NSC, composed of government and non-government organizations with a non-government majority, a UNDP representative, and individuals with expertise in the GEF Focal Areas, is responsible for grant selection and approval and for determining the overall strategy of the SGP in the country. NSC members serve without remuneration and rotate periodically in accordance with its rules of procedure. The Government is usually represented by the GEF Operational Focal Point or by another high level representative of relevant ministries or institutions. The NSC assesses the performance of the Country Program Manager (formerly National Coordinator) with input from the UNDP RR, the RTA, and UNOPS. The NSC also contributes to bridging community-level experiences with national policy-making.
3. The SGP Costa Rica Technical Committee, which is unique to Costa Rica and whose members also work pro-bono, continues advising the Country Team on priority thematic issues or areas of intervention, such as organic agriculture or biological corridors.
4. The Country Office is the business unit in UNDP for the SGP project and is responsible to ensure the project meets its objective and delivers on its targets. The Resident Representative signs the grant agreements with beneficiary organizations on behalf of UNOPS. The Country Office makes available its expertise in various environment and development fields as shown below. It also provides other types of support at the local level such as infrastructure and financial management services, as required. UNDP is represented in the NSC, and actively participates in grant monitoring activities.
5. The country team composed of a National Coordinator (also known as Country Program Manager in CEO Endorsement), Program Assistant, and a Secretary recruited through competitive processes, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. This includes supporting NSC strategic work and grant selection by developing technical papers, undertaking ex-ante technical reviews of project proposals; taking responsibility for monitoring the grant portfolio and for providing technical assistance to grantees during project design and implementation; mobilizing cash and in-kind resources; preparing reports for UNDP, GEF and other donors; implementing a capacity development program for communities, CBOs and NGOs, as well as a communications and knowledge management strategy to ensure adequate visibility of GEF investments, and disseminating good practices and lessons learnt.
6. Grants are selected by the NSC from proposals submitted by CBOs and NGOs through calls for proposals in specific thematic and geographic areas relevant to the SGP. Although

government organizations cannot receive SGP grants, every effort are made to coordinate grant implementation with relevant line ministries, decentralized institutions, universities and local government authorities to ensure their support, create opportunities for co-financing, and provide feedback on policy implementation on the ground. Contributions from and cooperation with the private sector are also sought.

7. SGP utilizes consultants for specialized services, mostly for baseline data collection, capacity development activities, business development support, and to assist grantees when specialized expertise is required, or for tasks that require an external independent view such as the mid-term and terminal evaluations. Civil society organization networks such as the Community Tourism Association play an important backstopping role in areas such as marketing and technical assistance to community rural tourism activities. These networks also benefit from SGP grants.
8. UNOPS provides country program implementation services, including human resources management, budgeting, accounting, grant disbursement, auditing, and procurement. UNOPS is responsible for SGP's financial management and provides periodic financial reports to UNDP. The UNOPS SGP Standard Operating Procedures guide the financial and administrative management of the project.

As commented before, some UNOPS responsibilities were transferred by agreement to the UNDP Country Office in Costa Rica due to UNOPS limited operational capacity within the country.

Implications of these arrangements

The described arrangements were a first attempt to define a reasonably appropriate structure for the operation of this new type of operations within the GEF: the GEF-UNDP SGP Country Programs

As described in Section 3.1.1 Understanding the SGP nature as a Project, the SGP Country Program is not a typical GEF full-size project; it is the result of the evolution of the GEF initiative to establish and operate a window for grants directed to CBOs, NGOs and similar small organizations.

Initially, this window was operated as a GEF-UNDP corporate program, centralized at UNDP HQ and coordinated with the UNDP Country Offices. The main concept underlying this decision was the GEF interest in maintaining this window as autonomous as possible from governmental influence as governmental organizations have their own windows to access GEF funds.

Therefore, the small-grants window was set up under a centralized unit outside any recipient country and the Country Programs were run by a National Steering Committee with representation of many different sectors (Government, UNDP Country Office, academia, civil society, and independent experts) in a way that limited the possibilities for any sector or organization to control the process.

This arrangement proved to be very successful as evidenced by the widespread adoption of the SGP throughout the world, its continuity for more than 20 years in an environment totally focused on limited 3-5 year projects, and the willingness of many Governments to consistently allocate larger proportions of their GEF allocation to the SGP.

One of the emerging problems of the new structure for the upgraded SGP projects is that the former reporting line between the National Coordination and the centralized SGP structure (CPMT) was replaced by a new structure of multiple reporting lines (4): to UNDP-CO, To UNDP-CPMT; to UNOPS and to the NSC.

Under this particular arrangement all things worked well as long as there are coincidences between the different reporting lines: fortunately, this was the case in SGP Costa Rica during OP5. Nevertheless, the risk for conflicts or lack of proper direction remains embedded in the system if the mentioned reporting lines disagree strongly on specific issues or priorities.

Another aspect to be pointed out is that by putting the SGP within the STAR allocation system, the SGP as the GEF funding window for NGOs and CBOs was actually put under Governmental decision. In other words, the GEF window for NGOs and CBOs is no longer independent from Government as initially agreed when the SGP was established. Moreover, if for any reason any Government decides not to allocate STAR funds to the SGP, the GED window for NGOs and CBOs in that country will be closed.

These two last issues have a systemic nature as they affect the entire SGP Country Program construction, and they are not specific or particular to the Costa Rica SGP.

3.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

3.2.1 Adaptive management

While adaptive management, understood as changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation, has been a constant characteristic of the SGP in Costa Rica, most of these adaptations took place when changing from phase to phase (OP to OP) and less during the implementation of a particular phase.

The experience in OP5 did not depart from this characteristic and it can be said that changes to project design and implementation were not significant. The same conclusion is also stated in the SGP APR/PIR of July 2014.

During 2014, the Project went through its MTR (Mid-Term Review). The MTR Report praised the Costa Rica SGP performance in general and made a few recommendations to be addressed before the end of the Project. This Terminal Evaluation found that all these MTR recommendations were properly addressed by the SGP as recommended.

3.2.2 Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

As adaptive management was not a key aspect of project implementation, the M&E system provided feedback in the planned way as it did in previous phases of the SGP and it helped in refining the operation of the system but this was not a key implementation feature of this OP5 project.

3.2.3 Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)

Project partnership arrangements, as described in the previous section (see 2.5), had two different components:

- i. Arrangements with the implementing/executing partners (UNOPS, UNDP, etc.)
- ii. Arrangements with local and national partners (NGOs, CBOs, national and local partners, etc.)

Based on the evidence gathered by both the MTR and now the TE both types of arrangements worked well and fluidly. Therefore there is no merit for further analysis of this in this report.

3.2.4 Project Finance & Co-financing

The PRODOC identified potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing reaching satisfactory co-financing ratios. As shown in the pertinent table below, the overall level of actual co-financing is better than planned, despite some non-fulfillment of expected contributions.

Generally speaking there is no evidence of problems with financial controls. The small-grants funds are disbursed directly by UNOPS through the UNDP CO to the beneficiaries, and SGP National Coordination provides the monitoring and evaluation controls ensuring that the expected results are achieved properly. The recipient organizations provide acceptable evidence (bills, accounting, bank accounts, checks, etc.) about the right use of the funds.

This evaluation also made an analysis of the organizations receiving funds in OP5, looking for duplications in funding and did not find a single case. A complementary analysis was made comparing organizations funded during OP4 and OP5 and there were a small number of organizations funded in consecutive phases (and this is allowed); the analysis showed that these organizations with consecutive funding presented different proposals with different tasks and results and, in most cases, with clear evidence that the funding was supportive of evolving processes in these organizations, a feature that the SGP is expected to support when these processes lead to sustainability of results. As shown later in Sections 3.3.6 (Impact) and 3.3.7 (Sustainability) this consecutive funding resulted in significant sustainable impacts in different areas.

The implemented audits do not show significant problems regarding the management of funds.

Co-financing tables

This aspect will be analyzed in two tables. The first one shows actual commitment and disbursement by organization. The second will present similar information by type of financing.

Actual commitment and disbursing by organization

#	Sources of Co-Funding	Name of CoFinancier (source)	Type of Cofinancing	Amount at design	Disbursed until Dec 2014	Difference
				(USD)	(USD)	(USD)*
1	National Government	CADETI (Costa Rica Commission for Land Degradation)	Grant	0,00	261.228,43	261.228,43
2	National Government	CADETI (Costa Rica Commission for Land Degradation)	In-Kind	638.400,00	1.180.862,38	542.462,38
3	GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant	1.000.000,00	280.000,00	-720.000,00
4	GEF Agency	UNDP	In-Kind	100.000,00	100.000,00	0,00
5	CBO / NGO	Grantee organizations	Grant	1.000.000,00	408.591,18	-591.408,82
6	CBO / NGO	Grantee organizations	In-Kind	1.600.000,00	2.289.375,64	689.375,64
7	Private sector	Various	Grant	0,00	220.162,00	220.162,00
8	Private sector	Various	In-Kind	100.000,00	55.594,49	-44.405,51
9	Bilateral agencies	Various	Grant	125.000,00	215.144,21	90.144,21
10	Bilateral agencies	Various	In-Kind	0,00	170.712,98	170.712,98
11	Other organizations	Various	Grant	0,00	67.429,95	67.429,95
12	Other organizations	Various	In-Kind	61.600,00	296.245,23	234.645,23
Total:				4.625.000,00	5.545.346,49	920.346,49

* Positive differences: actual larger than design.

Negative differences: actual smaller than design

The previous table shows clearly that:

1. The National Government (through CADETI) widely surpassed its commitments
2. UNDP did not meet its commitments at the TE time
3. Grantee organizations (CBOs and NGOs) surpassed their commitments
4. The private sector, bilateral agencies and other organizations also surpassed their commitments
5. Overall, the actual co-financing surpassed the one agreed at design by almost 20%, that is more than US\$ 900,000.- at the TE time.

Planned and actual co-financing by type and source

Sources of Co-Funding	GRANT			IN KIND		
	Amount at design	Disbursed until Dec 2014	Difference	Amount at design	Disbursed until Dec 2014	Difference
National Government	0,00	261.228,43	261.228,43	638.400,00	1.180.862,38	542.462,38
GEF Agency	1.000.000,00	280.000,00	-720.000,00	100.000,00	100.000,00	0,00
CBO	1.000.000,00	408.591,18	-591.408,82	1.600.000,00	2.289.375,64	689.375,64
Private sector	0,00	220.162,00	220.162,00	100.000,00	55.594,49	-44.405,51
Bilateral agencies	125.000,00	215.144,21	90.144,21	0,00	170.712,98	170.712,98
Other organizations	0,00	67.429,95	67.429,95	61.600,00	296.245,23	234.645,23
TOTAL	2.125.000,00	1.452.555,77	-672.444,23	2.500.000,00	4.092.790,72	1.592.790,72

The above table shows the same information as the previous one, but organized in a way that portrays better the situation with grant funds and in-kind fund.

The following conclusions are drawn:

1. Grant or cash contributions were less than planned by 30%. The key source of this situation was the inability of both UNDP and grantee organizations to meet their commitments in this area, at least in terms of the figures available at Terminal Evaluation time.
2. Fortunately all other sources surpassed their cash/grant contributions allowing to reduce the difference by almost 50%.
3. In-kind contributions were 60% higher than planned in general. All sources (excepting the private sector) surpassed (or met in the case the UNDP) their agreed in-kind contribution.
4. Overall, the over-achievement in in-kind contributions (60%) was significantly higher than the under-achievement in cash/grant contributions (-30%), ending in an overall balance in which actual co-financing at the time of the Terminal evaluation was significantly larger (20%) that planned at design.

3.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (*)

M&E Design at entry

The M&E design at entry was very thorough, and it definitely benefited from the SGP's many years and phases of operation.

A summary of its key aspect shows that the M&E system works at different interconnected levels:

- Country Program level
 - Project start
 - Quarterly Project Reports using UNDP platforms (UNDP Enhanced Results Based Management Platform and ATLAS)
 - Annual Project Report
 - Mid-term Review (MTR)
 - End of Project Report
- Individual Grant M&E, including a detailed set of activities:
 - Ex-ante Visits
 - Field monitoring visits
 - Progress reports
 - Final report
 - Final Evaluation
 - Grant Project Audit

The SGP PRODOC also included an M&E Workplan and Budget

One essential component of the M&E system are the databases required to compile the relevant information coming from 120 projects funded by the SGP in order to be able to aggregate the individual grant results into the broader indicators agreed on the PRODOC.

This aspect was structured in two stages. The first one was completed before the MTR and included all aspects related with the Biodiversity Conservation and Land Degradation Focal Areas. At the MTR, the Climate Change component was not completed and it was not operational, an issue that led to a specific recommendation in the MTR. Now, at the time of the Terminal Evaluation, the Climate Change component was finished and incorporated into the overall system. Therefore, the SGP Costa Rica now has a fully operational a very remarkable system to track grants progress in very specific ways and to render aggregate figures to report on PRODOC indicators.

RATING OF M&E SYSTEM DESIGN AT ENTRY: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

M&E Implementation

The actual implementation of the M&E System during OP5 is impressive considering the dimensions of the required effort in terms of inception workshops, field visits, review of progress and final reports, final evaluation and audits. These activities are to be repeated for each one of the more than 120 projects funded by the SGP, just considering the routine M&E process.

During this Terminal evaluation twelve projects were visited *in-situ* and the results from the visits were contrasted with the different reports kept in the SGP database. The results of this contrasting exercise were satisfactory as the reports represented fairly well the actual situation found in the field. Similar exercises were run regarding other partner organizations working jointly with the SGP with similar satisfactory results.

Moreover, close examination of grant terminal documents (Final Report, Final External Evaluation and Final External Audit) as well as different interviews provided good evidence confirming the remarkable implementation of the monitoring visits and other planned M&E activities.

RATING OF M&E SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

Based on the two aspects (M&E Design and Implementation) described above, the rating of the overall quality of the M&E System is as follows.

RATING OF OVERALL QUALITY OF M&E: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

3.2.6 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (*)

The analysis of the implementing/executing arrangements was already described in the previous chapter (Section 3.1.9) under Management arrangements.

A particular characteristic of the arrangements for the SGP in Costa Rica is that UNDP plays a double role as GEF Implementing Agency (a GEF term) as well as being called upon by UNOPS, the Implementing Partner (a UNDP term), to deliver local project tasks through a special agreement and contact between them.

Therefore, the UNDP CO finds itself in a position that theoretically ensures a high level of leverage, in a context where all UNDP Projects are implemented under UNDP authority, and confronting a new and unusual case of a GEF full-sized project that is not operating the same as the others. In this context there is potential room for friction among the different parties; however these problems seems not to have risen in the case of SGP Costa Rica and all processes seem to work smoothly.

The MTR raised an issue about several undefined issues and vagaries of the SGP governance system that can be summarized in a simple question: who is the boss of the National Coordinator?: Is it the National Steering Committee? The UNDP Res Rep? The UNOPS officers handling the project? The Coordinator of SGP Country Programs at CPMT in UNDP HQ? These issues were already presented in detail previously in section 3.1.9 Management Arrangement / Implications; therefore, they will not be addressed again here.

While this MTR recommendation was not solved yet, it was addressed by the NSC in a meeting and transmitted to other parties. It seems that it became a specific issue that is addressed at the SGP system level because it affects the entire group of SGP Country Programs and not just Costa Rica.

In terms of the agreed commitments defined in the PRODOC both the implementation and the execution were very good. All agreed commitments were fulfilled and the Project ran smoothly with a few problems (e.g. discrepancies about consultants) that were finally solved without affecting the Project operation.

Therefore the Terminal evaluation rating for overall implementation / execution is “Highly satisfactory”.

RATING OF OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION / EXECUTION: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

3.3 PROJECT RESULTS

3.3.1 Overall results (*)

Introduction

The analysis of attainment of Objectives should be done based on the particular characteristics of the Costa Rica SGP Project described before in Section 3.1.1 of this Report: Understanding the SGP's nature as a project. Based on this criterion, the analysis of results was done at the level of Project Outcomes.

The SGP Upgrading Country Programme Project does not implement actions directly in order to achieve its results and indicators. The SGP defines a set of objectives, outcomes and indicators (aligned with the GEF priorities) and then works to achieve them through different calls for proposals to fund activities carried out by third parties (CBOs, NGOs and other) with SGP funding.

At the Terminal Evaluation time the compilation of results from individual grants and its aggregation to report on the Project Objectives indicators was not completed because only 44 of the 118 funded projects was terminated.

This situation has two implications:

1. The reporting to the GEF Tracking Tools was not done yet
2. In the absence of the above mentioned report the TE assessed the achievement of results based on the specific achievement of Outcomes.

SGP Costa Rica Areas of work and Grants distribution

During the OP5, subjected to this evaluation, the Costa Rica SGP funded 118 grant projects organized under the following thematic areas:

1. Community rural tourism
2. Biological Corridors management
3. Sustainable production (including organic agriculture, honey production, responsible fishing and handicrafts)
4. Forest fires management and natural resources protection
5. Natural Resources management (water resources)
6. Renewable energy and energy efficiency

These lines contributed to attain biodiversity conservation, climate change and land degradation outcomes and indicators. They were implemented in indigenous people's territories as well as biological corridors and buffer zones of protected areas.

The following table summarizes the number of projects per line of action

LINE OF ACTION	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
1. Community rural tourism	21
2. Biological Corridors management	22
3. Sustainable production (including organic agriculture, honey production, responsible fishing and handicrafts)	39
4. Forest fires management	11
5. Natural Resources management	14
6. Renewable energy and energy efficiency	11
TOTAL	118

Organized and aggregated by GEF Areas, the distribution of projects is:

AREA	NUMBER OF PROJECTS
Biodiversity conservation	76
Climate change	22
Knowledge management	20
TOTAL	118

Actually achieved results (Outcome level)

The grant projects implemented along the mentioned lines generated a number of products and results that were analyzed by the SGP National Coordination who allocated the specific contribution of each Project to the different outcomes and indicators agreed by the Project.

These results were used to develop the second PIR Report in 2014 and they were considered and assessed by the TE as shown in the following table

Outcomes achievement description and TE assessment

Description of Performance Indicator	Baseline Level 2011	Target Level (end of Project) 2015	Status at Terminal evaluation	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating
OUTCOME 1. Community-based actions mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes in biological corridors and PA buffer zones					
Increased number of biological corridor management plans	1 biological corridor management plan (Pajaro Campana BC)	At least 10 biological corridor management plans that include PA buffer zones developed	12 Biological Corridors Management Plans are in the process of elaboration and implementation. 5 Biological Corridors Management Plans have been finished: Ruta los Malekus, Pájaro Camana BC, Alexander Skutch BC, Paso de la Danta BC, Bosque del Agua. 7 Biological Corridors Management Plans are due in June 2015: Premontano Chirripo Saavegre BC, Paso de las Lapas BC, San Juan la Selva, Volcanica Central-Talamanca, Cerros de Jesus, Cerros de la Carpintera and Río Navarro-Río Sombrero. Target has been surpassed.	Project surpassed the target levels by 20% All Biological Corridors are included as priority ones by the national authorities (Biocorridors National Program)	HS
Increased percentage of community-based initiatives that obtain certification with national or international standards	10% currently achieve certification. The following certifications have been achieved by communities nationally: Organic production certification: 14; Tourism sustainability certificate by ICT: 4; "Blue Flag" ecological certification: 3; Fair trade certification: 5	At least 50% of community sustainable livelihood initiatives supported by SGP obtain environmental certification	52 projects so far have achieved an environmental certification related to their productive activities: responsible fishery, tourism sustainable certificate (CST), Blue Flag ecological certification, Fair trade certification and Organic Agriculture certification. At least 300 agricultural producers are in the process of changing their production practices to organic (Abrojo, Asobrunka, Asociación Guanacasteca, ADITICA, ASOMOBI, ASOPROLA, ASOMOAS, Bijagual, Coto Brus, CJM).	Project achieved target levels at PIR time, and probably will surpass them by end of project	HS
Increased number of community conservation areas	There are no community conservation areas in the project geographic regions	5 new community protected areas increase by at least 2,000 ha community conservation areas in Costa Rica	At least 19 communities have increased inland and marine protected areas coverage, on 40,454 ha	Project widely surpassed target levels in both, area and number of reached communities	HS
Increased number of communities benefiting from PES	20 communities supported by SGP currently receive PES	10 additional communities in the project area receive PES	17 additional communities in the project area have received PES.(payment for Environmental Services)	Project widely surpassed target levels by 70%	HS

Description of Performance Indicator	Baseline Level 2011	Target Level (end of Project) 2015	Status at Terminal evaluation	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating
Increased number of families generating income from sustainable livelihood activities	200 families supported by SGP obtain income from sustainable livelihood activities	800 additional families will generate income from sustainable production practices (eg., sustainable use of species for handcraft production, ecotourism, agroforestry, organic apiculture, etc.)	3,122 additional families will generate income from sustainable production practices (eg., sustainable use of species for handcraft production, ecotourism, agroforestry, organic apiculture, etc.) Target has been surpassed.	Project widely surpassed target levels by almost 4 times (400%)	HS
OUTCOME 2. GHG emissions reduced and carbon stocks increased through community-based actions					
Increased renewable energy capacity installed: - By SGP - From replication	Existing capacity at community level in project area: Biodigestors: 300; Solar dryers: 5; Micro-hydro: 0; PV panels: 10	Additional capacity at community level: Biodigestors: SGP 300, through replication 600; Solar dryers: SGP 4, through replication 16; Micro-hydro: SGP 6, through replication 20; PV panels: SGP 5, through replication 10	Additional capacity at community level: Biodigestors: SGP 134, through replication 80 Solar dryers: SGP 14, through replication 2 (Asomobi, Cedra); Micro-hydro: SGP 6, through replication 0; PV panels: SGP 102, through replication 20 approx. Replication will be more accurately measured towards the end of the project.	Project achieved target levels at PIR time, and probably will surpass them by end of project. Biodigestors target were downgraded during project when Carbon balances showed that they contribute very little to mitigation measures	HS
Increased electricity and heat produced from renewable sources	27,600 kWh. TE COMMENT. There is no evidence about the source of this piece of information	8,054,600 kWh more produced from renewable sources	There are 18 projects under implementation contributing to this target but the measurements have not been made (CAC Coto Brus, CJM, ASOMOAS, Actuar, Fundarbol, ACEM, Calle Mora y Bajo Chirripo) the tool was developed during 2013, but the technical assistance required to gather the information from all the active projects in the field is programmed for the second half of 2014. TE COMMENT. The mentioned evaluation was carried out, but the results did not contribute any valuable information about this indicator	The indicator was probably chosen poorly because the Project has no way to measure in the proposed units (kWh). The assessment of the carbon balance was made in Ton.equivalent of C, that cannot be converted into kWh. THIS INDICATOR SHOULD BE CANCELED	CAN-NOT BE ASSESSED

Description of Performance Indicator	Baseline Level 2011	Target Level (end of Project) 2015	Status at Terminal evaluation	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating
Improved energy efficiency in rural productive activities - By SGP - From replication	No rural community tourism venture (30 rural hostels) currently applies EE practices: Efficient electric engines in project area: 0; CFL: 0	40% reduction of energy consumption in 30 rural hostels: Energy efficient electric engines: SGP 50, through replication 100; CFL: SGP 500, through replication 1,500	20 rural hostels use PV panels to reduce energy consumption. 2 projects (ACTUAR, NEOTROPICA) measurement of energy consumption has not been estimated.	Project reasonably achieved its targets, considering that the 2 projects (ACTUAR, NEOTROPICA) correspond in one case (ACTUAR)= to an umbrella organization for all rural community-based tourism in Costa Rica, and the other (NEOTROPICA) implements community projects in many different areas	S
Improved credit availability for RE and/or EE in rural areas	Credit availability and conditions to be determined for project geographic area at project inception	Three financial institutions providing credit for RE and EE to communities in project area and a minimum of 5 credits approved during lifetime of project	Three projects have started their own credit systems to promote RE and EE (Actuar, ACEM, and ASIREA). The number of credits approved by them will be assessed at the end of the project	Project achieved its targets as agreed	S
Increased number of crews in the rural areas able to prevent and manage forest fires	10 fire fighting crews trained and equipped	30 additional crews trained, equipped, and active	25 additional firefighting brigades trained, equipped and active and one strategic project has been approved to strengthen the National Commission for Forest Fire Prevention (NCFPP)	Project reasonably achieved its targets, considering that the strengthening of the NCFPP has a very important impact in the sustainability of the Brigades by assuming their financial support	S
Increased number of communities trained and with seedlings to undertake reforestation in degraded areas or to increase biomass in agricultural lands	There are no communities undertaking reforestation in the project areas	10 communities reforesting priority areas identified by biological corridors' management plans and planting trees in their agricultural lands	10 priority areas for reforestation have been identified in Biological Corridors: Asada Santiago, Fundacion Conservacionista Costarricense, ACCT, Kabacol-ska-Dikol, Asada la Florida, Fudebiol, Asobrunka, COBAS, Bribripa kaneblo y ACBTC for a total 155.000 trees.	Project achieved its targets as agreed	S

Description of Performance Indicator	Baseline Level 2011	Target Level (end of Project) 2015	Status at Terminal evaluation	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating
OUTCOME 3. Conservation of productive lands and restoration of degraded lands contribute to sustainability and improved local livelihoods					
Increased number of communities contributing to the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Desertification in the Jesus Maria Watershed	The National Plan has been developed but no communities in the project area are implementing actions identified in the Plan	Plan adopted and under implementation by 8 communities within the watershed; 40 leaders in the 8 communities trained in techniques related to integrated watershed management; 12 representatives participating actively in the Watershed Management Commission	9 communities within the watershed have started the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Desertification, 7 rural community water committees (ASADA) are implementing watershed management activities. The Watershed Management Commission is expected to be created towards the end of the project. Negotiations with private sector organizations have started, to integrate them into the Commission (INCOOP, AVOPAC)	Project slightly surpassed its targets	HS
Reduced degraded area in community lands in the Jesus Maria basin	TBD. Watershed status assessment underway	29,500 ha in the Jesus Maria watershed managed for environmental sustainability	37,829 ha in the Jesus Maria watershed managed for environmental sustainability. Target has been surpassed.	Project surpassed its targets by more than 20%	HS
Increased sources of investment at local level for SLM	There is no investment in SLM in the project area	8 new communities in the Jesus Maria watershed receive PES; At least 50% of SLM community initiatives financed by SGP receive support from national government institutions for their continuity	3 communities in the JM watershed have received PES, and 8 more are already in the process to receive it. All SLM community initiatives financed by SGP are receiving support from national government institutions for the implementation of their initiatives through the regional agencies of the Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) and the Ministry of Environment (MINAE-SINAC).	Project achieved its targets as agreed	S
Increased family income resulting from SLM activities	The average rural family income is \$300 monthly	15% increased income for families involved in sustainable production activities; 50% increased income for women participating in SLM activities; 75% increased income for indigenous communities participating in SLM activities	There was an agreement at MTR to cancel tracking of this indicator. The process to measure this target credibly is too expensive and would require a significant investment of resources that SGP cannot afford.	CANCELED	N.A.

Description of Performance Indicator	Baseline Level 2011	Target Level (end of Project) 2015	Status at Terminal evaluation	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating
OUTCOME 4. Community-based organizations and their members with improved capacities and knowledge management for replication and upscaling of best practices					
Increased community contributions to national policy and legislation related to project thematic priorities	SGP-related groups are actively promoting 2 law proposals (Laws promoting Organic agriculture and Rural Community Tourism) in Congress	At least 2 additional national policies and legislation related to project thematic priorities passed during FSP execution.	Two political incidence processes are carried out by CONIFOR, the Proposal of the Law on Control and Prevention of Forest Fires, and CANTURURAL, the Regulation of the Law on RCT.	Project achieved its targets as agreed	S
Increased number of eligible projects demonstrating community understanding of global environmental issues and their local solutions	Less than 30% of projects received are eligible; Most communities within the Jesus Maria watershed and BC lack understanding of global environmental issues	70% of projects are eligible after implementation of capacity development activities; 100 communities participating in SGP-funded projects able to articulate the relevance of their project goals and activities to related global environmental issues	118 projects have participated in capacity development activities and recognize the relevance of their project goals and activities related to global environmental issues	Project surpassed its targets by almost 20%	HS
Rate of successful community projects	90% of SGP-funded projects achieve project objectives	The rate of success of SGP-funded projects during GEF-5 remains 90% or higher	Delays in the implementation of 5 projects (Mulurbi, Fenopea, Ecogamalotillo, Bajo Chirripó y Abrojo Montezuma) led to their cancelation. This figure make up to 4% of total projects and 3% of grants allocated.	Project slightly surpassed its targets	HS
Increased number of contributions from SGP Costa Rica to local and national publications and media, as well as to knowledge products of the Global SGP and UNDP	SGP results and activities are published, announced or quoted by the media at local and national levels at least twice a year	15 knowledge products published or quoted by the media during the lifetime of the project	62 knowledge products planned. Some of them are in the process of elaboration and publication.	Project widely surpassed target levels more than 4 times (400%)	HS

From the above table it is evident that all indicators (excepting two) at the Outcome level were fully achieved and many of them over achieved significantly.

Regarding the two indicators mentioned as non-achieved, the actual situation is not that they were not achieved; it is that they were chosen wrongly. One of them was already examined at the MTR and it was recommended to just cancel it because it was impossible to measure in the operational framework of SGP. Something similar happened to the second one, with the difference that this one was identified as a wrong indicator in this Terminal evaluation because at MTR it seemed that a pending consultancy will measure it. Finally it did not happen despite making the consultancy because this consultancy was focused on carbon balances and the indicator was defined in terms of production of renewable energy.

While having to cancel two indicators is not good, it is necessary to consider that the lack of these indicators does not affect too much the overall assessment of the SGP attainment of results given the variety of complementing indicators included in the Results Framework that more than compensate for these two ones.

Moreover, these results are not taking into account some information from the projects still active, allowing for an expectation of even better results at the completion of the projects, particularly if the extension being requested is approved.

Therefore the Terminal evaluation assesses this aspect as Highly Satisfactory.

RATING OF OVERALL ATTAINMENT OF RESULTS: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

3.3.2 Relevance (*)

Costa Rica is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (August 26, 1994), to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (June 13 1994), and to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (November 3 1997) and is therefore eligible for GEF financing.

In terms of national priorities, the SGP is directly relevant to, supportive of, and consistent with Costa Rica's national priorities and policies related to global environmental issues and development priorities.

In the biodiversity focal area, the SGP responds to Costa Rica's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in several key aspects: consolidation of Protected Areas; consolidation of biological corridors; enhancement of ecological connectivity through new Protected Areas within existing corridors; and sustainable use of wild resources.

Regarding climate change, the SGP supports the National Climate Change Strategy. SGP grants contribute to implementing key aspects of this Strategy, particularly, aspects related to reduction of rural emissions of GHG. It is also important to highlight that in June 2007, Costa Rica made a public commitment to become a carbon-neutral country by 2021, the year

marking the Bicentennial of its Independence. Since then, several government organizations have prepared and launched activities to meet this ambitious goal, pulling together efforts to reduce carbon emissions, increase energy generation sources not based in fossil fuels (hydro-power, solar, biogas, biofuels, wind and other). The Government expects all investments of country funds (including the GEF STAR allocation to SGP) to contribute to the carbon neutrality goal.

In terms of land degradation, Costa Rica has a National Action Plan to combat Land Degradation and a National Land Degradation Commission (CADETI) to implement the Action Plan. SGP activities in this focal area are aligned with the Action Plan concerning soil conservation and restoration, as well as water resources management and conservation. During the preparation of the Strategy a thorough analysis of Costa Rica's degraded areas was performed and these areas were prioritized accordingly. In consultation with CADETI, it was agreed that SGP's land degradation interventions will concentrate in the Jesus Maria watershed, which is not only a highly degraded area but also part of the Montes de Aguacate Biological Corridor, and therefore, important for biodiversity conservation.

In terms of relevance to UNDAF and GEF, The Project is in line with the 2008-2012 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) agreed between the Government of Costa Rica and the UN System Country Team. It is consistent with the following outcomes: capacity building of local actors for a sustainable development, inclusive and equitable; promotion of effective participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies; development of analytical skills in social organizations for an informed and sustained public participation; changes in economic and socio-cultural practices in priority groups, in favor of environmental sustainability; and creation and strengthening of social networks that work under the principles of solidarity and respect for human rights.

The Project is fully consistent with three of the main strategic lines of action of UNDP Costa Rica's Country Program Document Framework (CPD): (i) Reducing poverty, inequality and social exclusion, (ii) Environment, energy and risk management, and (iii) Gender equality and equity. SGP supports community-based activities that simultaneously help reduce poverty, promote sustainable use of natural resources and, in general, improve environmental management, which includes energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and reduction of risks caused by poor management of land and natural resources, such as mudslides in deforested areas.

Based on the above described elements the Terminal Evaluation rating for relevance is Relevant.

RATING OF RELEVANCE: Relevant (R)

3.3.3 Effectiveness & Efficiency (*)

Effectiveness

The assessment of Project effectiveness is also based in the *Outcomes achievement description and TE assessment table* presented previously in Section 3.3.1

The mentioned table showed that:

- a. All Outcome indicators were achieved at the time of Terminal evaluation.
- b. Of the 18 Outcome indicators agreed on the Framework Results, 10 were either achieved fully or slightly surpassed (up to 20% above target).
- c. Another four indicators were significantly surpassed at levels between 20 and 100% over established targets.
- d. Another four indicators were very significantly surpassed at levels that more than doubled the established targets, reaching in some cases four times the agreed targets.

Moreover, more than seventy grants are in the final stages of implementation and have not submitted yet their final reports, external evaluations and audits. Several of them were visited during the field verification carried out with this Terminal Evaluation. From these visits it is highly reasonable to expect that some of the reported indicators will end at levels of achievement higher than the ones reported here.

In terms of efficiency, this high level of performance was based in the usual 2-person National Coordination Team supported for few months by a third person on administrative tasks as decided by the NCS.

Risk

The Project managed its risk factors, shown in Section 3.1.3 of this Report, properly. The identified factors were:

1. Running a grants program with civil society organizations that have a low level of technical and management capacity.
2. Climate variability fueled by the climate change process.
3. Weak governance systems may delay or impede adequate land use planning and management in the biological corridors.
4. Difficulty for communities in accessing markets for goods and services produced with SGP support.
5. Other exogenous risks (economic crisis, political instability, etc.).

The difficulties inherent to running a grants program with civil society organizations having limited management capacities was well addressed using the long SGP experience in dealing with this type of organizations. A good evidence of this is the low rate of grant project failures (4 out of 122)

Fortunately the country was not affected by any major climatic event during this Phase. There were the usual climate variations, sometimes with variations a bit stronger than usual but not completely off the registered information. The different actions aimed at reducing these risks seem to have been adequate because no issues of this kind emerged during field visits and/or interviews as causes of failure or extreme suffering

The local governance systems finally did not constrain the development of plans and activities in part because of the SGP experience in the area and also because of the leadership and support provided by other organizations as well as the National Commission for Biological Corridors that was, in due way, also supported by SGP.

Access to markets was a constraining factor during OP% as it was in previous phases. The advantages in OP5 compared to the previous ones is that some second tier organizations (e.g. ACTUAR, MAOCO) are consolidated and helping the local initiatives to reach markets, something that was less strong in previous phases. Moreover, during OP5 SGP funded some grants related with improving access to markets or processing by supporting the Green Fair experience that was very successful in opening markets where organic producers and consumers meet regularly to buy and sell products and also funded some groups to prepare and equip themselves better to reach broader markets (the case of the groups practicing responsible fishing and now having better packaging and refrigeration facilities are a good example of this aspect).

Finally, but not less important, the overall social and political climate of the country remained stable, in line with a mature democracy as Costa Rica. The impacts of the global crisis were felt in the country but not as strongly as they could, so they did not compromise the SGP work during OP5.

Lessons learned about effectiveness

There is not too much to be added about lessons learned regarding effectiveness. SGP Costa Rica was a well-designed and well-implemented project who benefited enormously from its successful story and its ability to learn from its own experience and maintain a permanent search for new challenges and the ability to achieve its goals.

Based on these elements, the Terminal evaluation rating for Effectiveness is Highly Satisfactory.

RATING OF EFFECTIVENESS: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

Efficiency

Project support

The project was supported by UNDP CO in a double function - as GEF Implementing Agency and also as fulfilling tasks for UNOPS as Implementing Partner or executing agency under an agreement between the two agencies.

The support was satisfactory in terms of administration and there is a good engagement of the UNDP Program Officer with the SGP.

The fact that SGP is hosted by UNDP-CO at their offices in San Jose also helped in assuring good contact, coordination, exchange of information and support with other UNDP initiatives.

Partnership arrangements

This issue was already addressed in detail in section 3.1.9 Management arrangements. The two key issues highlighted there are about potential problems due to deficiencies in the management arrangements (too many different reporting lines for the National Coordination), and the fact that the SGP (originally the GEF funding window for CBO/NGOs) is now under Governmental control in this SGP Country Programs contrary to the original GEF design.

Both of them are not particular or specific of Costa Rica and should be addressed at a higher system level.

Use of local capacity in implementation

The use of local capacities in project implementation is an old feature of the SGP in Costa Rica that was maintained and improved during the evaluated phase. The “accompanying organizations” mechanism to help CBOs and other local organizations to design and implement their projects is well established and a dozen of them are actively engaged by CBOs and they are chosen by the CBOs (and not by the SGP) to ensure due transparency and empowerment of the CBOs to be able to choose whose support they would like to have. In fact, this is an area in which the SGP has very relevant experiences to share with other large, medium and small projects aiming to use local capacities for implementation.

Lessons learned about efficiency

Some comments emerging from the collected evidence are as follows:

- the project management costs have remained at similar levels to previous stages . Some previous studies indicate that the efficiency of PPD is comparable or better than the average of GEF projects, therefore there were no significant changes in this regard.
- regardless of the previous point, some observations from the governmental institutions were registered about the need to reduce overhead costs distributed between the project implementing and executing agencies and to ensure that a greater proportion of funds reach the final beneficiaries. There were no comments regarding the costs of project coordination.
- according to the documents of funding proposals, in the Costa Rica SGP the recipient organizations should be able to mobilize resources at least equal than the funds received from SGP . In this particular aspect, the requirements of the Costa Rica SGP are aligned with the global requirement of 1:1 co-financing. As shown in the pertinent section the SGP Costa Rica was able to fully fulfill its co-financing commitments and to exceed the agreed co-financing targets by 20%

Based on these elements, the Terminal evaluation rating for Efficiency is Highly Satisfactory.

RATING OF EFFICIENCY: HIGHLY SATISFACTORY (6)

3.3.4 Country ownership

From all evidence and comments already provided it is obvious that the level of country ownership is high. Some key elements supporting this assessment are the alignment of SGP activities with country priorities, the composition of the National Steering Committee with a broad majority of national persons representing different national organizations (Governmental, academic, NGOs, etc), the comments collected during the evaluation in meetings with persons working in governmental organizations and NGOs at regional and national level, as well as the results of the MTR carried out in 2014.

One of the most striking points about SGP in Costa Rica is that it is well known and it is highly appreciated by most of those who know it. This is an excellent piece of evidence for the high level of ownership that the country organizations feel in regard to SGP.

3.3.5 Mainstreaming

Positive and negative effects on local population

Given the nature of the SGP in Costa Rica the main effects of the project take place with the local population. According to the people interviewed in the field they all coincide in that the effects are very positive in many aspects such as empowerment, organization, training, critical funding to undertake new initiatives, contacts with research and academic organizations, contacts and help or marketing, contacts to get additional funding, etc.

There are so many positive effects perceived by the local population that it is really hard to find people with negative views or grievances with the SGP.

Conformity with UNDAF and CPD

As presented before in the country ownership and the relevance sections (3.3.2 and 3.3.4), the SGP is well aligned with the UNDAF version used at the Project design moment.

This consistency is also extended to CPD that is an instrument aligned with UNDAF.

Contribution to preparedness and coping with natural disasters

The SGP contributes significantly and in different ways to preparedness and coping with natural disasters at community level and higher.

One of the six thematic areas of SGP is Forest fires management, an issue directly related with natural disasters. As any other Mesoamerican country Costa Rica suffers from a high level of risk regarding forest fires due to the long extension (5-6 months) of its dry season in the Pacific basin of the country where most of the population and economic activities are located.

For many years the country suffered year after year from large forest fires combined with (or initiated in) grassland areas causing significant economic and environmental damages as well as human lives. This risk is worsening throughout the area due to the impacts of climate change and dry seasons that are becoming longer and drier in a very variable way.

SGP was instrumental in the development of Community Brigades of Forest Fighters acting in a jointly and coordinated way with CONIFOR, the Costa Rican National Commission Against Wildfires. SGP funded through several GEF OPs, including OP5, the formation, equipment and training of many community brigades and it has also funded several aspects of the operation of CONIFOR itself until the Commission was able to secure its own funding from governmental sources. These actions of SGP, jointly with all its national and local partners, have significantly reduced the incidence, extension and danger level of forests fires addressing successfully a serious threat and reducing its incidence to minimum levels.

Other SGP actions as diversification of agricultural sources of income, sustainable production, renewable energy, soil and water conservation, water management and other also contribute significantly to reduce the impacts of climate events such as drought and excessively wet seasons leading to crop losses, loss of grasslands productivity, etc. All these impacts have

significant effects on the livelihoods of small and medium farmers dependent on their agricultural activities and hit by the climate extreme events.

Therefore, and even when most SGP activities are not specifically labeled as preparation or reduction of the impact of natural events, the very nature of the SGP activities in Costa Rica imply that the SGP is making a significant contribution to improve the resilience of local communities against natural disasters.

Consideration of gender issues

While the SGP does not have a specific gender component or gender indicators, as pointed out in the MTR, it works with a clear gender approach in the broad sense, meaning the incorporation of women and other disempowered groups such as natives, youth, poor and other in its activities.

From the field visits mentioned at MTR and other made at this Terminal Evaluation, as well as the reviewed information and interviews, the incorporation of women, youth, elder, natives and other disadvantaged groups is evident in almost all projects supported by SGP.

The SGP supported directly many of the organizations where these disadvantaged groups participate as well as other activities oriented to the different activities of those groups (domestic, productive, educational, training, organizational, funding, marketing, etc.).

The evidence collected in the evaluation points to a conclusion that the SGP takes into consideration different gender aspects in a significant and appropriate way. Moreover, there is growing evidence that some grantees are beginning to report their activities disaggregating their data by gender, which is a very important first step towards having specific gender indicators incorporated in the PRODOC, something that is expected to take place fully in the OP6 SGP proposal and PRODOC.

3.3.6 Impact (*)

Impact strategy of Costa Rica SGP

The work of SGP in Costa Rica is aimed at achieving impacts in different GEF areas (biodiversity conservation, climate change and land degradation) while positive impacts are also achieved in the wellbeing of individuals and communities in the different SGP work sites.

The SGP pursues these achievements through a basic strategy of organizing and strengthening local groups around proposals made by them that generate benefits both regarding GEF issues as well as social, economic, cultural and / or other aspects relevant to the groups. Once the groups are formed and their activities function properly they should begin a process aiming to sustainability. The following steps in this process consist of fulfilling one or more of the following steps: coordinate with other government and civil organizations (other than SGP) to expand the range of support available to them; local addition of value to goods and services, market access improvement for the mentioned products; organization of networks or associations of second and third degree that nucleate and strengthen local groups and open access to advocacy processes regarding policies of the sectors in which they operate.

In other words, the SGP believes that its action is completed only when the groups achieve a level of development (or maturity) characterized by a proper way of working and managing its activities; by producing, processing and marketing their goods or services on a regular basis ensuring their economic and financial viability; by their connection to government and civil organizations with which they collaborate; by becoming organized into larger (second and third degree) levels to maintain the processes of information exchange and management support; and by their ability to influence decision-making processes.

Obviously, under this vision, reaching the final level of maturity described in the preceding paragraph requires long periods, which far exceed the framework of a single GEF OP, and this is why at the end of OP5 there are SGP supported organizations that are in different steps of the described process, along with many others who have already completed that process.

In many cases SGP projects led to the articulation of governmental institutions, NGOs, associations, universities and foundations. This happens once there is a project that starts and shows certain success in the field and these institutions are motivated to sum up their efforts. The most important aspect is that this happens by itself and not necessarily due to the direct SGP advocacy. Besides, in many occasions the successful completion of a SGP grant by a local organization opens the doors to other funding sources for them.

Achieved Impacts

Based on the SGP strategy to achieve impacts summarized above, field visits show a visible impact of the project on the ground and in the communities and groups that have accessed SGP funding.

The level of impact varies according to the working lines of projects and organizations. As noted above, the SGP strategy involves a long-term work with local groups to reach maturity of its development, which included overcoming the limits of local actions and projecting them at regional and national scales in different aspects (economic , political, organizational, social, etc.).

Currently there are processes where progress and achievement of sustainable situations in areas such as rural tourism, forest fires control by local brigades of community-based volunteers and others is evident. In other areas there is very significant progress but they are still in process such as beekeeping and honey production, strengthening biological corridors, organic production and others where additional efforts are needed in marketing, coordination and management of different efforts (production, processing, marketing, etc.) at scales larger than the community level, and others.

Last but not least, there are other processes that are still in more preliminary stages and require longer support on issues such as responsible fishing, crafts, indigenous territories, alternative energy and others, in which local achievements are important but still need structured at larger scales (regions within the country and national) to achieve similar levels of development and political incidence as the most advanced.

Highlighting these differences should not be taken as a criticism to the SGP or the groups who carry forward their different activities. It is just a simple and basic reflection about the time

it takes working them and the specific difficulties associated with the evolution of each sector in the medium and long term.

Progress evidenced each of these processes has to be taken as changes or impacts achieved through the efforts of many actors, including SGP and it is therefore logical to attribute the SGP the rightful role it has played in these achievements and impacts.

A final but important aspect to consider regarding the impact of SGP in Costa Rica is the significant number of publications, guidelines, methodologies, systematization and other knowledge products derived from its long and rich experience of 20 years. This vast amount of materials results not only from the SGP actions but they also include the efforts of its partners and beneficiaries who have structured, jointly with SGP, a significant mechanism for generating, disseminating and exchanging information relevant and useful to the local groups all over the country.

Based on these elements, the Terminal evaluation rating for Impact is Significant.

RATING OF PROJECT IMPACT: SIGNIFICANT (3)

3.3.7 Sustainability (*)

After presentation of SGP project impacts in the previous section (3.3.6), it is obvious that sustainability of the results changes from site to site depending on the time since the local groups in those sites began to operate, the maturity level they have reached and the nature of the sustainability aspects considered. The different aspects are briefly analyzed, presented and rated as follows.

Financial resources

The financial risk of the different sites is not similar. Those who have completed the cycle foreseen in the SGP impact strategy can be considered as sustainable. Others, who are in more preliminary stages, are more vulnerable. Most probably if the SGP support is no longer available to them, these groups are not going to disappear or to return to the initial state, but there is a high risk that their evolution will be stopped or constrained.

Therefore, the overall rating for financial sustainability is “moderately likely”, using a conservative criteria by adopting the lower value, and also reflecting the actual damage that can be caused to many on-going processes if SGP support is no longer available.

RATING OF FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: MODERATELY LIKELY (3)

Socio-economic

The socio-economic sustainability of the achieved results is high; in other words the risks in this area are negligible. This evaluation is based on the high level of acceptance of the funded activities by the local groups. This acceptance is strengthened by the fact that the implemented activities are identified, proposed and implemented by the groups, improving the sense of ownership and eliminating (or significantly reducing) the impact of cultural and social issues that may affect the achieved results. In economic terms there is no significant reason to expect that market conditions for the different activities and products are going to change dramatically. Therefore, the rating for this aspect of sustainability is that it is “likely”

RATING OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY: LIKELY (4)

Institutional framework and governance

The institutional framework was supportive of most SGP supported activities in OP5. Organic production, food security, development of economic alternatives based on the use of native species, community organization, sustainable soil and water management, agroforestry, rural tourism, and other activities are all initiatives promoted and supported by Government at its different levels. Interviews to different Governmental officers during the Terminal Evaluation reinforce this assertion.

The local governance frameworks are also supportive of these initiatives as Costa Rica has a strong network of different local governance mechanisms (development associations, local councils, local commissions, etc.) in different areas (development, protected areas, biological corridors, women rights and development, youth support, etc.) that configure a strong social tissue able to support the initiatives of SGP supported groups.

An area of uncertainty is about the Governmental commitment to keep open the GEF window for NGOs and CBOs in Costa Rica. There is no reason to assume that the support to SGP will be interrupted, but at the same time there is no clear commitment to the continuation of SGP. This situation can be considered as a cause of concern given the fact the GEF OP6 began in mid-2014 and, based on precaution, this is the conservative criteria adopted by the Terminal evaluation.

Based on the previous considerations, the rating for this aspect is also considered as “moderately likely”.

RATING OF INSTITUTIONAL / GOVERNANCE SUSTAINABILITY: MODERATELY LIKELY (3)

Environmental

The environmental sustainability of the activities is difficult to assess because of its complexity. On the one hand the country has not been affected historically by hurricanes or similar highly destructive events. Every year there are areas suffering regularly from droughts or floods or strong winds, but generally speaking the local population has proved resilient to these impacts, and they usually reestablish their activities and continue without change.

But extreme weather is not the main aspect related to environmental sustainability; climate change is also critical in this respect. Current climate projections for Costa Rica based on the present models estimate significant reductions in rainfall by the end of the century and worsening in the northern part of the country.

While climate change is no longer under debate, the estimations based on models still have a lot of space for improvement in terms of climate variability, which is the aspect most visibly perceived by the rural communities. The key problem is not what is expected to happen at the end of this century but what can be expected for this year or the next. Unfortunately progress made in these areas seems not enough to help local communities. Despite this, general adaptation practices are taking place and expanding significantly (diversification, recuperation of tree cover, adoption of more resilient production systems, soil and water conservation, etc.) improving resilience in general.

Therefore, and considering the nature of these factors and their time-frames, a rating of “likely” is assigned in terms of short and medium term sustainability

RATING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: LIKELY (4)

Based on the ratings of all considered factors, the overall sustainability rating is “moderately likely”.

OVERALL RATING OF SUSTAINABILITY: MODERATELY LIKELY (3)

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

4.1 Conclusions

After reviewing documents, interviewing a broad range of stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, and visiting and observing several field locations of SGP activities, the main conclusions of this Terminal Evaluation are:

1. The current SGP Costa Rica GEF full size Project, corresponding to the 5th Operational Phase of the GEF (GEF OP5) is relevant to the objectives with what it must maintain consistency (GEF and country).
2. The project has completed the planned activities and, in the light of the completed projects (44 of 118) and the progress of those still running, is successfully reaching the proposed indicators, exceeding many in significant proportions.
3. The project has operated within the historical average efficiency of SGP projects. Some previous studies have shown that its level of efficiency is good in relation to the general population of GEF funded projects financed.
4. The project has achieved, throughout his history including the evaluated phase, numerous impacts that are evidenced in part by what is stated in section 3.3.6. These impacts at the level of the working sites have multiplied and far exceed the initial investment and scope of their activities. In this sense, the project has worked as a real "incubator" of initiatives that developed and prospered far beyond the SGP support
5. The sustainability of funded initiatives is good and varies according to the sites as stated in Section 3.3.7. In many sites sustainability is very strong while there are other sites where the processes are younger and have not been completed. In these cases continuing with the support should be considered for the next phase (OP6) in order to prevent different processes to be truncated halfway. The risk of remaining truncated not necessarily imply that the results achieved are going to be lost; it basically means that it will be much harder for different groups and processes to move forward until they can reach full maturity and sustainability of their processes.
6. The completion of this stage of SGP in Costa Rica (OP5) and ideas circulating about its possible scope in GEF OP6 highlight an issue that is appearing for the first time in SGP Country Programs and that should be considered in different levels both within the SGP (especially CMPT), UNDP and GEF. The issues turns around the question of what is the acceptable level of influence of national governments in the GEF Small Grants window aimed at civil society and community organizations as it was in the origins of SGP as a corporate program of the GEF. By including the SGP Country Programs in the GEF STAR allocation this original spirit is lost, since the distribution of STAR funds are made by the government and not necessarily in consultation with civil society and community groups. Taking the hypothesis to an end, in the current scheme the government can decide not to award funds to the GEF Small Grants (SGP) and just close a window the same GEF established to specifically target CBOs and NGOs many years ago. This is not a specific problem of Costa Rica, but a systemic issue that should be addressed at that level and not be left only to the particular decisions of governments of each country.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

7. To include the M&E system designed and tested in OP5 in new SGP proposals. At the end of OP5 the Costa Rica SGP has good and comprehensive M&E system that should be used fully in new projects since the beginning. Moreover, the full adoption of the M&E System will allow the SGP to choose Project and Outcome indicators that they can actually measure using the existing system and then eliminating the problems linked to the cancelation of indicators that were not well chosen at project design.
8. To maintain active the discussion at the NSC level and the SGP Country Programs in general about the potential problems caused by the existence of multiple reporting lines for the National Coordination. This situation may lead to conflict among different supervising organizations and, eventually, to serious problems for the design, implementation and evaluation of future SGP projects.
9. To define the size of the National Coordination Team based on the implementation requirements of the new OP. This sizing must be based on both the needs for guiding and supervising the SGP small grants and to meet the many demands for SGP presence in numerous local, regional and national processes to which SGP is invited to contribute. These demands offer significant opportunities for incidence in different processes without large expenditures, providing SGP with many opportunities to influence processes beyond the limits of its financial ability to provide small grants.

4.2.2 Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

10. To maintain the existing forms of operation of the Costa Rica SGP. They have proven effective and efficient to achieve the proposed results. Overall, the Costa Rica SGP project is ran in an outstanding way and so the first recommendation for follow up is to keep the good work.
11. The most important action for maintaining, reinforcing and continuing the development of the sites and lines of work that are not yet sustainable is to maintain the SGP Country Program in Costa Rica as a GEF full-size project for OP6. As presented in Section 3.3.6 Impact, the Costa Rica SGP has a successful long-term impact strategy. Some local processes in different sites are in varied stages of the process towards sustainability (many of them have already completed it). Therefore, the continuity of the SGP Costa Rica Country Program is essential to keep running the processes that will take all the initiatives to the final desired stage of sustainability.

4.2.3 Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

12. To maintain the concentration of activities on land degradation in the Jesus Maria river basin at least until gathering convincing evidence about its significant impact (or lack thereof) in the territory. Initial results from OP5 tend to demonstrate that the concentration of activities in a relatively small area can make a significant difference in terms of reducing land degradation, increasing sustainable agricultural production, reducing the sediments load of water courses, etc. Persisting in this approach will allow for gathering complete, strong and outright evidence about its benefits, as long as the final situation is consistent with the early trends emerging at the end of OP5.

4.2.4 Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

A program with a history of 20 years as the Costa Rica SGP had many opportunities to improve and adjust its operations, and it is evident that they have been using them to advance an operation that performs very well.

Therefore, even when there are minor things to be improved here and there, none of them are relevant enough to be included at the same level of relevance of the group previously presented in this chapter. Most of these minor things are mentioned along the different sections of this Report such as the need to have specific gender and youth indicators incorporated in the Project Results Framework, to better choose Project Objective indicators in a way that is simpler to report to the GEF Tracking Tools using the results of the M&E system, to assign a higher priority to the political incidence work to gain more visibility at the governmental level and to update the website that seems slightly outdated. As said, all minor aspects that do not tarnish the brilliant performance of the Costa Rica SGP in OP5.

Final Report, March 12, 2015

ANNEXES

- ANNEX 1. Evaluation ToR**
- ANNEX 2. Itinerary**
- ANNEX 3. List of persons interviewed**
- ANNEX 4. Summary of field visits**
- ANNEX 5. List of documents reviewed**
- ANNEX 6. Evaluation Questions Matrix**
- ANNEX 7. Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form**
- ANNEX 8. Terminal Evaluation Report Clearance Form**

ANNEX 1. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

Terminal Evaluation of the GEF-financed Full-Size Projects for the Fifth Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Costa Rica

This projects was approved in GEF OP5 as upgrading country programme projects financed by the GEF. Upgrading SGP Country Programme projects are products of the policy approved by GEF Council at the November Council of 2008. Under this policy, countries were encouraged to finance their SGP Country Programmes with a higher amount from their STAR allocations. The average GEF financing per upgrading country programme is USD 4.6 million.

Upgrading Country Programmes follow SGP Operational Guidelines, in particular in regard to the composition of the National Steering Committee and the role of the National Coordinator. The four-year standard Country Programme Strategies have been substituted by UNDP-GEF Project Documents in which a logical framework delineates the expected outputs and outcomes to be produced as a consequence of a focused grant making scheme. In the case of the five UCPs listed here, UNOPS remains the executing agency.

UNDP-GEF supplies standard TORs for Terminal Evaluations which can be found below. The project evaluation will require assessment, against the outcomes and outputs of each project, of the impacts achieved or in progress, identification of lessons learned, identification of bottlenecks and obstacles to further implementation and development of the Country Programmes for the future.

TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the *Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Costa Rica*

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows: *(fully complete the table below)*.

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:				
GEF Project ID:			<u>at endorsement</u> <u>(Million US\$)</u>	<u>at completion</u> <u>(Million US\$)</u>
UNDP Project ID:	4519	GEF financing:		
Country:	Costa Rica	IA/EA own:	UNDP	
Region:	LAC	Government:		
Focal Area:	MFA	Other:		

FA Objectives, (OP/SP):		Total co-financing:		
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:		
Other Partners involved:		ProDoc Signature (date project began):		
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed:	Actual:

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to: *(provide a project summary including project goal and outcomes. Also, in cases where the GEF funded project forms part of a larger programme, specify if the TE is to cover the entire programme or only the GEF component).*

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

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.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method¹ for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR *(fill in Annex C)*. The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to *(location)*, including the following project sites *(list)*. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum: *(list key stakeholders)*.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports - including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in Annex B of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework *(see Annex A)*, which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The

¹ For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

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

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.²

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations** and **lessons**.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the global manager for the SGP Upgrading Country Projects, assisted by UNOPS, as the executing agency for these projects. UNOPS will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be *XX* days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	03	<i>date</i>
Evaluation Mission	08	<i>date</i>
Draft Evaluation Report	07	<i>date</i>
Final Report	02	<i>date</i>

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to global manager for SGP Upgrading Country Programmes, UNOPS, UNDP CO, and National Coordinator
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To National Coordinator, UNDP CO
Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	To global manager UCPs, CO, NC, NSC
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to global manager UCPs, UNDP CO, NC, NSC

² A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROTI Handbook 2009](#)

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team will be composed of *(1-2 international /national evaluators)*. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. *(If the team has more than 1 evaluator, one will be designated as the team leader and will be responsible for finalizing the report)*. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Team members must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum **XX** years of relevant professional experience
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s)
- *(additional skills based on project particulars)*

Evaluator Ethics

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

(this payment schedule is indicative, to be filled in by the CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based on their standard procurement procedures)

%	Milestone
10%	At contract signing
40%	Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft terminal evaluation report
50%	Following submission and approval (global manager UCPs, UNDP-CO) of the final terminal evaluation report

ANNEX A: PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

(to be added)

ANNEX B: LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE EVALUATORS

(to be added)

ANNEX C: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This is a generic list, to be further detailed with more specific questions by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based on the particulars of the project.

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•		•	•
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•

ANNEX D: RATING SCALES

<p>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Sustainability ratings:</p> <p>4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks</p>	<p>Relevance ratings</p> <p>2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR)</p> <p>Impact Ratings:</p> <p>3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)</p>
<p>Additional ratings where relevant: Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>		

ANNEX E: EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND 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 Form³

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

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

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

Signed at *place* on *date*

Signature: _____

ANNEX F: EVALUATION REPORT OUTLINE⁴

- i. Opening page:
 - Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
 - UNDP and GEF project ID#s.
 - Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program
 - Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - Evaluation team members
 - Acknowledgements
- ii. Executive Summary
 - Project Summary Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Evaluation Rating Table
 - Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations (See: UNDP Editorial Manual⁵)
1. Introduction
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Scope & Methodology
 - Structure of the evaluation report
2. Project description and development context
 - Project start and duration
 - Problems that the project sought to address
 - Immediate and development objectives of the project
 - Baseline Indicators established
 - Main stakeholders
 - Expected Results
3. Findings
(In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (*) must be rated⁶)
- 3.1 Project Design / Formulation
 - Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
 - Assumptions and Risks

³www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

⁴The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

⁵ UNDP Style Manual, Office of Communications, Partnerships Bureau, updated November 2008

⁶ Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory, see section 3.5, page 37 for ratings explanations.

- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design
 - Planned stakeholder participation
 - Replication approach
 - UNDP comparative advantage
 - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
 - Management arrangements
- 3.2 Project Implementation
- Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
 - Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/ region)
 - Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management
 - Project Finance:
 - Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (*)
 - UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (*) coordination, and operational issues
- 3.3 Project Results
- Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*)
 - Relevance(*)
 - Effectiveness & Efficiency (*)
 - Country ownership
 - Mainstreaming
 - Sustainability (*)
 - Impact
4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons
- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
 - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
5. Annexes
- ToR
 - Itinerary
 - List of persons interviewed
 - Summary of field visits
 - List of documents reviewed
 - Evaluation Question Matrix
 - Questionnaire used and summary of results
 - Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

ANNEX G: EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by	
UNDP Country Office	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
UNDP GEF RTA	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____

ANNEX 2. Itinerary

The field visit was conducted during February 2015. Given that the evaluator is a resident in Costa Rica, the visits and interviews were spread along several weeks.

The Itinerary of the visit to the field projects was coordinated and implemented with the SGP National Coordination as follows.

DAY / TIME	PROJECT
Tuesday, February 3, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/89 Mariposas del Golfo
Tuesday, February 3, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y1/12/38 Asociación de Damas Trabajando por el Ambiente (ADATA)
Tuesday, February 3, 2015 Afternoon	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/74 Asociación Damas de Isla de Chira
Tuesday, February 3, 2015 Afternoon	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/80 Artesanas de Chira
Wednesday, February 4, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/12/55 Asociación de Pescadores Mixta de Montero
Wednesday, February 4, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/12/52 Asociación de Jóvenes Uniendo Esfuerzos para el Desarrollo y la Ecología de Isla Venado (ASJUESDE)
Wednesday, February 4, 2015 Afternoon	Proyecto COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y1/12/31 Asociación de Apicultores de Jicaral (ASOAPI) and Asociación de Mujeres Empresarias de Jicaral (ASOMEJ)
Thursday, February 5, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/12/54 Asociación de Pescadores Coyoteños (Aspecoy)
Thursday, February 5, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/116 Centro Agrícola de CAC Jicaral
Thursday, February 5, 2015 Afternoon	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/82 Asociación AgroOrgánica Guanacasteca
Friday, February 6, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/CC/13/83 FUNDECONGO
Friday, February 6, 2015 Morning	Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/CC/12/63 ASADA de Arado

ANNEX 3. List of persons interviewed

The list of persons interviewed for this evaluation includes:

Organizations and persons at the community level

Mariposas del Golfo - Gulf Butterflies, a women group in Costa de Pájaros

1. Leda Mayela Pérez Ledezma, Vicepresident
2. Elianay Pérez Ledezma
3. Esther Ledezma Chavarría

Asociación de Damas Trabajando por el Ambiente (ADATA) - Women Association Working for the Environment, in Chira island

4. Gloria Pérez, Presidenta
5. Cecilia Fernández
6. Cintia Díaz

Asociación Damas de Isla de Chira - Isla de Chira Women Association, in Chira island

7. Isabel Cruz Díaz, Vicepresidenta
8. Teodora Median Díaz

Artesanas de Chira - Artisans fo Chira, a women association in Chira island

9. Lidieth Matarrita Aguir, Presidenta
10. Marcedonia García Espinoza
11. Betzaida Peralta Trejos
12. María Cristina Matarrita M.
13. Sandra Medina Medina
14. Julia Medina Carmona

Asociación de Pescadores Mixta de Montero, Montero Mixed Fishermen Association, in Chira island

15. Feliciano García, Presidente
16. William Quirós
17. Aparicia Montes García

Asociación de Jóvenes Uniendo Esfuerzos para el Desarrollo y la Ecología de Isla Venado (ASJUESDE), Venado island Youth Association Joining Efforts for Development, in Venado island

18. Mariana Barrios
19. Olger Obando Reyes

Asociación de Apicultores de Jicaral (ASOAPI), Jicaral Beekeepres Association in Jicaral

20. Lorenzo Rodríguez Corrales, Presidente
21. Rubén Chavarría González
22. Alexander Rosales (productor de miel de meliponas)

Asociación de Mujeres Empresarias de Jicaral (ASOMEJ), Jicaral Entrepreneur Women Association, in Jicaral

23. Isabel Élide Mendez
24. Luisa Matarrita

Asociación de Pescadores Coyoteños (ASPECOY), Coyote Fishermen Association, in Coyote

25. Guillermo Chávez, Presidente
26. Jorge Fonseca A.
27. Anabela Aguilar
28. Ronald Rojas

Centro Agrícola Cantonal (CAC) de Jicaral, Jicaral District Agricultural Center, in Jicaral

29. Sonia Durón, Gerente General

Asociación Agro Orgánica Guanacasteca, Guanacaste Agri-organic Association, in Sámara

30. Miguel Gutiérrez V., Presidente
31. Teresa Ramos Guzmán
32. Judith Chin Mora
33. José Luis Cortés María
34. Francia Cerdas Sánchez
35. María Inés Briceño Montiel
36. Marta Pizarro Pizarro
37. Arancibia Rosales G.
38. Edgard Ruiz Pérez

FUNDECONGO, in Santa Cruz de Nicoya

39. Flor Gutiérrez Espinoza, Presidenta
40. Luis Alberto Castillo
41. Carlos Rosales
42. Darío Uribe Hooker

ASADA de Arado de Santa Cruz, Arado Community Aqueduct Association in Arado, Santa Cruz

43. Severino (Gamaliel) Cabalceta Gutiérrez, Presidente
44. Julia Cabalceta Barrantes
45. Lilian Gutiérrez Gutiérrez
46. Yanory Gutiérrez Díaz
47. Rosario Centeno G.
48. Leyla Hernández R.
49. Abigail Barrantes M.
50. Marco Tulio Briceño
51. Isidro Gómez Gutiérrez

NGO

1. Francisco Grau, AAMOR (organizers of the Green Fair in Aranjuez, San José)

Costa Rica State Governmental Organizations

1. Nidia Barrantes, MAG Jicaral
2. Carlos Barboza G, MAG San Mateo
3. Mariano Espinoza, MINAE, Focal Point for the Convention against Desertification

Universities

1. Gretel Ulate, Costa Rica National University, UNA
2. Ramiro Segura, Costa Rica National University, UNA

UNDP Country Office

1. Kifah Sasa, Programme Officer, Environment and Risk Management

SGP National Coordination

1. Eduardo Mata Montero
2. Paula Zúñiga

SGP National Steering Committee

1. Diego Lynch, ANAI Association
2. Mariano Espinoza, MINAE

Global Coordination of the GEF-UNDP SGP upgraded projects

1. Nick Remple, UNDP Global Technical Advisor for SGP upgraded programs

ANNEX 4. Summary of field visits

PROJECT ID & GRANTEE ORGANIZATION	PROJECT SUMMARY
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/89 Mariposas del Golfo	This is a women association established in 1999. It has 11 members. Its main activity is the provision of tourism services that they provide through a small dining facility and a hostel with 3 rooms for rent. They also have a multiple-use room they use to host training events, meetings and other community activities. During the TE visit they were hosting a 4-month course on handicrafts attended by local women; they plan to use their facilities as a place to show and sell local handicrafts to visitors. They also operate a small butterflies farm (hence the name of the association) that they use as an attraction for tourists and also to grow and sell butterfly cocoons to national and international buyers. They also have a boat that they use to sell sea tours in the Nicoya Gulf to tourists. They are supported by several organizations, but everything began with the SGP support to build the butterfly farm facilities and, during OP5, to buy materials for the hostel rooms. In both cases they also receive training in several areas significant to their work.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y1/12/38 Asociación de Damas Trabajando por el Ambiente (ADATA)	This is women association in the Island of Chira in the Nicoya Gulf, it has 12 women. They started working in 2009. They are building a recycling center, where they will recycle community solid waste and sold the recycled products to different buyers. The center fulfills all national standards, and it will include a kitchen and a nursery school. In this yard the association has also plans to establish hydroponic agriculture. The members of the association succeeded in obtaining all the necessary permits at the Municipality, process that implied to overcome many difficulties. SGP grant financed the building but other institutions provide for the design of the building, the equipment, training and other components. They are planning to open the center by the second half of 2015.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/74 Asociación Damas de Isla de Chira	This association has 10 members. They were women that work on fishing who started this association in 2000 when they were looking for new sources of income. They built and run the “La Amistad” hostel with six rooms with capacity for 4 persons each and a restaurant. They receive tourists and sometimes volunteers and students that are hosted by some of the community families in their homes. Some of association members are also tourist guides and certified boat captains. In the future they want to keep up and improve the conditions of the facilities, but currently the income is enough to cover all costs (including their labor) and generate a small benefit. They won the Benson Venegas Prize established by the SGP NSC (US\$ 5,000.-) and use these funds to improve hostel facilities.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/80 Artesanas de Chira	This is an association of six active members that built the “Artesanas Center”. They design and create handicrafts with natural resources from the Chira island. Recently they were hired to create a mural in an institution en San José. They sell their handicrafts to tourists in their own building that serves as workshop and showroom, fairs, and in some hotels. They are planning to improve the marketing of their handicrafts through internet. The SGP funds were used for training and to build a small building for the association where workshop, office and showroom are located. They are also involved in a project to plant “jicaro” trees (<i>Crescentia sp</i>) a native species whose fruits they use for many handicrafts.

<p>Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/12/55 Asociación de Pescadores Mixta de Montero</p>	<p>This association started in 2010 to improve the fishermen life conditions. It has sixty members (30 men and 30 women). The over catching and other environmental conditions have decreased the fishing conditions in the Nicoya Gulf. Therefore they established a Responsible Fishing Area, to promote fishing sustainable practices. Some women have worked in coordination with the association in the reforestation of mangroves. The SGP funds were used to promote mangrove reforestation, to delimitate the fishing area in the sea (to keep commercial fishermen away) and to buy materials to build meeting facilities for the association. They are planning to strengthen the association actions in promoting responsible fishing practices and better marketing conditions for their products. One of their goals is to be able to produce living bait in order to contribute to the sustainability of the fish population.</p>
<p>Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/12/52 Asociación de Jóvenes Uniendo Esfuerzos para el Desarrollo y la Ecología de Isla Venado (ASJUESDE)</p>	<p>This is youth association promoting conservation and development activities in Venado Island started in 1995 with a group of youth people. It has now 30 members, thirteen women and seventeen men. During this period they benefited from the support of many different institutions. The association members promote many social and environmental activities in the island, and many facilities (school, health post, kinder garden and others) had their first location in the island at the House of Youth run by this association. Their place provides meeting facilities for different local organizations such as AA, the old people association, the environmental groups and others that lack their own buildings or meeting facilities. All these community activities are supported by the income provided by a hostel and small restaurant they run to receive tourist and volunteers that come to island. They organize tours and coordinate with other community members that provide tourism services. The small restaurant and the gallery for handcrafts and art exposition were built with SGP support.</p>
<p>Proyecto COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y1/12/31 Asociación de Apicultores de Jicaral (ASOAPI) and Asociación de Mujeres Empresarias de Jicaral (ASOMEJ)</p>	<p>ASOAPI started in 1998. They have 32 members dedicated to the production of honey that is processed and marketed through ASOAPI. They have new honey processing and packaging installations and are planning to improve production thanks to a long-term supply agreement they signed with major national honey retailing company. ASOAPI managed an SGP project which financed ASOMEJ and the training in recovery and production of honey produced by native stingless bee species. ASOMEJ is a women association with six members that produces honey and health and cosmetic products based on honey. The production of honey from these natives stingless bee is spreading among the communities as a possible and valuable production. It changes an unsustainable practice (to destroy the hives to obtain the honey) into a sustainable one that allows reproducing hives and obtaining the benefit of the honey.</p>
<p>Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/12/54 Asociación de Pescadores Coyoteños (Aspecoy)</p>	<p>This is a fishermen association working on open seas areas on the Pacific coast of the Nicoya Peninsula. It was established in 2003 and they have 34 members. They established governmentally recognized area for responsible fishing, meaning that the use of fishing nets and other forms of commercial fishing are restricted. Responsible fishing is done only by using line and baited hooks techniques that ensure that only large specimens are captured without affecting the reproductive cycle of the different species. This Association was supported by SGP to build a center for receiving and processing fish captured by their members. The center has basic processing, packaging and refrigeration facilities that will help the local fishermen to sell their products better, under a trademark</p>

	highlighting products from responsible fishing, and aimed at final consumers in hotels and restaurants from the capital or large tourism centers attended by consumers looking for this type of products.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/116 Centro Agrícola de CAC Jicaral	The Center started in 1976 and currently Sonia María Durón González is the manager. The Center is a non-governmental institution aimed to promote better agriculture and livestock production and the sustainable use of natural resources. To achieve these goals they implement different agricultural initiatives. The project coordinates actions with ASOAPI (beekeeper association), Agriculture Ministry, and Cattlemen Association. The SGP Project promoted organic agriculture in the communities of the Biological Corridor of the Nicoya Peninsula. During the project they promoted training and implementation of organic vegetable and fruit tree orchards among farmers, families, education institutions and communities.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/BD/13/82 Asociación AgroOrgánica Guanacasteca	It is a local association of organic producers from three counties (Nandayure, Nicoya and Santa Cruz) predominantly dedicated to cattle ranching. It has 24 highly motivated members committed to the development and mainstreaming of conservation and organic production in the area. It was established in 2009 as a result of the awareness activities from MAOCO (Costa Rican Organic Agriculture Movement, also supported by SGP in previous GEF OPs) in the region. They received training and support from several different organizations, governmental and not. The SGP support was requested for forest protection, soil and water conservation and management, organic agriculture, adoption of renewable energy sources and strengthening capacities. The members of the association have their own individual farms where they actually practice organic production and the other listed activities and they sell their production to neighbors, local hotels and restaurants and in the local markets in the tourism areas.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/CC/13/83 FUNDECONGO	It is a local environmental organization established in 1994. It has eight active members. Its main activity is to support local producers (cattle ranchers and farmers) in many processes related to reforestation and forest production such as forest inventories, forest certification, requests for payment for environmental services and other. The SGP Project was aimed at organizing and training community-based Brigades to fight forest fires around the Diria National Park. They have now 4 Brigades and more than 100 firemen trained and equipped to deal with wild fires, including the Arado Brigade (next Project below). In 2014 they participated in fighting more than 40 wildfires around the Park. In both, 2013 and 2014, they manage to keep the areas affected by wildfires under 15 has / year, mostly on grasslands and secondary forests in early succession stages. Additionally they organized awareness events and worked jointly with farmers to prevent wildfires.
Project COS/SGP/FSP/OP5/Y2/CC/12/63 ASADA de Arado	This is a community association managing the aqueduct supplying water to the community. It was established in 1989 and they have 565 associates. Their activities turn around the operation of the aqueduct, but the community is located in the Buffer Zone of the Diria National Park. SGP began their support to this group during OP5 and the SGP funds were used to organize a Community Brigade to Fight Forest Fires (who entered in action with a few wild fires in 2014), reforestation, environmental awareness at the community level (schools and communal events) and to buy materials for the construction of a small building with the office and storing room for the association. It is a very active and consolidated group and the income from providing water supply covers its operation fully.

ANNEX 5. List of documents reviewed

1. Costa Rica SGP Project Document (PRODOC)
2. Costa Rica SGP 2015 Project Implementation Review (PIR)
3. Costa Rica SGP Mid-term Review (MTR) Report 2014
4. Marco de Cooperación de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo en Costa Rica (UNDAF) 2008 - 2012
5. UNDP Country Program Document Costa Rica (CPD) 2010-2014
6. National Steering Committee Meeting Acts (several)
7. SGP Quarterly Project Reports (several)
8. SGP National Coordinator Reports (several)
9. SGP Project M&E Reports (several)
10. Grant Project Proposals submitted to and approved by the SGP (several)
11. Grant Project Progress Reports (several)
12. Grant Project Final Reports, Final External Evaluation Reports and Final External Audit Reports (several)
13. Reports from the 2014 Annual Meetings of Project Partners and Grantees (thematic, five reports)
14. UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects
15. UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results
16. GEF Evaluation Office. The ROTI Handbook: Towards enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects
17. UNEG. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation
18. PPD Comité Directivo Nacional. Sin fecha. Términos de Referencia del Comité Directivo Nacional actualizados para la OP5
19. Comisión Asesora sobre Degradación de Tierras (CADETI). 2004. Programa de Acción Nacional de lucha contra la degradación de tierras
20. PPD/PNUD. 2014. Facilitación del proceso evaluación de línea base y elaboración de una estrategia de paisaje del programa país COMDEKS de la Iniciativa Satoyama en la cuenca del río Jesús María. Informe Final.
21. Alpizar V., E. 2014. Aplicación de la plantilla digital para estimar carbono en proyectos del Programa de Pequeñas Donaciones (PPD) en Costa Rica

ANNEX 6. Evaluation Questions Matrix

As defined in the Inception Report and the TOR, the Evaluation Questions Matrix is as follows:

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology*
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
• What are the objectives of the GEF focal area?	• List of GEF Objectives for the FA	• GEF Documents	• DR + I
• What are the priorities of UNDP development environment?	• List of UNDP priorities	• UNDP Documents	• DR + I
• What are the objectives and indicators of the project?	• Projects Objectives & indicators	• PRODOC & Reports	• DR + I
• What is the level of correspondence between the above? Why? What can be improved?	• Level of correspondence	• Evaluator's criteria	• Comparison analysis
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
• What are the Project Objectives and Outcomes?	• Proposed Objectives and outcomes	• PRODOC	• DR + I
• What are the achievements of the project?	• Achieved Objectives and outcomes	• Project Reports • Partners & beneficiaries • Field observation	• DR + I + O
• What is the level of correspondence between proposals and accomplishments achieved? Is it satisfying? Why? What can be improved?	• Level of correspondence	• Evaluator's criteria	• Comparison analysis
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
• What are the project implementation costs? How are they structured? Why?	• Project costs and costs structure	• Project information	DR + I
• How many people staff members (permanent and temporary) have the project? Why? What proportions of costs are involved? What human resources were mobilized outside the project?	• Project Staff • Staff from other organizations • Staff from beneficiary organizations	• Project information	DR + I
• What was the cost of the project? What other resources were mobilized? What results achieved?	• Project total cost (GEF + co-financing) • Project direct and indirect benefits	• Project information	DR + I
• In what areas the project was efficient and what can be improved?	• Evaluator's criterion on efficiency level based on other experiences	• Evaluator's criteria	• Evaluative analysis

Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different types of risks to the sustainability of the project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of financial, institutional, economic and environmental risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + O
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the likelihood that these risks actually happen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probability of occurrence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + O
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far the most likely risks endanger the permanence of the results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact of the risks on the results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + O
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures have been taken to prevent or mitigate these risks? Are they adequate? What can be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of prevention and mitigation measures and their degree of relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Evaluator's criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + Evaluative analysis
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major pressures on the environment related to the themes of the project in the region? What are being reduced? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of environmental pressures and trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + O
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What aspects of the project have improved the ecological situation in the region? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of aspects in which the ecological situation has improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Field observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + O
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the project has helped to reduce pressures and / or improve the ecological situation? What could have been improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of achievements and results of the project on related environmental, ecological and socio-economic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project information • Partners and beneficiaries perceptions • Evaluator's criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DR + I + Evaluative analysis

ANNEX 7. Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁷

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

Name of Consultant: Alejandro Carlos IMBACH

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Not relevant

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

Signed at *Turrialba, Costa Rica* on *February 10, 2015*

Signature:  _____

⁷www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

ANNEX 8. Terminal Evaluation Report Clearance Form

Terminal Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared By:	
Commissioning Unit	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____