

Interim Evaluation of the UNEP/GCF Project

REDD+ Results-based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017 (Paraguay + Verde Project)

UNEP SB-OI 6313



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The evaluation consultants hope that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalization of the current project and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

CONSULTANTS

This evaluation was undertaken by DeftEdge (www.deftedge.com), a firm that has been providing results-based planning, management, training and evaluation services to UN agencies, international organizations, governments and non-government organizations since 1997.

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ABOUT THE EVALUATION

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Brief Description: This report is an Interim Evaluation of a UNEP/GCF project being implemented between 2020 and 2026. The project's overall development goal is to further reduce emissions from degradation and deforestation in Paraguay to meet NDC targeted emission reductions of 20% by 2030. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GCF and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Climate finance, regulatory frameworks, enabling environment, governance, economic development

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Meaning
AE	Accredited Entity (UNEP)
APR	Annual Performance Report
BAU	Business-as-usual
CBIT	Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency
CPLI	Community-based and Locally-led Initiatives
CLPI	<i>Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado</i> (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent - FPIC)
DNCC	Dirección Nacional de Cambio Climático
EE	Executing Entity (MADES)
ENBCS	National Strategy of Forests for Sustainable Growth (Estrategia Nacional de Bosques para el Crecimiento Sostenible)
ERs	Emissions Reductions
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSAP	Empresa De Servicios Sanitarios del Paraguay
ET	Evaluation Team
FAA	Funded Activity Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Funding Proposal
FREL	Forest Reference Emission Levels
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IAS	Implementing Agencies
ID	Investigación para el Desarrollo
INDI	Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous People
INFONA	National Forestry Institute
IR	Inception Report
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MAC	The project's grievance redress mechanism
MADES	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture/Livestock
MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MINMUJER	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MTS	UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NCCF	National Climate Change Fund
NDA	National Designated Authority

NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
PAMs	Policies and Measures
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNRF	National Forest Restoration Plan
POA	Annual Operating Plan
POUT	Municipal land-use plan
POW	Programme of Work
P+V	Paraguay Mas Verde (Project)
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RBP	Results-Based Payment
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
RNMR	National Women's Network
STP	Technical Secretariat for Development Planning and Economic and Social Planning
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ID:	SB-OI 6313	Grant ID (if applicable):	FP 121 GCF
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division/Adaptation and Resilience Branch/Climate Change Mitigation Unit		
Implementing Partners:	UNEP		
Sources of Funding:	Country(ies): Paraguay	Institution Name/Type: Green Climate Fund (GCF)	
Relevant SDG(s):	1, 5, 13, 15		
MTS (all that apply):		UNEP approval date:	21/11/2019
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Output(s) number/reference	POW Direct Outcome: Private and public financial flows are aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022).	MTS 2025 Outcome: IA - Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways
			POW Expected Accomplishment:
Sub-programme:	Climate Action	Programme Coordination Project:	Adaptation and Resilience
Expected start date:	13/11/2020	Actual start date:	27/11/2020
Planned completion date:	13/11/2026	Actual operational completion date:	Not Applicable
Planned total project budget at approval:	50.000.000 USD	Actual total expenditures reported as of 31-12-2024:	14,055,048 USD
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: N/A In-kind: N/A	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: N/A In-kind: N/A
		Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of [date]:	Cash:
First disbursement:	50.000.000 USD	Planned date of financial closure:	12/02/2027
No. of formal project revisions:		Date of last approved project revision:	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	18/12/2025
Interim Evaluation/ Evaluation (planned date):	15/09/2024	Interim Evaluation/ Evaluation (actual date):	30/06/2025
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	25/12/2026	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	n/a
Coverage Implementing Country(ies):	Paraguay	Coverage - Implementing Region(s):	Paraguay
Dates of previous project phases:	In progress	Status of future project phases:	In progress

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Interim Evaluation of the Paraguay + Verde (P+V) project, a six-year initiative funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) under its REDD+ Results-Based Payments (RBP) modality. The project was launched in November 2020 and is expected to close in November 2026, with a total GCF investment of USD 50 million. By the end of 2024, it had disbursed approximately USD 14 million.

P+V builds on Paraguay's achievement in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation between 2015 and 2017. It supports the implementation of the National Strategy on Forests for Sustainable Growth (ENBCS) and aims to operationalize and capitalize the National Climate Change Fund (NCCF). The project aligns with the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) target to avoid 429 MtCO₂eq in emissions by 2030 and addresses one of the world's highest historical deforestation rates.

The project is implemented by MADES (Executing Entity), with UNEP serving as the Accredited Entity. It is supported by UNDP and FAO as Implementing Agencies. Project activities fall under two key outputs:

- (1) implementation of the ENBCS through institutional strengthening, forest monitoring, safeguards, environmental service payments, territorial governance, and communications; and
- (2) establishment of the NCCF to provide sustainable finance for climate action. Collectively, these efforts aim to strengthen forest governance, incentivize conservation, and reduce deforestation drivers across Paraguay's territory.

The P+V project is governed by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and implemented through a Project Management Unit (PMU). The PSC provides strategic oversight, approves workplans and major changes, and is co-chaired by MADES (the Executing Entity) and UNEP (the Accredited Entity). Its membership includes key institutions such as INFONA, MAG, MEF, and Indigenous representatives, with advisory roles held by MINMUJER, INDI, and MESA REDD+. Day-to-day coordination is carried out by the PMU, which sits within UNEP.

Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

This formative Interim Evaluation, commissioned by the UNEP Evaluation Office, aims to generate lessons learned, identify good practices, and provide recommendations to support the remainder of the Paraguay + Verde project's implementation and inform potential course corrections—including the possibility of a no-cost extension beyond 2026. The evaluation is intended primarily for UNEP's regional and country offices, the UNEP-GCF Coordination Unit, and implementing partners (FAO, UNDP), with additional users including national government counterparts, the GCF Secretariat, civil society, and Indigenous groups. Covering the full implementation period from project approval in November 2019 through March 2025, the evaluation assessed both Outputs 1 and 2 across national and decentralized levels, with field visits to Cerro Corá and Ñacunday National Parks. It examined OECD-DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability), as well as UNEP-specific evaluation criteria such as project design, financial management, monitoring and reporting, likelihood of impact, and cross-cutting issues (gender, inclusion, and safeguards). Efficiency analysis included a review of expenditure trends and cost-effectiveness measures.

Methodology

The evaluation employed a non-experimental, mixed-methods design with a focus on qualitative data, complemented by quantitative data for financial analysis and output reporting. It followed a participatory, utilization-focused approach involving close collaboration with UNEP and project partners during all phases, from inception to analysis and reporting. The evaluation was gender-responsive and inclusive by design, disaggregating data by gender and stakeholder group and ensuring representation of vulnerable populations. Data collection methods included an in-depth document review, key informant interviews (KIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observations during field visits to Cerro Corá and Ñacunday National Parks. A total of 74 individuals were consulted across the following stakeholder groups: Accredited Entity (UNEP);

implementing agencies (FAO; UNDP); national ministries (including MADES, the Executing Entity); local authorities and park management staff; civil society and indigenous groups; community beneficiaries. The evaluation adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, as well as UNEP's internal guidelines and quality assurance protocols.

Findings

Overall, the project was rated as Moderately Satisfactory. A detailed ratings table can be found in Annex 13 of the report.

Main Criteria	Ratings
A. Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
B. Quality & Revision of Project Design	Moderately Satisfactory
C. Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory
D. Financial Management	Satisfactory
E. Efficiency	Moderately Satisfactory
F. Monitoring and Reporting	Moderately Satisfactory
G. Exit Strategy & Sustainability	Moderately Likely
H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	Satisfactory
Overall Rating	Moderately Satisfactory

Strategic Relevance

The Paraguay + Verde project demonstrates strong alignment with UNEP's strategic priorities, particularly under the Nature Action and Climate Action subprogrammes, and contributes to regional efforts addressing deforestation and ecosystem degradation. At the national level, the project directly supports Paraguay's updated NDC and the National Strategy on Forests for Sustainable Growth (ENBCS), advancing priorities such as forest monitoring, territorial planning, and sustainable production. It is also fully aligned with the GCF's Results-Based Payments (RBP) modality, having met all eligibility requirements and serving as a model for performance-linked climate finance. The project complements earlier REDD+ readiness work and other initiatives like GEF's CBIT and the UNDP Green Commodities Programme, particularly through the continuation of multi-stakeholder commodity platforms. While coherence with other GCF-financed projects remains limited due to the absence of a GCF Country Programme, steps are being taken by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) to strengthen coordination going forward.

Quality of Project Design

The project design reflects strong strategic alignment with REDD+ priorities and national institutions, building on previous readiness investments and assigning clear roles to MADES, INFONA, UNDP, and FAO. Implementation arrangements were well articulated, including the establishment of the PMU and PSC, with provisions for safeguards, communications, and knowledge management embedded in the PMU structure. However, several design weaknesses have affected implementation. Among these is the absence of a formal Theory of Change and results framework, with no logframe, indicators, or targets to support performance monitoring. While planning relies on the FAA's sub-output structure, the lack of outcome-level tracking hinders adaptive management. Additionally, risk analysis was limited, and the design did not anticipate major contextual shifts—such as the 2023 political transition—that have since disrupted implementation timelines.

Nature of External Context

The project has operated in an unfavourable external context marked by sustained political, institutional, and global challenges. The 2023 government transition caused significant delays in high-level decision-making, approval of workplans, and the structuring of the NCCF. Institutional fragmentation—particularly among MADES, MEF, and INFONA—further impeded coordination and slowed implementation. Early governance issues, including delays in formalizing Indigenous representation on the PSC, also contributed to procedural bottlenecks. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused early setbacks, delaying key strategies and consultations. Collectively, these external factors postponed effective implementation by nearly two years, prompting consideration of a no-cost extension.

Effectiveness

The Paraguay + Verde project has made moderate progress toward its intended outcomes, with stronger performance in Component 1—focused on REDD+ implementation—than in Component 2, which aims to operationalize the NCCF. While foundational outputs have been delivered in areas such as forest monitoring, territorial governance, and protected area conservation, progress has been uneven, affected by institutional fragmentation, delayed roll-out, and the absence of a clear results framework.

Notable achievements include the upgrade of the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), development of municipal land-use plans (POUTs) in over 12 municipalities, formalization of protected areas, and enhanced response capacity for wildfires and deforestation alerts. The Joint Intervention Protocol (2024) has established a framework for inter-institutional responses to illegal land use, and Paraguay's first National Forest Restoration Plan was developed with broad participation. The new MADES headquarters was completed, and safeguards tools and gender-responsive consultation methodologies were introduced to support inclusion.

Despite these gains, effectiveness has been constrained by implementation delays, infrastructure quality issues, and limited operationalization of several outputs. For example, while Indigenous communities have been certified under the Environmental Services Regime, the absence of a functioning market interface and interoperability between institutional systems limits the utility of this certification. Similarly, sustainable production and income diversification pilots have shown promising technical results in isolated cases but remain small-scale, fragmented, and slow to reach beneficiaries.

Component 2 has been significantly delayed. While draft regulations, fiduciary models, and safeguards protocols for the NCCF have been developed, the fund remains non-operational. Political transitions, legal uncertainties, and design misalignment with Paraguay's public financial management framework have delayed the operationalization of the NCCF. As of early 2025, only a revised RBP window is being pursued, with first disbursements not expected until late 2026—pending legislative approval and stakeholder preparedness.

Overall, the project's likelihood of long-term impact is only moderately likely, as critical assumptions about institutional coordination, inclusive governance, and sustainable financing have only partially held. While Paraguay now has stronger monitoring systems and planning tools, enforcement, market access, and local ownership remain weak links in the causal chain. Adaptive management has occurred in select cases—such as adjusting the strategy in Caazapá National Park after discovering illegal plantations or restructuring Component 2 to focus solely on the RBP window—but the absence of a robust M&E framework limits systematic learning and course correction.

Despite these challenges, the project has also generated unintended positive outcomes, including court rulings that enforce environmental service certificate purchases, digital improvements in INFONA's administrative systems, and the establishment of new regional Indigenous councils. These emergent changes suggest the project is contributing to broader institutional and policy shifts, even if its full impact may not be realized within the current timeframe.

Financial Management

The project has demonstrated strong financial management, with full adherence to UNEP's financial procedures and timely submission of detailed, activity-based financial reports. Annual operational plans were prepared, and no budget revisions or overruns occurred. A comprehensive set of financial documents—including disbursement records and PCAs—was made available, though disbursement reports for MADES were not provided due to delays in Component 2 implementation. While no audit had been conducted as of the review, one is scheduled at project end. Coordination between financial and project teams has been highly effective, with regular communication, responsive support, and joint missions to resolve bottlenecks—particularly those affecting the NCCF. Despite these strengths, under-spending in Component 2 remains a concern linked to delayed execution.

Efficiency

The project has experienced significant implementation delays, especially during its first three years, with cumulative disbursement reaching only 28% of the total budget by end-2024. These delays were driven by external disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and 2023 political transition, staffing turnover, and slow procurement procedures under UNEP. Despite these challenges, the project employed several cost-effective practices, including local procurement, joint missions, and leveraging UNDP's infrastructure expertise. However, certain activities—like the Caazapá production pilot—raised concerns about proportionality of resource use. A no-cost extension appears justified to complete delayed activities, particularly under Component 2, though its value will depend on the timely resolution of legal and institutional bottlenecks around the NCCF's RBP window.

Monitoring and Reporting

The project has faced significant limitations in monitoring and evaluation due to the absence of a centralized results framework with indicators, baselines, or targets, as permitted under the GCF's RBP modality. While FAO and UNDP have used their own internal M&E systems, these are not fully aligned with the project's core planning tool (Table 14 of the FAA), limiting coherence and evaluability. The PMU lacks a dedicated M&E specialist, and monitoring has primarily occurred through safeguard and thematic missions, rather than systematic tracking of performance across outputs. Although Annual Performance Reports are comprehensive and well written, they remain largely qualitative due to the absence of measurable indicators. Ministries and partners have also reported unclear expectations for reporting and limited use of performance data in decision-making.

Sustainability

The project's design demonstrates a clear intent to promote sustainability through institutional and policy reform, even though no formal exit strategy is articulated in planning documents. Strong national ownership is evidenced by public institutional uptake of project-supported reforms—such as INFONA's new wildfire unit and the use of POUTs by municipal governments. Several national systems, including the NFMS, have been institutionalized and show promise for continuity. However, financial sustainability remains a concern, especially as the NCCF has not yet materialized beyond a single RBP window with limited scope, and no long-term funding streams have been secured to replicate or maintain pilot initiatives. The institutional sustainability of platforms and pilot models is also uncertain due to reliance on short-term support and weak inter-agency coordination. Finally, the lack of integration of the Dirección Nacional de Cambio Climático (DNCC)—Paraguay's lead climate authority—from project implementation represents a missed opportunity to anchor REDD+ governance more firmly within the national climate architecture.

The project has faced a complex set of enabling and constraining factors. Preparation and readiness were moderately satisfactory, with over a year's delay between Board approval and implementation due to budget adjustments, protracted UN-to-UN negotiations, and institutional coordination challenges. Despite this, early groundwork was laid through stakeholder engagement and formal partnership agreements. Project management and supervision have been characterized by strong technical capacities across implementing agencies, but UNEP's limited in-country presence and internal staff turnover have constrained effective

coordination—particularly under Component 2. The PSC reflects inclusive governance, with Indigenous and gender representation, but its strategic role has been limited by uneven participation from key ministries and civil society, and by the absence of the department within MEF currently functioning as the NDA. Private sector engagement has not materialized despite its central role in REDD+ implementation. The project has demonstrated a strong commitment to human rights and gender equity, with notable achievements such as the creation of the Red Nacional de Mujeres Rurales and institutionalization of FPIC. However, gaps persist in follow-up at community level and in the operationalization of safeguards. Country ownership is anchored in the leadership of MADES and the alignment of project activities with national REDD+ strategies, though engagement from some ministries has been inconsistent and high-level political commitment remains uneven. Communication and knowledge management functions have expanded since 2023, with the development of dedicated strategies, branding, and dissemination via government channels. However, the late consolidation of these functions and weak integration with monitoring systems have limited their strategic contribution to visibility, learning, and outreach.

Conclusions

Conclusion #1: Strategic relevance and institutional alignment have enabled early momentum, particularly under Component 1.

Conclusion #2: However, key systemic gaps are limiting effective coordination and the pace of implementation.

Conclusion #3: Component 2 remains the project's most significant bottleneck, with unresolved design, institutional, and political constraints.

Conclusion #4: The lack of a unified results framework and real-time monitoring system has limited adaptive management.

Conclusion #5: Gender equality and safeguards have been areas of strong procedural compliance, but with uneven systemic integration.

Conclusion #6: Progress has accelerated since 2023, but efficiency and sequencing challenges remain.

Conclusion #7: The foundations for sustainability are visible but require broader institutional integration.

Lessons Learned

The Evaluation offers four lessons learned:

Lesson Learned #1: Project success in multi-agency contexts is enhanced when coordination platforms are embedded from the outset.

Lesson Learned #2: Investing in national systems for safeguards can promote both compliance and inclusive development.

Lesson Learned #3: Projects that invest in institutional capacity through hands-on implementation tend to generate stronger conditions for sustainability.

Lesson Learned #4: Clear design and early dissemination of complex financing mechanisms are essential when project components involve significant institutional and financial complexity.

Recommendations

The evaluation proposes eight recommendations, which are targeted primarily at the UNEP project team.

Recommendation #1: Consideration should be given to pursuing a no-cost extension (NCE) for: a) Component 1, to finalize activities for which progress has been slower; b) for Component 2, but only if progress has been made in establishing the required legal framework.

Recommendation #2: Establish a high-level coordination mechanism for cross-sectoral and technical alignment.

Recommendation #3: Integrate the NDA formally into the Project Steering Committee structure.

Recommendation #4: Ensure strategic institutional engagement with DNCC and mainstream climate finance mandates.

Recommendation #5: Strengthen inclusive engagement mechanisms by institutionalizing support to the National Women's Network and improving communication with Indigenous communities.

Recommendation #6: Reinforce the project's monitoring function to enhance learning and adaptive management.

Recommendation #7: Develop an exit strategy for selected pilots and tools.

Recommendation #8: Operationalize and report on Activity 1.2.2.2 to ensure meaningful strengthening of REDD+ human resource capacities.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Context of REDD+ and the Paraguay + Verde Project

- 1 After successfully reducing greenhouse gas emissions between 2015 and 2017, Paraguay accessed funding through the Green Climate Fund (GCF) REDD+ results-based payments window. This recognized the results achieved in terms of emissions reductions, and sought to generate further reductions through the implementation of the National Strategy of Forests for Sustainable Growth (ENBCS) and the operationalization and capitalization of the National Climate Change Fund (NCCF) in Paraguay.
- 2 The REDD+ framework (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is a voluntary initiative under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that helps incentivize developing countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the forest sector through results-based payments (RBPs) for verified emission reductions. For Paraguay, protecting forests is critical because the country has historically had one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world. According to the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), Paraguay has seen “an average loss of 286,000 hectares” of forest per year (p.2). However, since the adoption of the ENBCS in 2019, the situation has begun to improve. Paraguay also recently initiated the NCCF which is intended to assist in funding actions to reduce emissions from deforestation and related factors. These efforts align with multiple national policies and Paraguay’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) that aim to avoid 429 MtCO₂eq emissions by 2030.
- 3 The Paraguay + Verde Project started in November 2020 and is expected to be completed by November 2026. The total budget (fully funded by GCF) is 50,000,000 USD with 14,055,048 USD expended by the end of 2024. See Annex 2 for detailed financial tables including (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding /expenditure. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES) as the Executing Entity (EE) and UNEP as the Accredited Entity (AE). It is supported by two Implementing Agencies (IAs): United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Within UNEP, the project is part of its Climate Action subprogramme, falls under the Climate Change Division, Adaptation and Resilience Branch and is administered by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Project Outputs and Outcomes

- 4 The current Project directs the funds provided by results-based payments towards the implementation of ENBCS (Output 1) and towards the establishment of a REDD+ financing window within the NCCF (Output 2). According to the evaluation ToR, the following “fund-level outcomes” are expected as a result of project activities:

Strengthened institutional and regulatory systems:

- The capacities of the MADES and National Forestry Institute (INFONA) to implement ENBCS are strengthened, with high levels of participation of stakeholders and compliance with safeguards.
- An enabling environment to implement the ENBCS (includes piloting sustainable economic alternatives for local actors, such as peasant and indigenous communities) is created.
- The National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), including National Forest Inventory, terrestrial monitoring satellite systems, and the Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report of the agriculture and forestry sectors, is consolidated.
- A safeguards monitoring and reporting system is strengthened.
- Project lessons and results communicated to promote a paradigm shift on forest and sustainable development.

Improved management of land and forest:

- A strengthened regulatory framework facilitates land use regulation and the control and monitoring of land use in forest lands and reduces deforestation.

- Financial incentives (subsidies, tailor-made credits, guarantee funds) reduce deforestation drivers.
 - Market for environmental services encourages forest conservation.
 - Communication campaign positively affects people's behavior towards forest conservation and sustainable production.
- 5 The Project consists of two key outputs, each having several sub-outputs.
- **Output 1 establishes the infrastructure for implementing the Environmental and Natural Resource Conservation Strategy** through six sub-outputs. It combines early conservation actions, institutional capacity building, safeguards monitoring, environmental payment systems, territorial governance improvements, and results communication. These elements work together to combat deforestation through rapid response systems, regulatory frameworks, and digital efficiency measures.
 - **Output 2 focuses on operationalizing the NCCF to finance climate initiatives.** It encompasses three key areas: establishing operational regulations and decision-making mechanisms, capitalizing the fund through disbursements, and implementing verification procedures to ensure proper use of resources. This creates a transparent financial framework to channel Results-Based Payments toward climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

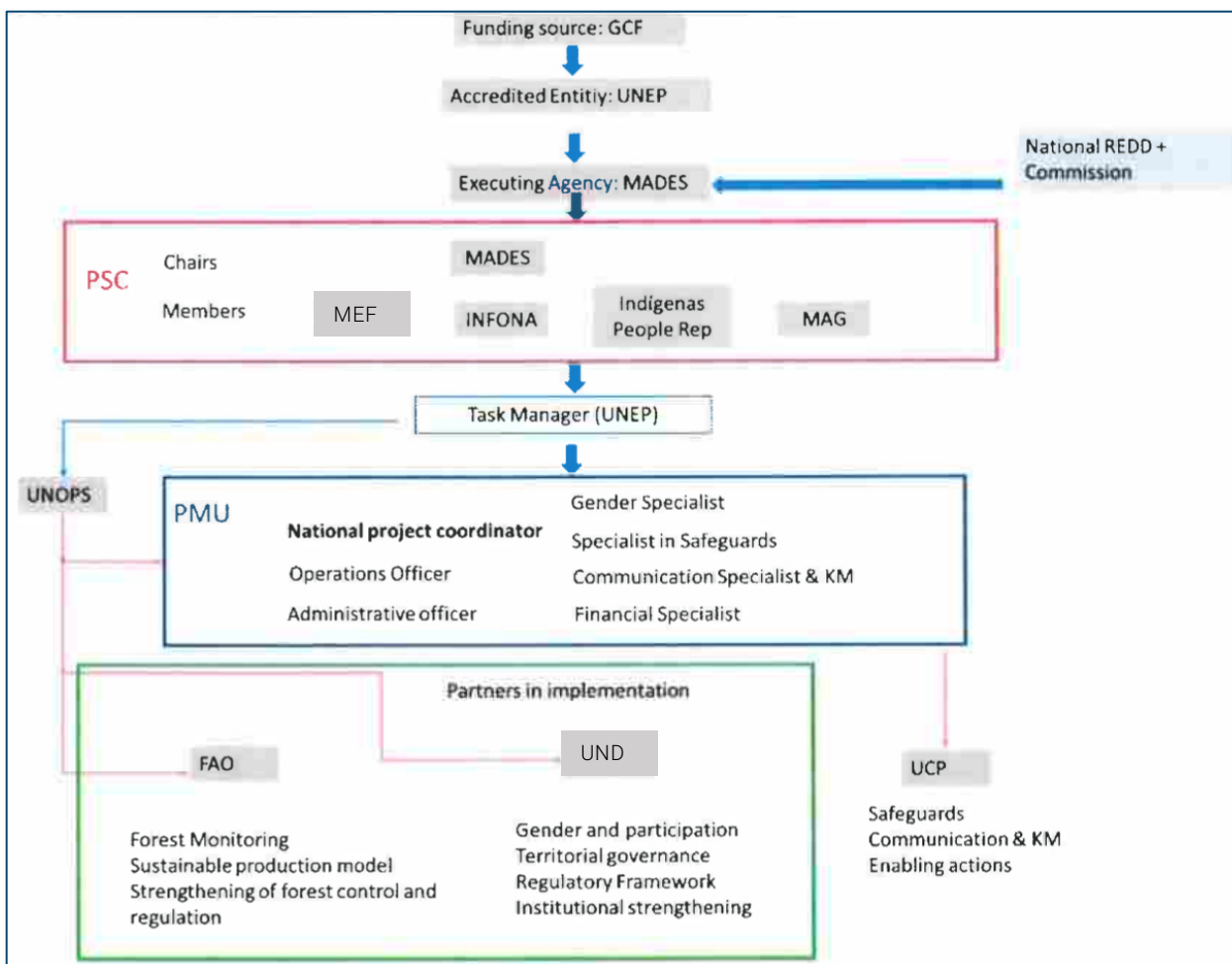
Implementation Structure and Stakeholder Analysis

- 6 In terms of its governance and management arrangements, the Project is composed of a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and a Project Management Unit (PMU) (see Figure 1)¹. The PSC provides oversight and strategic direction, including supervision of project implementation, and review of annual workplan and project reports. It is also responsible for approving any changes in project objectives, activities and timeline. The PSC is co-chaired by the MADES, the Executing Entity (EE), and UNEP, the AE, with the UNEP Task Manager providing overall project supervision and participating in annual PSC meetings. The PSC is also comprised of full members - INFONA, Ministry of Agriculture/Livestock (MAG), Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), and Representatives of Indigenous Communities² - and advisory members - Ministry of Women's Affairs (MINMUJER), Paraguayan Institute of Indigenous People (INDI), MESA REDD+.
- 7 The PMU is responsible for coordinating project activities between the AE, the EE and project stakeholders, including FAO, UNDP, government partners, and civil society. It is led by a project coordinator with support from: an operations officer; administrative officer; technical and operational assistant; administrative assistant; gender specialist; safeguards specialist; communication specialist; knowledge management specialist.
- 8 The project stakeholders mapping diagram (Figure 2) depicts the internal and external stakeholders for the project. A full stakeholder analysis table can be found in Annex 6 which provides an overview of key project stakeholders, their priorities regarding the project and involvement in the evaluation process. It also identifies where a stakeholder is part of the Project's governance and management arrangements.

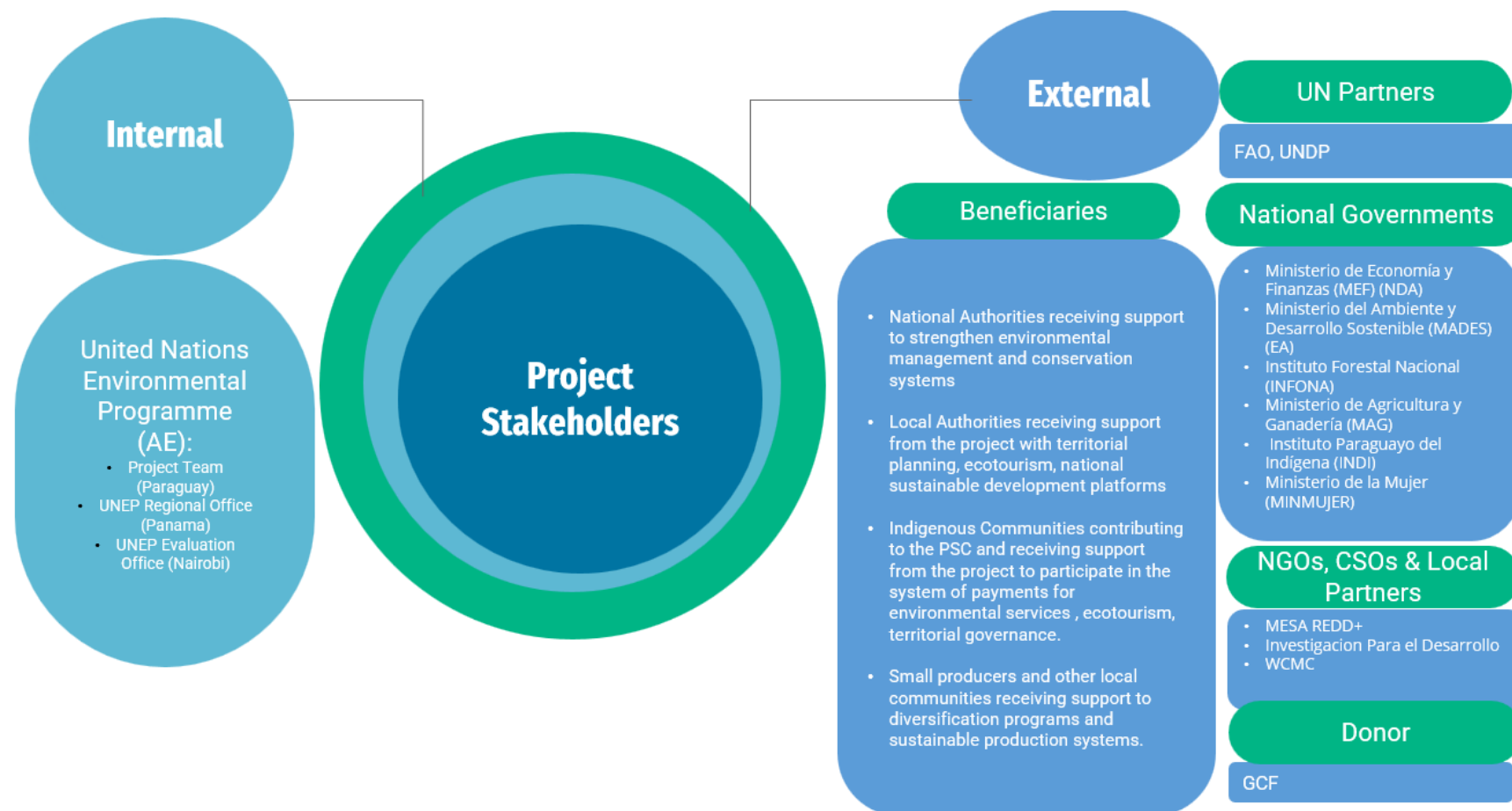
¹ Source: Funding Proposal, page 50

² This includes two representatives for each of the country's two regions (one woman and one man), for a total of four representatives.

Figure 1: Governance and Management Arrangements



FigFigure 2: Stakeholder Mapping Diagram



EVALUATION METHODS

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

- 9 Commissioned by the UNEP Evaluation Office, this Interim Evaluation is formative and has a learning purpose. It has sought to generate lessons learned, good practices and recommendations to inform the remainder of the implementation cycle and guide potential course corrections. Additionally, the evaluation considered the need for a possible no-cost extension beyond the current anticipated end date of 2026. The primary evaluation users are the UNEP Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean, the UNEP Country Office in Paraguay, the UNEP-GCF Coordination Unit, the GCF Portfolio Manager in UNEP's Climate Change Division, and the Project's implementing partners (i.e. UNDP, FAO). Other users include government partners, the GCF Secretariat, civil society, indigenous groups, and other community groups.
- 10 The Interim Evaluation covers the entire project implementation timeframe, from its approval in November 2019 until the end of the evaluation's data collection phase in March 2025. The geographic coverage of the evaluation included both national and decentralized activities, with a focus at decentralized level on two national parks, namely Parque Nacional Cerro Cora and Parque Nacional Ñacunday, where the ET conducted field visits to collect primary data. The programmatic scope of the evaluation is both Output 1 and Output 2 as per the Project's Funded Activity Agreement (FAA).
- 11 The evaluation covers OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. In accordance with UNEP guidelines for evaluations, the following criteria are also included and are rated for their performance: quality of project design; financial management; monitoring and reporting; likelihood of impact; factors affecting project performance – including country ownership and drivenness; and cross-cutting issues (of gender equality and inclusion as well as environmental and social safeguards). Unexpected results are also assessed. Considering the formative nature of the evaluation, the criteria of effectiveness, sustainability and likelihood of impact are covered lightly, focusing on an assessment of the Project's positioning to meet these criteria.
- 12 With respect to the efficiency analysis, the evaluation looked at the use of financial resources and rate of expenditure.³ It also examined, to the extent possible, whether the project implemented any cost-effectiveness measures and sought to procure inputs at the lowest possible costs (for example, through procurement processes for the construction of the new building).

Evaluation Design and Approaches

- 13 The design of this evaluation is non-experimental and draws on mixed methods to collect primary and secondary data. Given its midterm, formative nature, the evaluation relied mostly on qualitative data, but quantitative data was used to perform the financial analysis and report on output achievement. The evaluation process was participatory and utilization-focused, with an intent to maximize the use of evaluation findings and recommendations by its primary users. UNEP staff were closely involved in the evaluation process by participating in inception workshops to validate the methodology and contributed to the analysis and reporting phase by validating findings and co-creating recommendations.
- 14 The evaluation is gender-responsive in that gender equality is considered in the evaluation questions, methodological approach and analysis. The evaluation sought a gender balance of evaluation participants, disaggregating collected data by gender and stakeholder group, looking for and reporting any gender differences in responses, and ensuring the comfort level of all participants particularly in any group sessions that are held. The analysis looked closely at the extent to which outputs and outcomes integrated gender considerations and recommendations are made for further incorporating gender and other cross-cutting themes such as social and environmental safeguards into the work going forward. The evaluation also

³ As agreed with the Project Task Manager and UNEP staff during inception consultations, the Evaluation Team did not conduct a full cost-effectiveness analysis that would compare costs with comparable initiatives.

addresses inclusivity by considering the extent to which the work has addressed leave no one behind (LNOB), a central tenant of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- 15 The evaluation has adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation⁴ and the UNEP Evaluation Office guidelines and tools⁵.

Data collection methods, sampling and sources

The evaluation employed the following data collection methods:

- 16 **Document review:** The evaluation conducted an in-depth desk review of project documents (strategic documents, government/GCF/UNEP policies, Funding proposal and agreements, annual operational plans and budgets etc.) against evaluation questions set out in the evaluation framework.
- 17 **Key informant interviews (KIIs):** The Evaluation Team conducted virtual and in-person KIIs with a range of project stakeholders to ensure that the diversity of relevant stakeholders as reflected in the stakeholder analysis (See Annex 6 for a list of stakeholders engaged) was covered by data collection. These included staff from UNEP, FAO, and UNDP. Government representatives were also consulted, namely from MADES, INFONA, MAG, INDI, MINMUJER, and MEF. Participants were selected purposefully by the PMU based on their positions and on the extent of their involvement in project governance mechanisms and as recipients of project support. A snowballing approach was also used by the Evaluation Team to identify additional stakeholders as relevant. KIIs were conducted with representatives of the Mesa REDD+, indigenous groups, and local authorities. KIIs lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and were guided by a semi-structured protocol (see Annex 7) aligned with the Evaluation Framework (Annex 4).
- 18 **Focus group discussions (FGD):** FGD were conducted with community members (women and men), and park rangers. Three FGDs were held in the two national parks. In total, 13 individuals were consulted through this method.
- 19 **Observations:** The evaluation conducted observations during field visits to the National Parks. The focus of these observations included, for example, improvements in infrastructure (parks and MADES building), ease of access, and visitor services, enhanced signage, conservation status of the forests at specific sites, and involvement of the buffer area community, among other improvements. Observations were selected during virtual KIIs with UNEP, FAO, and UNDP prior to the field visit.
- 20 The sampling approach used to identify the stakeholders that participated in the evaluation process was mostly purposive, with the Project Manager identifying individuals that have the most intimate knowledge of the Project. To the extent possible, communities' members from vulnerable groups (e.g. indigenous people, etc.) were purposefully selected to participate in FGDs. A snowballing approach was also used to identify additional relevant stakeholders that had not been identified during inception, although the time to conduct additional consultation was limited due to the evaluation's tight timeline.
- 21 The Evaluation Team conducted in-person data collection in the capital of Asuncion to consult with government and other relevant stakeholders and field visits to two national parks (Parque Nacional Cerro Cora and Parque Nacional Ñacunday). The selection of both parks was based on their representation of distinct ecoregions, as well as the considerable progress and significant outcomes reported by the project activities within these areas, mainly in working with park rangers and local communities. See Table 1 for more information on the stakeholders interviewed.

⁴ UNEG (2016). UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.

https://www.unevaluation.org/uneq_publications/uneq-norms-and-standards-evaluation-un-system

⁵ INDEPENDENT EVALUATION TOOLS AND TEMPLATES - Evaluation Office of UNEP - Global Site

Table 1: Stakeholders Interviewed

Stakeholder Group	Entities Involved	# (F) respondents	# (M) respondents
Project team	UNEP	7	4
Executing agencies/ government beneficiaries	MADES (6) field (7) INFONA (2) MAG (3) MEF (6) INDI (2) MINMUJER (1) Municipality Santa Rosa (4)	18	13
Project implementing partners (receiving funds from the project)	UNDP (6) FAO (5) ID (2)	7	6
Project collaborating/contributing partners (not receiving funds from the project)	World Wildlife Federation	0	1
Beneficiaries	-Indigenous Councils of the Western and Eastern Regions -Indigenous community members (Nartanjaty, Itajeguaca, Cerro akangue) - Rural women's network - Chaco sustainable production platform - Itapúa meat and soybean platform	8	10
	TOTAL	40	34
		74	

Data analysis

- 22 The Evaluation Team conducted primarily descriptive data analysis methods. The Evaluation Team used the constructed theory of change based on discussions with the project team and results framework from the project documents to perform the effectiveness analysis.
- 23 In accordance with UNEP guidance for evaluations, the analysis was guided by the Midterm Evaluation Criteria Ratings Table⁶ and the Midterm Evaluation Criteria Ratings Description Matrix⁷. To facilitate this analysis, the Evaluation Framework (Annex 4) was structured along these evaluation criteria as well as other evaluation questions that were agreed with the Project Task Manager and UNEP staff during inception workshops.
- 24 Qualitative data was coded against the evaluation questions and sub-questions. To ensure proper triangulation, the Evaluation Team coded qualitative data by stakeholder group. To increase transparency in the triangulation process, the Evaluation Team has identified through footnotes in the findings section the stakeholder groups that provided qualitative data.

⁶ 02_MTE Criteria Ratings_Table_31.01.2024.docx

⁷ 03_MTE Criterion Rating Descriptions_Matrix_31.01.2024.docx

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

25 The Evaluation Team identified the following limitations and mitigation strategies.

Table 2: Evaluation Limitations and mitigation strategy

Limitation	Description and mitigation strategy
Lack of a comprehensive results framework with clear indicator and baseline data	Based on the desk review and inception interviews, the Evaluation Team did not identify a complete results framework with clear indicators, baseline and targets. Prior to in-country data collection, the Evaluation Team conducted an in-depth KII with the PMU and project stakeholders (FAO and UNDP), to better understand the project monitoring and reporting framework. In addition, the Evaluation Team constructed a theory of change for the purpose of this evaluation. To address the potential lack of baseline, the ET posed retrospective questions to comprehend the changes that took place due to the project.
Limited timeline for data collection and analysis	The timeline for data collection, analysis and reporting was tight (approximately 6 weeks), particularly for a complex project of this nature. There were several delays during the inception phase which occurred during the annual reporting and summer vacation period. There were also changes in the evaluation management team. To mitigate this, the Evaluation Team presented a comprehensive preliminary findings presentation in early June to inform the annual planning process with a draft report in May 2025.
Government staff turnover	Contextual changes occurred during implementation, including an election and a change in the National Designated Authority (NDA) from the Technical Secretariat for Development Planning and Economic and Social Planning (STP) to MADES, and subsequently from MADES to MEF. Therefore, the Evaluation Team sought to consult with former government representatives where possible, including through the identification of relevant stakeholders using a snowballing approach. The use of this approach was limited by the tight evaluation timeline.

Ethical and environmental considerations

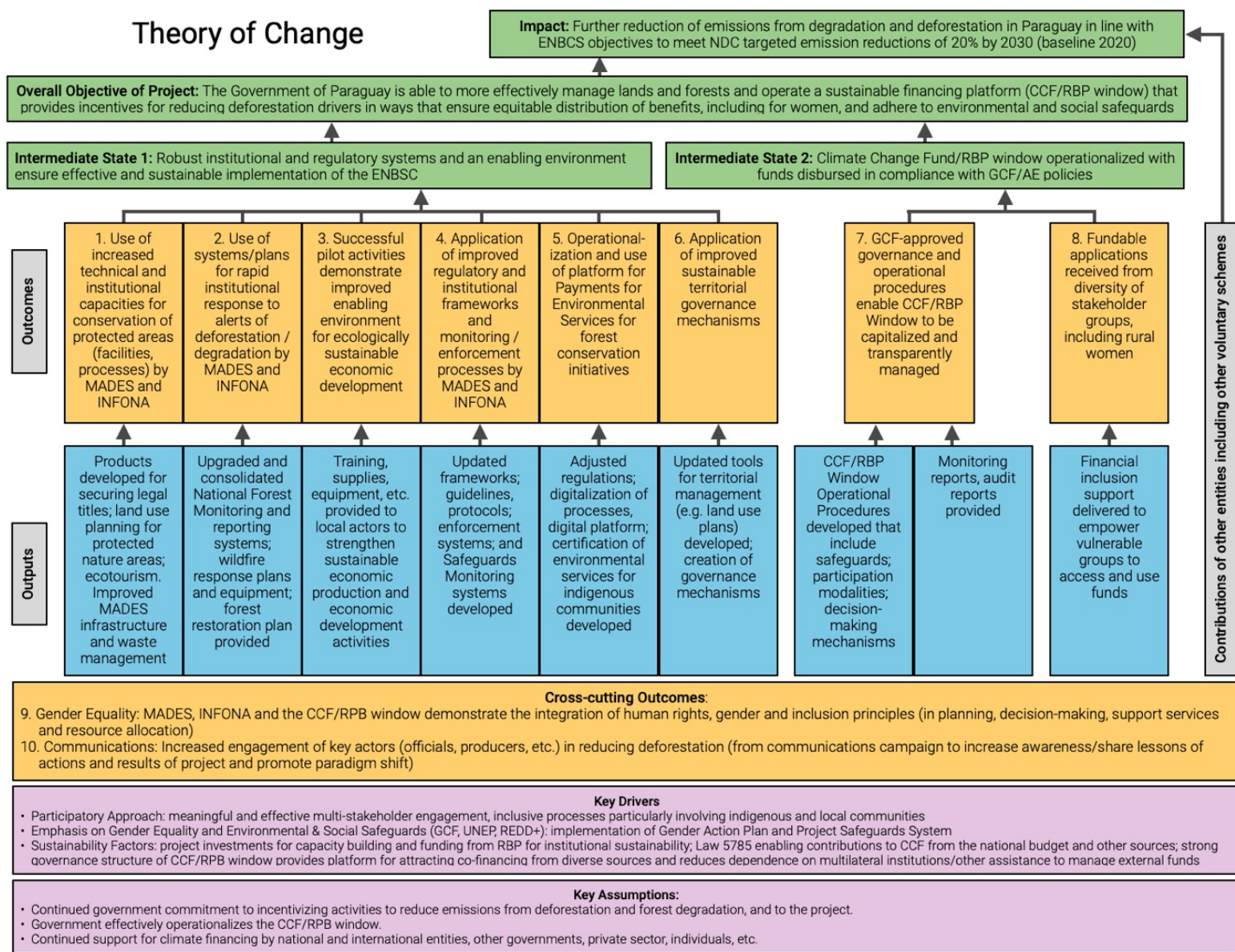
- 26 Evaluators followed the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation \(2020\)](#) and signed the Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation (Annex 11) which addresses i) integrity of the evaluation process, ii) accountability and transparency, iii) respect for all stakeholders, and iv) beneficence (striving to make a positive contribution and do no harm). As part of the latter, evaluators ensured that data collected remained confidential, anonymous, and secure, and that participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. In respect to environmental considerations, the evaluation assesses a project directly addressing environment and climate change; therefore, social and environmental safeguards in place were fully assessed. Efforts to minimize the environmental impact of the evaluation process included having in-country data collected by a national Evaluation Team member and a team leader who is based in the region.
- 27 Throughout this evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Interim Evaluation Report, efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to relevant UNEG guidelines and UN standards of conduct.

THEORY OF CHANGE

- 28 The project did not have a theory of change (ToC) and this was not required by GCF for interventions approved prior to 2020. In order to construct one for the purposes of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team drew information from the Funding Agreement (FAA) which is used as the project design document. Paraguay + Verde does not have a full results framework; the rationale and limitations of this are discussed in Table 2.
- 29 The FAA includes two fund-level outcomes -- (a) strengthened institutional and regulatory systems, and (b) improved management of land and forests -- with five and four sub-outcomes respectively, as well as two costed output statements. It also includes a table (table 11) showing the two outputs, several sub-outputs and numerous activities. Although this information mostly provides an accurate reflection of the project's intentions, several issues with this presentation hindered the project's evaluability. A table justifying the reformulation of results statements can be found in Annex 3, the main factors necessitating the changes being:
- UNEP's definitions of different results level are not used in the FAA - for example, intermediate states are not articulated; one being the operationalization of the Climate Change Fund/RBP window which is only mentioned in the FAA as an output.
 - Causal linkages between the different levels of results are not shown.
 - Results statements are not consistently framed in a measurable way.
 - The intent to improve territorial governance and the communications-related outputs are not captured.
 - There is no reflection of human rights, gender equality or Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) (although the latter two areas are well articulated elsewhere in the document).
 - Neither assumptions nor drivers are included.
- 30 The draft version of the ToC was developed with input from the UNEP project team and Evaluation Office, and the revised version was subsequently validated at a project team meeting on 27 February 2025. The constructed ToC is shown in Figure 3. It includes five levels of result, with the intended eventual impact being further reduction of emissions from degradation and deforestation in Paraguay in line with ENBCS objectives to meet NDC targeted emission reductions of 20% by 2030. There is recognition that other initiatives, including voluntary schemes, will contribute to achieving this goal as well. The ToC also includes an overall objective for the Government of Paraguay to be positioned to more effectively manage lands and forests and operate a sustainable financing platform (NCCF/RBP window) in a way that (a) provides incentives for reducing deforestation drivers, (b) ensures equitable distribution of benefits, including for women and, (c) adheres to environmental and social safeguards.
- 31 There are two intermediate states specified, and these are the level of results beyond project outcomes that are required to contribute towards the achievement of the intended impact and are expected to be emerging by the end of the project. One is for robust institutional frameworks, regulatory systems and an enabling environment to be in place for implementing the ENBSC, and the second is for the NCCF/RBP window to be operationalized with funds actually being disbursed. For each, many of the previously stated sub-outputs and activities have been translated into outcomes and associated outputs statements.
- 32 The six outcomes leading to effective implementation of the ENBSC include increasing the technical, institutional and rapid response capacities of MADES and INFONA for conserving protected areas and responding to wildfires and other threats, as well as applying improved regulatory systems and monitoring and enforcement processes. Expected outcomes also include economic activities being successfully piloted by local communities in support of a paradigm shift towards ecologically sustainable income streams. Related to this are the operationalization and use by indigenous communities of a platform for payments for Environmental Services, as well as improved sustainable territorial governance mechanisms. The implementing partners are responsible for producing a wide range of outputs to support outcome achievement from infrastructure development and equipment procurement to land use planning, updating systems and regulations, creating governance mechanisms, and developing certification and training processes.

- 33 The outcomes related to the NCCF/RBP window include GCF approval of operational procedures for the fund to be effectively and transparently managed, and the submission of fundable applications for support from diverse stakeholders. To accomplish this, the project is required to develop the processes, including the decision-making mechanisms for the NCCF.
- 34 The ToC incorporates cross-cutting themes related to supporting gender equality and to communications activities that are needed for increasing awareness and sharing success of the project to promote participation and the intended paradigm shift. The key drivers fundamental to project success are noted as being a highly participative approach, an emphasis on gender equality and ESS, and a strong focus on sustainability factors. Finally, the ToC has three key assumptions underlying the project logic. These are continued government commitment to the project and its aims, including to effectively operate the funding mechanism, and continued tangible and multi-level support for climate financing amongst the international, national and private sectors and by individual contributors.

Figure 3: Theory of Change



FINDINGS

- 35 As required by UNEP, ratings have been established for each section of Findings. An overall score of Moderately Satisfactory has been calculated. The full ratings table can be found in Annex 13 of this report.

A. Strategic Relevance

Overall Rating for Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory
Rating for Alignment	Highly Satisfactory

A1. Alignment to UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

FINDING 1 – The project has demonstrated strong strategic alignment with UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (PoW), particularly in the areas of climate action and nature action, while contributing to the Bali Strategic Plan and regional cooperation priorities.

- 36 At the global level, the project is fully aligned with the MTS 2022–2025, which identifies deforestation and biodiversity loss as central concerns under UNEP’s “Nature Action” and “Climate Action” subprogrammes. The project contributes to the 2025 outcome of halting and reversing biodiversity loss and reducing emissions from deforestation, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.⁸ The project’s REDD+ results-based framework **directly supports the UNEP Programme of Work’s targets** under the nature subprogramme, particularly those related to sustainable forest management, ecosystem restoration, and nature-based livelihoods.⁹
- 37 Regionally, the project **complements UNEP’s programming in Latin America and the Caribbean** (LAC), addressing drivers of deforestation that are common across ecosystems shared with Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.¹⁰ Interview evidence confirms that the project has been intentionally aligned with other UNEP initiatives in the region, including sustainable production and ecosystem-based approaches, enhancing coherence and operational synergy¹¹.
- 38 At the country level, the project is integrated into UNEP’s programmatic engagement in Panama, where it contributes to national efforts in forest governance, biodiversity conservation, and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods—further **reinforcing its relevance to UNEP’s broader commitments under the 2030 Agenda**.
- 39 The project also reflects UNEP’s strategic priorities under the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building by supporting government capacity to implement forest monitoring systems, develop policy

⁸ For people and planet: the UNEP strategy for 2022–2025.

⁹ UNEP Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023.

¹⁰ Examples of similar projects in the region include: Ecosystem-based Adaptation Project - Collaboration between the Ministry of the Environment of Paraguay and UNEP to reduce the vulnerability of food security in communities of the Chaco region in Paraguay; Design of a set of environmental indicators for Uruguay within the framework of support work for the country’s UNCT and its document analyzing the country’s situation; Support to the Strengthening of the GHG Inventory Transparency System, climate mitigation and financing monitoring in Argentina; Design of a set of environmental indicators for Uruguay within the framework of support work for the country’s UNCT and its document analyzing the country’s situation. (<https://www.unep.org/regions/latin-america-and-caribbean/our-offices/southern-cone-sub-regional-office>)

¹¹ For more information on UNEP’s work in the region see: <https://www.unep.org/regions/latin-america-and-caribbean>

frameworks, and engage in results-based REDD+ programming. These contributions **strengthen national institutions' ability to comply with environmental agreements and advance coherent environmental policies**.¹²

A2. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

Finding 2 – The project is highly relevant to GCF's strategic priorities, particularly in the context of REDD+ and the Fund's forest and land use results area. It is also a flagship example of GCF's pilot modality for results-based payments (RBP).

- 40 The Paraguay + Verde project **aligns directly with the GCF's strategic objective to promote a paradigm shift** toward low-emission and climate-resilient development, as outlined in both the 2020–2023 and 2024–2027 Strategic Plans (GCF 2020; GCF 2024).¹³ It does so by rewarding verified emission reductions achieved between 2015–2017, while reinvesting proceeds into further actions that support the country's REDD+ implementation and low-carbon development goals.¹⁴ This **directly supports the GCF's forest and land use results area**—one of eight thematic priorities—through actions that address drivers of deforestation, improve forest governance, and benefit local communities.
- 41 The project is also well **aligned with GCF's REDD+ RBP pilot programme**, which was designed to operationalize results-based payments in line with the Warsaw Framework and UNFCCC decisions. Paraguay was one of eight countries selected through a competitive process based on readiness and verified results. The project fulfills all eligibility criteria set out in the RBP Terms of Reference, including submission of a technically assessed Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL), a national REDD+ strategy, a functioning Safeguards Information System with a summary of safeguards, and the reporting of emission reductions through a REDD+ Technical Annex to the Biennial Update Report (BUR). As noted in the special study, these requirements were met by only a few countries in the LAC region, **reflecting Paraguay's institutional maturity and commitment to REDD+**.¹⁵
- 42 GCF also considers RBP modalities essential to broadening access to finance and incentivizing performance-based action. As a payment for past results rather than an ex-ante investment, this modality represents a shift in GCF operations toward performance-linked funding, which is noted as a distinctive feature of the 2020–2023 strategic period.¹⁶ Paraguay's project contributed to learning under the pilot phase and is **expected to inform ongoing discussions on scaling RBP modalities in future GCF programming**.¹⁷
- 43 Finally, the reinvestment of proceeds in alignment with Paraguay's NDC and REDD+ National Strategy—required by the RBP ToR—**ensures continued contribution to national priorities and GCF objectives**.¹⁸ This includes interventions in forest monitoring, wildfire prevention, and sustainable forest management, with co-benefits for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.¹⁹

¹² Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

¹³ GCF's Strategic Plan 2024-2027; GCF's Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

¹⁴ FAA, pp. 9–11; RBP ToR, section 3.5.

¹⁵ GCF Independent Evaluation Unit. (2024). Special Study on REDD+ results based-payment projects in the Latin America and Caribbean region, p. 8.

¹⁶ GCF's Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

¹⁷ GCF Independent Evaluation Unit. (2024). Special Study on REDD+ results based-payment projects in the Latin America and Caribbean region, p. 12.

¹⁸ FAA, p. 11; RBP ToR, section 3.5.

¹⁹ FAA, Annex 2; GCF Independent Evaluation Unit. (2024). Special Study on REDD+ results based-payment projects in the Latin America and Caribbean region, p. 15–16.

A3. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Finding 3 – The project demonstrates strong alignment with Paraguay’s national environmental priorities, particularly its updated NDC (2021) and National Strategy for Forests and Sustainable Development (ENBCS), supporting both climate mitigation and forest sector policy commitments.

- 44 The project is explicitly designed to support the implementation of Paraguay’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), notably its mitigation objectives for the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector. These include strengthening protected areas, advancing sustainable forest management, and promoting ecosystem services—all priority measures under the country’s Sectoral Mitigation Plan (PMCC-UT) and key components of the NDC’s forest sector contributions²⁰. The project **also supports cross-cutting NDC priorities such as Indigenous Peoples’ participation, biodiversity conservation, and nature-based solutions**²¹.
- 45 Importantly, the project has been explicitly conceived as an instrument to implement the ENBCS (Estrategia Nacional de Bosques para el Crecimiento Sostenible), which outlines four priority lines of action: forest governance, forest conservation and restoration, sustainable production, and access to financing. The project directly supports all four pillars through activities related to regulatory strengthening, support to protected areas, forest monitoring (via INFONA), sustainable production pilots, and the establishment of payments for environmental services²².
- 46 Stakeholders confirm the project’s relevance to national policy frameworks. MADES indicated that the project is well embedded within the National Environmental Plan and aligned with national goals in both the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2030 and climate change policy frameworks. They noted that “there will be a before and after with the implementation of the P+V project” due to its broad policy relevance.²³ Similarly, MEF emphasized the project’s contribution to REDD+ planning instruments and its role in structuring ecological corridors and protecting hydrological resources through territorial planning. INFONA has also **underscored the relevance of the project to the ENBCS and the consolidation of a national forest monitoring system**.²⁴
- 47 Project stakeholders widely recognized the strategic relevance of constructing MADES’s new headquarters, which represents an investment of 8.280.000 USD out of the total 50,000,000 USD project budget. While not directly tied to emission reduction outcomes, stakeholders emphasized that the investment responds to a longstanding institutional gap: MADES has historically been underfunded and lacked adequate infrastructure, limiting its visibility and influence within the national governance architecture. The new building is therefore seen as a critical step toward **positioning MADES as a key actor in environmental and climate policy, enhancing its legitimacy and enabling higher-level political engagement**²⁵. According to the FAA, the project planned an activity to ensure that the new infrastructure would be strategically aligned with REDD+ objectives—specifically through Activity 1.2.2.2 “Strengthening HR capacities for REDD+ implementation.” However, reporting to date has focused solely on the construction of the building under this activity, with no evidence of parallel investments in staff training or functional integration of REDD+ content. As such, while the building itself represents a major institutional achievement, its current use is not substantively connected to REDD+ implementation. For the infrastructure to contribute meaningfully to REDD+ governance, **additional efforts will be needed to develop human resource capacities and embed REDD+-relevant functions within the facility**.
- 48 While the project contributes to multiple SDGs (notably 13 on climate action, 15 on forests, and 16 on inclusive institutions), the strongest alignment is with Paraguay’s forest and climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, making the project **highly relevant to the country’s environmental and sustainable development agenda**.

²⁰ NDC, pp. 88–89.

²¹ NDC, pp. 13–15.

²² FAA, pp. 5–7, 16–22; ENBCS, pp. 5–7, 18–27.

²³ KIIs: National Ministries

²⁴ KIIs: National Ministries

²⁵ KIIs: National Ministries

A4. Complementarity with Existing Interventions /Coherence

Rating for Complementarity	Highly Satisfactory
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FINDING 4 – The Paraguay + Verde project demonstrates strong external coherence by complementing ongoing national and international initiatives in the forest and land-use sector, building on previous REDD+ investments and ensuring geographic and thematic complementarity to avoid duplication.

- 49 The project complements the earlier UN-REDD National Programme in Paraguay, with collaboration between UNEP, UNDP and FAO, as well as the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility-funded and the UNDP-implemented initiative, *Support for the Completion of the REDD+ Preparation Phase in Paraguay*, both of which enabled the country to meet eligibility requirements under the GCF's REDD+ Results-Based Payment (RBP) pilot window. Those initiatives supported the development of the Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL), the NFMS, and the National REDD+ Strategy (ENBCS), as well as the Safeguards Information System (SIS), all of which laid the institutional and technical groundwork for Paraguay + Verde²⁶. Paraguay + Verde builds on this foundation by reinvesting verified emission reductions into actions that implement the ENBCS.
- 50 The project also complements the GEF funded Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) project, which enhances Paraguay's transparency and MRV systems to meet Paris Agreement requirements. Paraguay + Verde leverages the improved data infrastructure and institutional capacities strengthened by CBIT to support transparent tracking of REDD+ results and safeguards.²⁷
- 51 In the area of sustainable production systems, the project complements and builds on the work previously undertaken by the UNDP Green Commodities Programme, which supported multi-stakeholder efforts to improve the sustainability of soy and beef value chains—two major drivers of deforestation. Although the Green Commodities Programme closed in 2021, Paraguay + Verde has continued key activities, particularly through the revitalization and institutionalization of commodity platforms in Alto Paraná, Itapúa, and the Chaco. These platforms serve as structured spaces for multi-sector dialogue and coordination, bringing together public institutions, producers, private sector actors, and civil society to define sustainability criteria, discuss policy alignment, and promote deforestation-free production practices. Under Paraguay + Verde, the platforms have been restructured, integrated into the institutional framework of MADES, and included within the axes of the national environmental policy²⁸, with a draft legal framework under preparation to formalize their mandate. The project has subsequently expanded the scope of the platforms beyond beef and soy to include broader sustainability objectives²⁹. Through these efforts, the project supports sustainable land use and contributes to integrating forest conservation into productive landscapes.
- 52 The project has also demonstrated deliberate efforts to avoid duplication and optimize geographic complementarity with the **FOLUR Program (Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact)** funded by GEF and led by the World Bank. While FOLUR supports territorial planning and POUT development in certain municipalities, Paraguay + Verde has strategically focused on different territories to ensure complementarity³⁰. Stakeholders confirmed that coordination efforts were made across institutions to align approaches and delineate areas of intervention.
- 53 Finally, the project is coherent with the **Corazón Verde del Chaco** initiative, which focuses on forest conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights in the Gran Chaco region. Paraguay + Verde contributes to these shared goals by reinforcing forest governance and supporting the implementation of REDD+ safeguards, including in Indigenous territories³¹.

²⁶ REDD+ Special Study, p. 8; FAA, p. 9

²⁷ KII: National Ministries; UNEP; GEF. 2024. GEF - Project Implementation Report (PIR): CBIT, https://open.unep.org/docs/gef/PIR/10342_PIR_UNEP_2024_Paraguay_CBIT.pdf

²⁸ Política Nacional Ambiental, Ejes 10.8 and 10.13.

²⁹ KIIs: National Ministries.

³⁰ KIIs: National Ministries; Inception Workshop Report, p. 11

³¹ KIIs: National Ministries.

Finding 5 – It is not possible to fully assess coherence among GCF-funded interventions in Paraguay due to absence of a GCF country programme. The GCF country programme under development through Readiness support is expected to enhance strategic coherence among GCF projects in Paraguay.

- 54 The Paraguay + Verde project (FP121) represents the largest Green Climate Fund (GCF) investment in Paraguay, with a total funding of 50,000,000 USD. In addition to FP121, Paraguay hosts two other GCF-funded projects:
- **FP062: Poverty, Reforestation, Energy and Climate Change Project (PROEZA)** – A cross-cutting initiative implemented by FAO, which combines poverty reduction, reforestation, renewable energy, and climate change objectives based on an integrated sustainable development strategy.³²
 - **FP063: Promoting Private Sector Investments in Energy Efficiency in the Industrial Sector in Paraguay** – A mitigation project implemented by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) focused on reducing reliance on fuelwood and other fossil fuel energy sources by Paraguayan SMEs, increasing their energy efficiency, and shifting energy use to renewable hydropower.³³
- 55 Despite the presence of these significant GCF-funded initiatives, assessing coherence among them is challenging due to the absence of a comprehensive GCF Country Programme. The National Designated Authority (NDA) lacks a clear framework to ensure alignment and synergy among GCF investments. This gap has been recognized, and the MEF, which assumed the role of NDA in 2024, has sought Readiness support to strengthen its capacity to fulfill its NDA function³⁴. As part of this support, a GCF Country Programme is currently under development. The establishment of such a programme is expected to enhance strategic coherence across GCF-funded projects in Paraguay, ensuring that future investments are well-aligned with national climate priorities and contribute effectively to the country's Sustainable Development Goals.³⁵

B. Quality of Project Design

Overall Rating for Quality of Project Design	Moderately Satisfactory
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Finding 6 – The project design capitalized on strong strategic alignment and institutional engagement but was weakened by the absence of a results framework and limited risk anticipation—factors that have affected implementation to date.

- 56 The Paraguay + Verde project was designed as a follow-up to verified REDD+ emission reductions under the UNFCCC framework, with a clear purpose to reinvest results-based payments into activities aligned with the ENBCS. The design demonstrates strong **strategic relevance**, aligning closely with national priorities, GCF funding modalities, and the REDD+ readiness investments made in prior years. It also builds on **existing institutional structures**—particularly INFONA and MADES—and assigns clear roles to UNDP and FAO through detailed UN-to-UN agreements³⁶.
- 57 A notable design strength is the **clarity of implementation arrangements**, with well-defined roles for each implementing agency and a management model centered on the Project Steering Committee and PMU under MADES. The design also includes provisions for communication, knowledge management, and safeguards, with

³² <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp062>

³³ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/project/fp063>

³⁴ See Readiness grant “Strengthening the National Designated Authority, Candidate Direct Access Entity, National Programming Process and Development of Strategic Frameworks for Low-Carbon Development in Paraguay”, approved in March 2025: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/strengthening-national-designated-authority-candidate-direct-access-entity-national>

³⁵ KIIs: National Ministries.

³⁶ FAA; UN-UN Agreement FAO; UN-UN Agreement FAO.

positions budgeted in the PMU structure. However, as noted in the finding on communication and public awareness, the **communications strategy was only finalized mid-way through implementation**. Even though Annex 4 of the Operations Manual includes preliminary directions for communications that were used to guide communications in the early stages of implementation, this was meant as a provisional document to be replaced by a full communications strategy. While the absence of this strategy did not prevent the conduct of communication activities, implementing agencies explained that this led to the lack of a common approach to communications resulting in misalignment in how to communicate project-related actions.

- 58 Project activities and expected outputs are detailed in **Table 14 of the FAA**, which remains the main programmatic reference for planning and reporting. However, project design lacks a **formal Theory of Change** and does not include a **logframe with indicators, baselines, or targets**. While Table 14 clearly outlines outputs and sub-outputs, the absence of measurable outcomes and causal pathways constrains the project's capacity for results-based management and performance tracking.³⁷ While the project as a whole lacks SMART indicators, components implemented by FAO and UNDP include a logframe with indicators and targets.
- 59 The design also did not fully anticipate key contextual risks—particularly the political transition that occurred in 2023—which has since proven to be a major factor in delaying implementation.

C. Nature of External Context

Rating for Nature of External Context (excluded from calculation)	Unfavourable
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Finding 7 – The external operating context has posed significant and sustained challenges to project implementation, notably due to political transitions, institutional fragmentation, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 60 The change of government in 2023 was particularly disruptive, resulting in a nearly year-long delay in decision-making and approval processes. Several stakeholders highlighted that the electoral transition stalled project momentum, particularly affecting high-level coordination, the structuring of the NCCF, and the approval of Annual Operating Plans (POAs). As noted by Indigenous representatives, “with the change of government everything stopped—almost a year of project work”³⁸. The 2024 APR similarly confirms that “various factors, including the change of government in August 2023 and the designation of the MEF as the NDA, led to institutional leadership changes and internal restructuring,” which “significantly impacted political decision-making processes including those related to the structuring of the Fund”.³⁹
- 61 In addition to political shifts, persistent institutional fragmentation and unclear mandates among key actors (notably MADES, MEF, and INFONA) have constrained coordination and slowed implementation. These constitute a clear hindering contextual factor that goes much beyond the Project’s sphere of influence. The FAO team cited this misalignment as a long-standing barrier: “One of the main challenges has been balancing the interaction between MADES and INFONA... and that continues to this day,” with concrete consequences for implementation timelines, budgetary reallocation, and inter-agency agreements⁴⁰. Similarly, MEF officials underscored that conflicting legal mandates and lack of coordination have impeded decisions on trust fund design and execution, creating regulatory bottlenecks hindering progress in the implementation of Component 2⁴¹. Another illustration of early governance challenges was the lengthy process to ensure indigenous representation on the PSC. At the beginning, INDI was not part of the PSC because, according to GCF guidelines, Indigenous representation had to come from representatives chosen by Indigenous Peoples themselves, not from a government institution. In response, INDI filed a complaint

³⁷ FAA; UN-UN Agreement FAO; UN-UN Agreement FAO.

³⁸ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

³⁹ APR 2024.

⁴⁰ KIIs: FAO.

⁴¹ KIIs: National Ministries.

with the GCF in 2022. Once the Indigenous Representatives were selected, the first PSC meeting was held, and INDI's participation on the PSC was formally approved⁴².

- 62 COVID-19 also contributed to early delays. According to UNEP, both the Communication and Knowledge Management Strategies were delayed due to the pandemic, and some consultations had to be postponed or reformulated during 2020–2021⁴³. FAO confirmed that despite project approval in 2019, implementation only gained traction in mid-2022 due to initial pandemic-related delays and the complexities of setting up a tri-agency structure under the UN-to-UN modality⁴⁴.
- 63 The cumulative impact of external factors delayed implementation start-up by at least two years, with key project mechanisms—such as the NCCF and field-level activities—only becoming fully operational in 2024. A no-cost extension is under consideration as of 2025, explicitly justified by these external delays⁴⁵.

D. Effectiveness

Overall Rating for Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory
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D1. Theory of Change Analysis

- 64 The analysis presented below is structured around the reconstructed theory of change developed by the evaluation team (Figure 3), which served as the analytical framework for assessing project performance in the absence of a formal results framework with indicators and targets. The outcomes and outputs included in this reconstructed theory of change reflect the Paraguay + Verde project's intended causal pathways as inferred from official planning documents, the Funding Activity Agreement (FAA), stakeholder interviews, and a validation session with UNEP project staff.
- 65 The assessment covers eight outcomes, grouped under two components:
- Component 1: REDD+ implementation and enabling environment (Outcomes 1–6)
 - Component 2: Operationalization of the NCCF (Outcomes 7–8)

Table 3: Components and Outcomes

Outputs	ToC Outcomes	Alignment with APRs	Progress % Completed ⁴⁶
Component 1: Capacities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS	1. Use of increased technical and institutional capacities for conservation of protected areas (facilities, processes) by MADES and INFONA	Sub-output 1.1. Early actions in the ENBCS delivered	Component 1: Significant achievements include updating protected areas regulations, enhancing the NFMS with new equipment and training, and drafting the National Forest Restoration Plan with broad stakeholder participation. The project
	2. Use of systems/plans for rapid institutional response to alerts of deforestation /degradation by MADES and INFONA	Sub-output 1.2. Strengthened capacity and inter-institutional coordination Sub-output 1.3. Safeguards	

⁴² APR 2022; KIs : National Ministries; UNEP.

⁴³ KII: UNEP.

⁴⁴ KII: FAO.

⁴⁵ UNEP; APR 2024.

⁴⁶ Annual Financial Report for the period up to Dec 2024

Outputs	ToC Outcomes	Alignment with APRs	Progress % Completed ⁴⁶
	3. Successful pilot activities demonstrate improved enabling environment for ecologically sustainable economic development	information and monitoring system	trained park rangers, improved national park infrastructure, published the first National Forest Cover and Land Use Change Report (2017–2020), updated subsequent forest cover maps, re-measured and expanded the National Forest Inventory (INFN), digitized historical records, launched an interactive forest portal, approved a joint intervention protocol for detecting land-use changes, strengthened early warning systems for fires and deforestation, developed the National Strategy for Land Degradation Neutrality, and completed the construction of the MADES HQ building. It also implemented safeguards and gender equality measures, ensuring indigenous participation and women's involvement in decision-making. % Completed: 47% (On track at mid-term point)
	4. Application of improved regulatory and institutional frameworks and monitoring / enforcement processes by MADES and INFONA		
	5. Operationalization and use of platform for Payments for Environmental Services for forest conservation initiatives	Sub-output 1.4. System of payments for environmental services strengthened	
	6. Application of improved sustainable territorial governance mechanisms	Sub-output 1.5. Strengthening territorial governance (environment & forestry)	
Component 2: Governance and operational procedures of NCCF established, and	7. GCF-approved governance and operational procedures enable NCCF/RBP Window to be capitalized and transparently managed	Sub-output 2.1. Regulation, implementation and operation of the NCCF	Component 2: Progress has been limited due to political transitions following the 2023 elections and legal

Outputs	ToC Outcomes	Alignment with APRs	Progress % Completed ⁴⁶
finance channeled to NDCs, the ENBCS and low carbon development	8. Fundable applications received from diversity of stakeholder groups, including rural women	Sub-output 2.2. Capitalization of the NCCF	barriers preventing MADES from operating the fund, with preliminary work on the NCCF's operations being conducted but implementation delayed as the new government makes structural changes, including designating the Ministry of Economy and Finance as host organization and establishing a working group to analyze alternatives for fund operationalization. % Completed: 1% (Significantly behind schedule at midterm point)
	Cross-Cutting Outcomes: Gender Equity/Communications	Sub-output 1.6. Project lessons and results communicated Sub-output 2.3. Project monitoring and auditing	Addressed in other sections of the report

D2. Availability of Outputs

Rating for Availability of Outputs	Moderately Satisfactory
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Finding 8 – The project has made substantial progress in delivering key outputs, especially those foundational to institutional strengthening and territorial governance. However, timeliness, operational readiness, and end-user accessibility have varied, with notable infrastructure and system-level delays and some quality issues.

- ⁶⁶ A **systematic assessment of output achievement** is not possible, as the project lacks a **monitoring framework with clear output-level targets, indicators, and baselines**⁴⁷. As a result, this analysis is based on triangulated evidence from annual reports, stakeholder interviews, and field observations, with emphasis on outputs most critical to enabling outcomes.

⁴⁷ APR 2023; UNEP.

- 67 Across Components 1 and 2, the project has successfully produced most of its programmed outputs, particularly in areas linked to **forest monitoring, land-use planning, safeguards and gender equality, and institutional coordination**. Key achievements include the delivery of:
- A strengthened NFMS through a fully upgraded **forest monitoring platform**, including updated geospatial mapping tools, automated deforestation and fire systems, and the publication of national forest coverage reports by INFONA⁴⁸⁴⁹
 - Participatory **territorial governance instruments (POUTs)** in 12 municipalities, approved via municipal ordinances and accompanied by inclusive workshops⁵⁰
 - A detailed draft of the **National Forest Restoration Plan**, with early steps toward implementation⁵¹
 - Gender-responsive and culturally appropriate **Community-based and Locally-led Initiatives (CPLI) guidelines and safeguard protocols**, which have been validated through consultation processes⁵²
 - A set of **certification processes and legal documentation** enabling Indigenous communities to enter the Environmental Services Regime⁵³.
- 68 The quality of most outputs has been rated positively by national partners, who consider them **technically sound, well-aligned with institutional mandates**, and useful for medium-term planning. However, the **timeliness of delivery has been inconsistent**, with key strategic deliverables such as the communications strategy developed late in the cycle⁵⁴. Several stakeholders described the implementation process as **“sobre la marcha” (on the fly)**, with guidance often arriving after key activities had begun⁵⁵.
- 69 A major infrastructure-related output was the construction of the **new headquarters building for MADES**, completed with project support and widely recognized as a high-visibility achievement⁵⁶. However, as of the evaluation mission, the building **remained non-operational due to issues related to connecting the water supply**; as a result, staff had not moved in, limiting its immediate utility⁵⁷.

⁴⁸ The NFMS has been strengthened through a fully updated forest monitoring platform that integrates geospatial mapping tools and automated processes for deforestation and fire monitoring, consolidating a national early warning system. INFONA has published the first National Forest Cover and Land Use Change Report (2017–2020) in 2022 and the second report (2020–2022), with a third (2022–2024) under preparation. Each report includes thematic accuracy assessments (EET), enabled through the strengthening of academic capacities at the National University of Asunción (UNA) in collaboration with FAO and INFONA.

⁴⁹ APR 2022; APR 2023; KIIs: National Authorities.

⁵⁰ APR 2023; KIIs: Local Authorities and Park Management; UNDP.

⁵¹ APR 2024; KIIs: FAO.

⁵² KIIs: UNEP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; APR 2023.

⁵³ APR 2023; APR 2024; KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; FAO.

⁵⁴ KIIs: UNEP; APR 2024.

⁵⁵ KIIs: UNEP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

⁵⁶ KIIs: UNDP; UNEP; APR 2023.

⁵⁷ Field Observation; APR 2024.

- 70 Concerns were also noted regarding the type of material used for infrastructure in protected areas. Specifically, the metal fencing installed at the entrance to a waterfall was assessed during the field mission to be poorly constructed, with a visible breach compromising its security function. The fence is made of a light-gauge wire mesh attached to thin posts, with loose tensioning and no solid anchoring or support rails, making it unstable and prone to deformation under pressure. Located in a humid and densely vegetated environment, the material is also exposed to continuous moisture and organic matter, increasing the risk of corrosion and early deterioration. The use of non-reinforced, non-galvanized wire further limits its durability and makes it unsuitable for tourist areas where safety barriers must withstand frequent contact and environmental stress.⁵⁸
- 71 Other critical outputs—such as those related to the NCCF—were completed in terms of **draft laws, operating manuals, fiduciary scenarios, and safeguard documentation**, but have not yet been activated or used by institutional partners⁵⁹. While technically solid, their delayed operationalization has limited their present-day usefulness to intended beneficiaries⁶⁰.

Figure 4: Low Quality Metal Fencing Nacunday Park Waterfall.



D3. Achievement of Outcomes

Rating for Progress Towards Project Outcomes	Moderately Satisfactory
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- 72 Findings indicate that Component 1 has demonstrated progress across most outcomes, particularly in relation to the upgrading of forest monitoring systems, fire response capacity, and the development of municipal land-use plans (POUTs). There has also been selective progress in ecotourism development and the certification of Indigenous communities for environmental services, though several implementation and coordination gaps remain. In contrast, Component 2 has made more limited progress, with strong technical groundwork laid for the NCCF but no operationalization to date due to legal and political constraints. As of early 2025, an alternative pathway is under consideration to activate only the NCCF's RBP window through a dedicated fiduciary structure. The first disbursements are tentatively projected for the second half of 2026—conditional on the approval of the draft fiduciary law currently under inter-institutional review and expected to be presented to Congress in June 2025.

Finding 9 – Outcome 1: There has been tangible progress in the conservation of protected areas but translating these gains into inclusive and sustainable ecotourism models remains a work in progress.

- 73 The project has made notable progress in strengthening the conservation of protected areas through land regularization, participatory management planning, infrastructure improvements, and ranger capacity-building. These advances are most visible in a subset of national parks—particularly Nacunday and Cerro Corá—where multiple stakeholder groups⁶¹ confirm that updated sustainable management plans are now guiding patrols, visitor management, and conservation priorities. Park rangers have been trained in fire control, biodiversity monitoring,

⁵⁸ Field Observation.

⁵⁹ APR 2023; APR 2024; KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

⁶⁰ KIIs: National Ministries; UNEP.

⁶¹ KIIs: Park authorities; UNEP; UNDP.

and first aid, with equipment and technical tools distributed across key sites⁶². Complementary infrastructure improvements (e.g. signage, water and sanitation, fencing) were also observed by the Evaluation Team, although certain concerns were raised over quality and maintenance, in some areas⁶³.

- 74 The project has contributed to the demarcation of protected areas, including the formalization of Ñacunday National Park, which was cited as a major achievement by UNDP, UNEP, and park authorities⁶⁴.
- 75 Despite these institutional and technical gains, challenges remain in ensuring broad engagement and equitable community participation. Until now, Indigenous and community stakeholders have lacked detailed awareness of park planning and ecotourism initiatives, suggesting that, thus far, participatory processes have been more consistent at the governance level than on the ground.⁶⁵ UNDP noted that activities involving communities are planned for 2025 and 2026, and that communications with these groups will be strengthened going forward.
- 76 In terms of ecotourism, the project supported the formulation of a public policy, the Master Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Tourism Sector in Paraguay 2023–2030 (Resolution No. 238/23), which outlines the country's main challenges and provides an institutional roadmap for the coming years. In addition, the project has laid the groundwork—through branding (e.g. promotion of a park visitor 'passport' entitled 'Ruta de los Saltos'), interagency coordination with the National Tourism Secretariat (SENATUR), and communication tools—but these efforts remain largely preparatory. Ecotourism plans were delayed by external factors (e.g. institutional transitions), and no fully operational initiatives were identified during field interviews conducted by the evaluators. Poor infrastructure, access limitations, and tenure insecurity continue to pose practical barriers to implementation, particularly in communities surrounding protected areas⁶⁶.

Finding 10 – Outcome 2: Institutional response systems have advanced technically, but institutional fragmentation and weak accountability linkages constrain systemic effectiveness

- 77 Significant institutional progress has been made in strengthening Paraguay's capacity to detect and respond to forest degradation and deforestation. The NFMS, led by INFONA with support from FAO and UNDP, was upgraded to produce weekly deforestation alerts and generate land-use and commodity-specific data, now used by entities such as the MEF and the Central Bank⁶⁷. With the support of the Project, INFONA has institutionalized a Directorate of Monitoring and launched a public portal ("Forests and Land Use") offering real-time data on forest and land dynamics. These advances mark a qualitative leap in national forest monitoring capacity and position INFONA as a central actor in Paraguay's data ecosystem.
- 78 Stakeholders across several groups confirm that the NFMS supports decision-making within and beyond the environmental sector⁶⁸. However, the planned interoperability between INFONA's NFMS and MADES's SIAM system remains delayed. While FAO reports ongoing development of system modules, all three UN agencies note that progress is hindered by limited coordination between MADES and INFONA. In addition, limited coordination between INFONA and MAG hinders the ability of both institutions to create synergies for the development of high-potential productive systems for forest restoration⁶⁹.
- 79 A milestone in 2024 was the approval of the Joint Intervention Protocol for the Detection and Verification of Land Use Changes in Native Forests (Decree 1746/2024), formalizing coordinated action between INFONA, MADES, and Secretaría Nacional Antidroga (SENAD) in response to deforestation and forest degradation. While the legal basis of the protocol focuses on illegal land-use change, it is being applied in parallel to an early warning system for wildfires. In 2024, the project issued 1,203 deforestation alerts and 2,147 wildfire monitoring reports, which were shared with institutions and communities to support prevention and control⁷⁰. This suggests that the protocol is

⁶² KIIs: UNEP and UNDP; **Documents:** APR 2023, 2024

⁶³ KIIs: UNEP; APR 2024.

⁶⁴ KIIs: Park authorities; UNEP; UNDP.

⁶⁵ KIIs: community beneficiaries.

⁶⁶ KIIs: UNEP; Community Beneficiaries; APR 2024.

⁶⁷ KIIs: National Ministries; APR 2023, 2024.

⁶⁸ KIIs: UNDP, National Ministries, UNEP.

⁶⁹ KIIs : FAO, UNEP, UNDP.

⁷⁰ APR 2024.

becoming a cross-cutting mechanism to translate alerts into joint institutional responses to multiple drivers of forest degradation.

- 80 Further institutional consolidation was achieved through the drafting of Paraguay's first National Forest Restoration Plan, prepared through four participatory workshops with over 700 stakeholders and published for consultation in 2023. The plan aligns with national climate and land-use strategies and is expected to be adopted by decree in 2025⁷¹. Stakeholders, including UNDP and FAO, view the plan as an important legislative and policy milestone.
- 81 In sum, Outcome 2 has delivered notable technical and institutional advances in forest monitoring and planning. However, the intended systemic response—linking alerts to enforcement and restoration—remains only partially realized. While Paraguay now has a strong system to identify deforestation and illegal land use, this capacity is not yet systematically connected to accountability mechanisms. Several stakeholders⁷² noted that alerts often fail to result in enforcement, due to insufficient coordination with the justice sector, lack of role clarity, and fragile institutional relationships. The Joint Intervention Protocol is a critical step, but further operationalization, formal inter-sectoral coordination, and active enforcement pathways will be essential to ensure that monitoring data translates into meaningful institutional response.

Finding 11 – Outcome 3: Pilot initiatives demonstrate early technical and ecological viability, but limited territorial scale, institutional fragmentation, and slow rollout of complementary income strategies constrain transformative potential.

Sustainable Production Systems

- 82 Pilot production activities have begun to demonstrate ecological and technical viability in select locations. The most advanced implementation is reported under FAO's leadership, with 46 participating farms in Caazapá adopting models such as apiculture, agroforestry, silvopastoral systems, and windbreaks, with expansion underway in Itapúa and other two departments⁷³. Positive outcomes include increases in honey yields and the introduction of native and exotic tree species for high-quality timber and fuelwood, supported by training, equipment, and soil conservation inputs like green manure and lime⁷⁴. Agricultural production is expected to be further diversified to include cassava, pineapple, yerba mate, among others. It is expected that these production models will contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by providing alternative income opportunities that lessen pressure on forests while supporting their restoration. A baseline study is currently being developed by FAO to establish reference data that will later enable measurement of impacts on income levels, carbon emissions, and the surface area of forests conserved or restored.
- 83 While these examples indicate tangible results, they so far remain localized and small in scale. Several stakeholders—including community beneficiaries and Indigenous organizations—reported that many pilot activities are still pending or in early stages of implementation⁷⁵. In several communities, the provision of technical assistance and productive support is still forthcoming, with limited clarity about timelines or selection criteria⁷⁶. According to IAs, the scalability and replicability of pilot sites have been delayed by the extended time required for planning and inter-institutional coordination. MAG, which has a permanent local presence and is preparing to launch its own agroecological pilots, acknowledged that it joined the project late and that coordination with INFONA has been weak, particularly between MAG's extension and planning departments⁷⁷.
- 84 Evidence points to promising technical results in specific pilot areas, but broader territorial coverage is limited. Weak inter-institutional coordination, especially between INFONA and MAG, is a recurring obstacle to scaling and sustainability⁷⁸.

⁷¹ APR 2023.

⁷² KIIs: Civil society; UNEP; FAO.

⁷³ APR 2024; FAO.

⁷⁴ APR 2024.

⁷⁵ KIIs: Community Beneficiaries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

⁷⁶ KIIs: Community Beneficiaries.

⁷⁷ KIIs: National Ministries; FAO.

⁷⁸ KIIs: National Ministries; FAO; UNEP.

Income Diversification

- 85 Although income diversification—particularly through Indigenous artisanal production—is widely seen as culturally relevant and potentially impactful, no concrete implementation had occurred as of 2024. Civil society and community groups expressed strong interest in crafts and cultural livelihoods linked to ecotourism but reported that no materials, storage infrastructure, or technical support had been provided⁷⁹. Local authorities in protected areas also confirmed that these activities are part of the project’s vision, but highlighted barriers such as low tourism traffic, logistical challenges, and lack of sales infrastructure in parks⁸⁰.
- 86 UNDP acknowledged that income diversification is part of the project’s logic but noted concerns about supporting Indigenous communities lacking land titles, which could complicate safeguards and ownership⁸¹. The 2024 APR corroborates that the component is still in design and baseline analysis, with technical specifications for activities under development and implementation postponed to 2025⁸².

Soil Use and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)

- 87 Significant progress has been made in advancing enabling conditions for sustainable soil use. In 2024, Paraguay’s National Strategy for Land Degradation Neutrality (ENNDT) was finalized with FAO’s technical support and approved through national decree (2990/2024), with coordination led by MADES⁸³. The strategy was validated through a participatory process involving 17 institutions and includes provisions for land restoration, monitoring, and multisectoral planning. To guide implementation, the National Commission to Combat Desertification was established, co-led by MADES and MAG, as the official platform for technical dialogue and analysis on land degradation neutrality and soil management and conservation, with participation from public and private sector representatives. As part of this strategy, a Gender Action Plan was developed, and gender indicators were incorporated into strategic planning.
- 88 Field implementation of LDN-aligned activities has also begun. FAO reported that pilot production systems are explicitly designed around LDN principles, including site selection based on restoration opportunity maps and integration of soil improvement techniques⁸⁴. Technical steps such as soil sampling, deployment of green manure and cover crops, and hiring of a soil specialist suggest alignment between policy and practice. INFONA’s monitoring tools are also expected to contribute to tracking LDN indicators.
- 89 However, several stakeholders (UNEP, FAO) emphasized that operationalization is still incipient, and LDN was not mentioned by beneficiaries, indicating a disconnect between national strategy and field-level awareness⁸⁵. It is expected that, as pilots progress, local stakeholders will increasingly understand and apply LDN principles through the application of good practices, thereby strengthening alignment and coherence with the ENNDT.

Finding 12 – Outcome 4: While the project contributed to important regulatory instruments such as the Joint Intervention Protocol and forest monitoring governance structures, institutional fragmentation, weak enforcement capacity, and unclear mandates continue to limit the application of improved legal and institutional frameworks.

- 90 Stakeholders and reports consistently recognized the Joint Intervention Protocol, approved by Presidential Decree No. 1746/2024, as the most important regulatory achievement under this outcome. Designed to coordinate interagency responses to illegal land-use change, the protocol was developed with project support and outlines responsibilities for response of key operational institutions, namely INFONA, MADES, and SENAD⁸⁶. However, despite its legal adoption, multiple sources noted that it remains largely unimplemented, lacking clear institutional

⁷⁹ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; Community Beneficiaries.

⁸⁰ KIIs: Local Authorities and Park Management.

⁸¹ KIIs: UNDP.

⁸² APR 2024.

⁸³ APR 2024.

⁸⁴ KIIs: FAO; APR 2024.

⁸⁵ KIIs: UNEP; Community Beneficiaries; Local Authorities and Park Management.

⁸⁶ APR 2024; KIIs: National Ministries; UNEP; UNDP; FAO.

routines and enforcement procedures. UNEP described it as a framework “on paper” without embedded operational practices⁸⁷, while INFONA itself acknowledged limited progress in translating it into coordinated institutional action⁸⁸. Delays in operationalization were attributed not only to capacity constraints, but also to persistent confusion over agency mandates, especially between MADES and INFONA⁸⁹. FAO reported that activities initially assigned to INFONA had to be reassigned to MADES in some cases, requiring adjustments to project timelines and budgets⁹⁰.

- 91 In parallel, the project supported the development of several legal and policy instruments intended to reinforce enforcement frameworks. These included the drafting of regulations under the Zero Deforestation Law (Law 6676/2020), technical and legal inputs for a regulatory proposal under the Carbon Law (Law 7190/2024), and support for the participatory development of a National Forest Policy, finalized in 2024⁹¹. These efforts mark progress in the strategic policy landscape, though most were still in the approval or early dissemination stages within the timeframe of this evaluation and had not yet affected field-level practice.
- 92 Unlike Outcome 2, which focuses on the generation of forest alerts and monitoring tools (e.g. through the NFMS), this outcome addresses the institutional and legal infrastructure necessary to act on those alerts. Yet, interviews with both government and UN stakeholders confirmed that no operational enforcement mechanism has been established to respond to detected infractions. UNDP and FAO emphasized that while INFONA’s monitoring system is active, it is not linked to systematic follow-up or legal action⁹². Alerts are shared with MADES, the Presidency, and judicial actors, but coordination with the justice system remains informal, and infractions are rarely prosecuted⁹³. Local and park-level stakeholders similarly noted that even when reports of illegal deforestation or encroachment are filed, no institutional verification or sanction typically follows⁹⁴.
- 93 Finally, the project made progress on ESS, including the design of a project-wide grievance redress mechanism (GRM) that incorporates Indigenous Peoples, gender, and labor dimensions. The GRM was finalized and approved by the Steering Committee in 2024⁹⁵. However, across stakeholder groups, there was limited awareness or use of the GRM, and no examples were provided of how safeguards had been applied in enforcement or regulatory contexts⁹⁶.

Finding 13 – Outcome 5: The project made tangible progress in certifying Indigenous communities for environmental services, laying important groundwork for a national PES system, though institutional, market, and system-level gaps still limit full operationalization.

- 94 The project achieved visible progress in supporting the certification of Indigenous communities for participation in Paraguay’s Environmental Services Regime (RSA). All activities related to the RSA with Indigenous communities were implemented by MADES and INDI, with support from FAO. As of 2024, 11 communities (e.g., Itajeguaka, Yalve Sanga, Campo Largo, Campo Loro, Nueva Vida, Nich’a Toyis) had granted consent to join the RSA and were undergoing certification with support from project-contracted consultants⁹⁷. Certification preparation included field visits, geospatial analysis, updated maps of certified forests, and delimitation of forest areas, with GIS support from project staff⁹⁸. These efforts were preceded by 13 FPIC consultation processes conducted with a total of 3,184 participants (1,071 women, 1,385 men, and 682 children), using child-friendly spaces as part of FAO’s methodology to ensure women’s effective participation. These activities were supported by bilingual visual materials, community

⁸⁷ KIIs: UNEP.

⁸⁸ KIIs: National Ministries.

⁸⁹ KIIs: FAO; UNDP.

⁹⁰ KIIs: FAO.

⁹¹ APR 2023; APR 2024; KIIs: UNDP; FAO.

⁹² KIIs: UNDP; FAO.

⁹³ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

⁹⁴ KIIs: Community Beneficiaries; Local Authorities and Park Management.

⁹⁵ APR 2023; APR 2024.

⁹⁶ KIIs: Community Beneficiaries; UNDP; UNEP.

⁹⁷ APR 2024.

⁹⁸ APR 2024.

dialogue spaces, and a simplified mechanism for Indigenous certification⁹⁹. While the annual reports do not specify a formal target, this level of certification is widely seen by stakeholders as a promising foundation¹⁰⁰, even if modest relative to ambitions. However, at least two communities declined to participate in the certification process, citing confusion and mistrust linked to inadequate communication about the nature and implications of PES¹⁰¹. These issues are addressed in more depth under the dedicated finding on Indigenous Peoples' participation.

- 95 Despite this progress, certification remains disconnected from markets. While UNEP and partners are developing training for Indigenous communities to understand and engage in the market for environmental services, stakeholders noted that no institutional mechanism is currently in place to support certified communities' post-certification in negotiating, pricing, or commercializing certificates¹⁰². According to UNEP, the process remains resource-intensive (5,000–6,000 USD and up to 20 months per certificate), and the lack of a digital trading platform or national registry further impedes access to buyers¹⁰³. A simplified mechanism for small producers was proposed, and initial market analyses were conducted, but commercialization remains largely aspirational at this stage¹⁰⁴.
- 96 At the institutional level, the project supported the proposed amendment to Law 3001/06 on Valuation and Compensation of Environmental Services, which was submitted to the Senate in 2022 but has not yet been adopted due to political transitions¹⁰⁵. The purpose of the amendment is to modernize the legal framework by streamlining procedures, clarifying institutional roles, and improving market alignment – including potential sales of environmental certificates in regulated and voluntary markets. Supporting documents included comparative studies of carbon registries and legal analysis of opportunities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement¹⁰⁶. In parallel, the project contributed to draft regulations under the new Carbon Credit Law (Law 7190/2024). The draft was developed through participatory consultations involving Indigenous representatives and links the national registry to UNFCCC systems. Although not yet implemented, this regulation could eventually serve as a complementary channel for PES if aligned with Law 3001/06 and integrated into a coherent market framework¹⁰⁷. Progress is also limited by persistent technical constraints. The lack of interoperability between MADES's SIAM and INFONA's SIGF systems continues to hinder the automation of forest deficit detection and PES compensation workflows¹⁰⁸. As noted under Outcome 2, while both systems are being upgraded independently, their integration has yet to be finalized, making it difficult to trace, verify, and process environmental service certificates in a streamlined manner¹⁰⁹. Moreover, once both systems become fully operational, their effective interoperability will depend on the political will and sustained collaboration of both institutions to ensure proper integration and functioning. These issues limit the full operationalization of the PES system despite strong legal and technical foundations.
- 97 Consultation and participation processes—particularly the application of CPLI—enabled community engagement but varied in quality. Some communities reported short timelines or lack of follow-up, which is addressed in the dedicated finding on Indigenous Peoples engagement.

Finding 14 – Outcome 6: The project made meaningful contributions to improved territorial governance by supporting the development of POUTs in over a dozen municipalities, though implementation capacity at the local level remains limited, posing a risk to long-term effectiveness.

- 98 The project supported the development and approval of POUTs (Planes de Ordenamiento Urbano y Territorial) in at least 12 municipalities, surpassing its original target¹¹⁰. UNDP led the formulation process using a six-stage

⁹⁹ APR 2024.

¹⁰⁰ KIIs: FAO; UNEP.

¹⁰¹ KIIs: Community Beneficiaries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

¹⁰² KIIs: UNEP; FAO; APR 2024.

¹⁰³ KIIs: UNEP; APR 2024.

¹⁰⁴ APR 2023; APR 2024.

¹⁰⁵ APR 2023.

¹⁰⁶ APR 2024.

¹⁰⁷ APR 2024.

¹⁰⁸ APR 2024.

¹⁰⁹ KIIs: FAO; APR 2024.

¹¹⁰ APR 2024.

methodology that included spatial diagnostics, infrastructure mapping, and strategic zoning plans¹¹¹. The POUTs are recognized by municipal and national authorities as effective tools for structuring territorial development, preventing unregulated urban expansion, and integrating environmental safeguards into municipal decision-making¹¹².

- 99 Importantly, several stakeholder groups emphasized how the POUTs promote connectivity between urban centers and rural zones, with the latter serving as ecological corridors critical to conservation. In Santa Rosa del Aguaray, for instance, the POUT was seen as enabling decisions that restrict infrastructure development in sensitive areas and promote coordinated planning across zones of expansion and protection¹¹³. National actors described how these plans reflect conservation-compatible zoning and foster inter-institutional awareness of the value of land-use planning¹¹⁴.
- 100 The process was also notable for its participatory approach. The project facilitated over 28 workshops involving more than 2,200 participants, including representatives from civil society, women's groups, and Indigenous communities¹¹⁵. Learnings from this participatory process were integrated into the draft Indigenous Peoples Participation Plan for the POUT, which outlines the role and involvement of Indigenous communities in POUT development¹¹⁶.
- 101 However, despite this progress, stakeholders across all levels raised concerns about the limited capacity of municipalities to implement the POUTs. Municipalities such as Santa Rosa reported lacking GIS specialists and resources to manage land registries and enforce zoning¹¹⁷. National ministries and UNDP echoed these concerns, noting that POUTs risk remaining on paper without a dedicated technical structure and follow-up investment in local institutions¹¹⁸. To address this gap, UNDP indicated it will use remaining project resources to not only expand POUT coverage but also to strengthen implementation capacity.
- 102 The inclusion of women and Indigenous communities in planning processes improved over time, but gaps remain—particularly in ensuring the participation of Indigenous women and translating planning outcomes into local benefits¹¹⁹. These aspects are explored further in the dedicated findings on gender and Indigenous engagement.

Finding 15 – Outcomes 7 and 8: While the project has made progress in laying the technical and institutional foundations for the NCCF, a change of government and subsequent political and legal delays have prevented its operationalization.

- 103 As of March 2025, only the RBP window is being advanced, and its implementation remains contingent on the approval of a draft law currently under inter-institutional review.
- 104 The project has invested significant effort in supporting the creation of Paraguay's NCCF, envisioned as a multi-window mechanism to channel climate finance aligned with the country's NDCs and low-emission development goals. Between 2020 and 2024, the project developed the NCCF's **legal framework, operational manuals, safeguards procedures, and financing scenarios**, including the proposal to establish a **fideicomiso model with a multi-stakeholder governance structure**¹²⁰.
- 105 Despite these technical advances, the NCCF has not yet become operational. **No governing body has been established**, and no funds have been disbursed through the mechanism. Progress has been constrained primarily by the need to ensure alignment with Paraguay's legal and institutional framework for public financial management. The initial design of the NCCF envisaged the creation of a fideicomiso under MADES; however, this approach was

¹¹¹ KIIs: UNDP.

¹¹² KIIs: Local Authorities and Park Management; National Ministries.

¹¹³ KIIs: Local Authorities and Park Management.

¹¹⁴ KIIs: National Ministries.

¹¹⁵ APR 2024.

¹¹⁶ KIIs: UNDP; APR 2024.

¹¹⁷ KIIs: Local Authorities and Park Management.

¹¹⁸ KIIs: National Ministries; UNDP.

¹¹⁹ APR 2024.

¹²⁰ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries; APR 2023, 2024.

not deemed feasible as MADES does not hold the legal mandate to administer public trust funds. Addressing these design limitations has required extensive inter-institutional dialogue and legal review to determine a structure consistent with national legislation.¹²¹

- 106 In March 2025, representatives of UNEP, the MEF, and MADES held technical discussions to explore options for advancing the NCCF. While no formal agreement was reached, participants considered the possibility of setting up a fund for the **RBP (Results-Based Payment) window only, rather than creating a multi-window trust fund**, to be managed through a **dedicated fideicomiso with Agencia Financiera de Desarrollo (AFD) as trustee**, and MADES as executing entity¹²². Following these discussions, a **draft law enabling this fiduciary structure was submitted to legal review** and is expected to be **presented to Congress by June 2025**¹²³. However, the MEF noted that this draft had not been shared with them for review prior to submission and underscored the importance of coordinated institutional consultation in future steps.
- 107 The future of the NCCF will depend on the finalization and approval of this legal framework, which requires sustained coordination among institutions and formalized working arrangements. While the March 2025 technical mission was key to fuel discussion on Component 2, the project still lacks a formal technical working group for Component 2 that is needed to ensure such interinstitutional alignment.
- 108 Should the law be passed, the tentative timeline foresees the fideicomiso contract with AFD finalized by mid-2025, a first call for proposals in the first half of 2026, and initial disbursements in the second half of 2026. However, stakeholders emphasized that beneficiaries are not yet prepared to access the fund, and that proposal development, compliance with safeguards, and understanding of fund modalities require substantial capacity-building efforts. These activities—targeting Indigenous communities, women's groups, and other local actors—are just beginning and remain a work in progress¹²⁴.
- 109 Meanwhile, expectations from communities and civil society remain unmet. Respondents across stakeholder groups reported that the NCCF had been promoted as a channel for REDD+ benefits, but that **no concrete access opportunities have materialized**. Some warned that **continued delays and lack of communication risk eroding trust** in the project and in public institutions responsible for managing climate finance¹²⁵.
- 110 The project's planning documents confirm that approximately **500,000 USD remains earmarked for the NCCF**, covering extension of the PMU, operational costs, and startup activities linked to the RBP window. However, unless political alignment is achieved and implementation accelerated, the mechanism's relevance to REDD+ objectives and national climate finance architecture may be undermined.

D4. Likelihood of Impact

Rating for Likelihood of Impact	Moderately Likely
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Finding 16 – The project has made measurable contributions toward several intended outcomes, but the realization of long-term impact is only partially likely, given that critical assumptions around institutional coordination, fund operationalization, and community-level ownership have not fully held.

- 111 The project's reconstructed Theory of Change envisions long-term impacts related to improved climate resilience and reduced deforestation through systemic policy change, institutional coordination, and community engagement. Intermediate States such as strengthened territorial governance, access to climate finance, and enhanced monitoring and enforcement were expected to bridge the pathway from outcomes to impact.

¹²¹ National Ministries; UNEP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; PSC Meeting notes Octubre 2024.

¹²² KIIs: UNEP.

¹²³ KIIs: UNEP.

¹²⁴ KIIs: UNEP.

¹²⁵ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; Community Beneficiaries.

- 112 Evidence shows that progress has been achieved across most outcomes, particularly in Component 1. Upgrades to forest monitoring systems, development of territorial plans (POUTs), improved fire response capacity, and emerging structures for certification of Indigenous communities for environmental services signal meaningful steps toward the Intermediate States. For example, the new national forest monitoring platform now allows INFONA to track land use and commodity flows, contributing to more transparent and data-driven policy decisions, even beyond the environmental sector¹²⁶.
- 113 However, several key assumptions embedded in the Theory of Change have not held, limiting the project's likelihood of achieving transformative impact within the current timeframe. Most notably, the NCCF remains non-operational as of early 2025, due to institutional fragmentation and unresolved legal and fiduciary barriers. While a revised scenario is being advanced for the RBP window only, this is still contingent on the approval of a draft law and faces ongoing resistance from within MEF¹²⁷. This undermines assumptions that sustainable finance would be available to consolidate and scale local climate-compatible investments.
- 114 Similarly, while Indigenous participation processes were launched and new platforms created (e.g., the Regional Indigenous Council in the Chaco), their actual influence in planning and resource allocation remains limited. This weakens assumptions related to inclusive governance and risks undermining local ownership of results.
- 115 The project's contribution to impact is therefore visible but only partially likely to materialize in full during the project timeframe. Unless assumptions related to political alignment, institutional coordination, and inclusive implementation are addressed -particularly in Component 2- the causal chain may stall at the level of intermediate outcomes.

Finding 17 – The project has already generated several unintended results-both positive and negative-which may contribute to or hinder long-term impact.

- 116 Several unintended positive effects emerged during implementation that may support longer-term systems change beyond the project's original design:
- The training of judges and prosecutors has begun to yield court decisions related to environmental services, including rulings that mandate the purchase of environmental service certificates. This reflects a legal system increasingly aligned with climate-related mechanisms and may strengthen accountability in the medium term¹²⁸.
 - Improvements in INFONA's digital systems, originally intended for monitoring, have also led to increased use of electronic invoicing, enhancing transparency in administrative procedures. This institutional spillover may help reduce corruption risks and improve inter-agency trust¹²⁹.
 - The participatory Indigenous planning process, while uneven in influence, led to the creation of a new Regional Council of Indigenous Peoples in both the Chaco and Eastern regions, a structure not originally envisioned by the project. This could become a durable platform for Indigenous voice in climate governance¹³⁰.
- 117 However, there are also unintended negative effects that could undermine progress, in particular:
- The certification of Indigenous communities for environmental services, while welcomed in some areas, has led to internal tensions within communities, especially where land titles are unclear or where participatory processes were not sufficiently inclusive. Several stakeholders warned that premature certification without parallel investments in land regularization and communication could trigger intra-community conflict, particularly when expectations of financial returns are unmet¹³¹.

¹²⁶ KII: National Ministries; APR 2023, 2024.

¹²⁷ March 2025 Notes; UNEP.

¹²⁸ FAO; National Ministries.

¹²⁹ National Ministries; APR 2023.

¹³⁰ Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; UNDP.

¹³¹ Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; UNDP; Community Beneficiaries.

Finding 18 – The project has introduced several technological, methodological, and institutional innovations.

- 118 Most promising innovations have emerged in forest monitoring, intercultural consultation methodologies, inclusive engagement practices, and territorial planning that integrates ecological corridors.
- 119 **Technological innovations in forest monitoring systems** have been widely recognized by implementing agencies and national authorities. INFONA's forest monitoring system, strengthened with FAO's technical support, now includes disaggregated data on land use and commodities and incorporates forest inventory data from Indigenous territories for the first time.¹³²
- 120 **Methodological innovations in Indigenous consultation and intercultural communication** were cited across stakeholder groups. The co-development and institutionalization of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), or *Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado* (CLPI) methodology, validated by Indigenous leaders and the INDI, enabled structured participation across diverse territories. The integration of gender parity in representation in the PSC (e.g., requiring both male and female Indigenous representatives from both regions), as well as the translation of communication materials into Indigenous languages and the use of visual tools to facilitate understanding among indigenous communities were seen as highly innovative.¹³³
- 121 **Gender-responsive practices that remove barriers to participation** have been introduced during project activities. For example, the provision of food through community kitchens and on-site childcare during project activities enabled meaningful participation of women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities. These measures helped increase the presence and voice of women in decision-making spaces, which was previously constrained by logistical and cultural barriers.¹³⁴
- 122 **Innovations in municipal territorial planning** have integrated ecological corridors into land governance frameworks. Through the development of POUTs, municipalities have begun bridging rural and urban territorial planning. This innovation, highlighted by local authorities and national stakeholders, allows for the explicit incorporation of ecological corridors and forest conservation objectives into territorial planning processes, marking a shift from purely administrative zoning to integrated conservation-oriented governance.¹³⁵

Adaptive Management

Finding 19 – The project has made some adaptive adjustments in response to operational challenges and stakeholder input; however, the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation system has significantly constrained its capacity for systematic, results-based adaptive management.

Rating for Adaptive Management	Moderately Satisfactory
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- 123 Adaptive management has been limited due to the absence of a robust M&E system. The project lacks a comprehensive results framework with clear outcome-level indicators, baselines, and targets. While activities are reported in APRs, the lack of performance metrics prevents the project from systematically assessing progress and making evidence-informed adjustments. Moreover, real-time monitoring data is not routinely used to inform strategic decisions, which hinders the project's capacity for course correction.
- 124 Nonetheless, isolated examples of adaptive management were identified. One such case involved the adjustment in the strategy for the National Park Caazapa, which had initially been identified for ecotourism activities; however,

¹³² KIIs: National Ministries; FAO.

¹³³ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; UNEP; National Ministries; Community Beneficiaries.

¹³⁴ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

¹³⁵ KIIs: UNDP; National Ministries; Local Authorities and Park Management.

following safeguard monitoring visits that revealed the presence of illegal plantations and associated security risks, the project abandoned the ecotourism component and refocused efforts solely on conservation.¹³⁶

125 Adjustments at the planning level have also occurred through the PSC. For example, during the fourth and fifth meetings¹³⁷, new municipalities were incorporated into the project's territorial planning activities in response to over performance against POUT-related targets.¹³⁸ Another example of adaptive management is the redesign of Component 2, which originally envisioned the operationalization of the NCCF through direct budgetary channels. Due to legal and institutional barriers, Component 2 was adjusted to support the creation of an RBP Window for the disbursement of GCF funding, rather than the creation of the entire NCCF.

126 Despite these efforts, adaptations have tended to be reactive and ad hoc rather than part of a structured learning cycle. Without a functioning M&E system to systematically capture and analyze performance information, adaptive management across the project remains limited.

E. Financial Management

Overall Rating for Financial Management	Satisfactory
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Table 4. Financial Management Table GCF PROJECTS ¹³⁹

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		Satisfactory	Detailed annual reports both narrative and financial (broken down by activity) presented analysis of actual expenditure. Annual operational plans were prepared. No expenditure over operational planning budget
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ¹⁴⁰ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	Proper procedures appear to have been followed with each partner.
2. Completeness of project financial information ¹⁴¹ :			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		Satisfactory	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Annual budget reports, annual operational plans were prepared by the project team broken down by activity

¹³⁶ KIIs: UNEP.

¹³⁷ Acta de la Cuarta Reunion de la Junta Directiva Del Proyecto Paraguay + Verde & Acta de la Quinta Reunión de la Junta Directiva Del Proyecto Paraguay + Verde.

¹³⁸ While the project did not have a comprehensive results framework with baseline and targets, some activities – including the POUT – set targets as part of separate results frameworks developed by the Implementing Agencies for their respective components.

¹³⁹ Source: 12_MTE_ Financial Tables 31.01.2024, table 3 (Non GEF and GCF Projects)

¹⁴⁰ If the evaluation raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

¹⁴¹ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
B.	Revisions to the budget	No	There were no budget revisions
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Clear PCAs for each partner
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Disbursement requests, project reconciliation reports were shared for most partners (not MADES)
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	N/A	
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Annual financial reports were submitted with the APRs
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (where applicable)	N/A	An audit is planned for project end and has therefore not yet taken place
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		Highly Satisfactory	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		Highly Satisfactory	Task Manager informed of financial status through regular communications and financial reports.
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		Highly Satisfactory	As above
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		Satisfactory	Joint missions undertaken to address bottlenecks related to Component 2
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		Highly Satisfactory	Interviews indicate regular communication is maintained.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process		Highly Satisfactory	All requests for documentation were met

E1. Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

Rating for Adherence to UNEP Policies/Procedures	Satisfactory
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- 127 The project has adhered to UNEP's financial management policies, with annual financial reports submitted alongside performance reports and reviewed in line with standard procedures. Financial reports were consistently prepared and presented by activity, with no recorded budget overruns or required revisions throughout the period under review. Annual operational plans were developed, and clearly structured Program Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) were established with implementing partners. However, despite compliance with procedures, the project has faced serious under-spending, particularly in Component 2, due to both internal and external factors (see Efficiency, Section F).

E2. Completeness of Financial Information

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information	Highly Satisfactory
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- 128 The project has provided a robust set of standard financial documentation. Financial reports are detailed and structured, and disbursement documentation was shared for most partners, aside MADES because the component for which it is responsible (Component 2.2) has not yet started execution. No co-financing or in-kind contributions were foreseen or reported, in line with the project's GCF-only funding structure. Furthermore, no financial audits were completed at the time of review, as the only planned audit is scheduled for the project's end.

E3. Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

- 129 Coordination between the UNEP Fund Management Officer and the PMU has been consistent and effective. The PMU's financial officer has maintained strong internal control and produced detailed reports. Interviews confirm that financial and project staff communicate regularly, and that UNEP's financial team has remained responsive to documentation requests and financial clarifications. Joint missions were undertaken to resolve bottlenecks, particularly those linked to Component 2. Overall, the quality of internal financial communication has supported transparency and compliance.

F. Efficiency

Overall Rating for Efficiency	Moderately Satisfactory
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Finding 20 – The project has experienced substantial delays in both implementation and disbursements, particularly during its first three years. These delays are attributed to external disruptions, staffing turnover, and slow administrative procedures, especially related to UNEP's procurement systems.

- 130 Implementation of Paraguay + Verde began slowly, with **zero disbursement in 2020** and only **20,864 USD executed by the end of 2021**—less than **0.05% of the total budget**¹⁴². By the close of 2022, cumulative expenditure had reached **just 1.2% of the 50,000,000 USD budget**, with nearly all outputs under Component 1 and Component 2 still in early stages¹⁴³. Disbursements began to accelerate in 2023, but by **December 2024, only 14,060,000 USD—approximately 28% of the total budget—had been executed**¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² APR Financial Report 2021.

¹⁴³ APR 2022; Financial Report 2022.

¹⁴⁴ APR Financial Report 2024.

Table 5. Expenditure by Outcome/Output¹⁴⁵

Component/sub-component/output (all figures as USD)	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure (as of December 2024)	Expenditure ratio
Outcome 1	26,100,000	12,152,188	47%
Outcome 2	18,667,500	142,934	1%
Project Management Costs	5,232,500	1,759,926	34%
	50,000,000	14,055,048	28%

Delays were driven by several interrelated factors:

- 131 **External shocks and governance transitions** – The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 national elections contributed to significant interruptions during project start-up and planning phases. Political transitions affected key partner institutions (notably MEF and MADES) and resulted in shifts in priorities and focal points, slowing decision-making and approvals¹⁴⁶.
- 132 **Staffing turnover and slow recruitment** – The PMU experienced coordination gaps due to the departure of the original coordinator, followed by an interim coordinator and the eventual hiring of the current coordinator. Turnover of the coordinator position was also observed in the FAO team. Hiring replacements through UN recruitment processes proved cumbersome, often requiring **multiple rounds of selection** with no suitable candidate. For instance, the replacement of the PMU project coordinator in 2023 required three separate calls before a temporary consultant was engaged¹⁴⁷. Similar issues occurred in the recruitment of a safeguard's specialist and technical advisors, leading to gaps in leadership and delays in execution.
- 133 **Slow procurement and approval procedures** – Administrative and procurement processes for activities exceeding **100,000 USD** must be reviewed and cleared by UNEP's **Panama regional office and headquarters in Nairobi**, a step that often adds **several months to the timeline**¹⁴⁸. These additional clearance steps are not discretionary to UNEP but derive from its Accreditation Master Agreement with the GCF, which requires that any procurement undertaken by a third party comply with the financial rules, policies, and procedures of the Accredited Entity. The project's large scale and its need for simultaneous contracting of multiple services further stretched administrative bandwidth and slowed sequencing of outputs.
- 134 These cumulative delays have had cascading effects on sequencing. For example, the approval of annual POAs was held back by the delayed establishment of the PSC and the INDI representation dispute¹⁴⁹. Field implementation lagged behind planning timelines, which in turn delayed the production of knowledge and communications products and the delivery of some safeguard activities.
- 135 While implementation has accelerated since 2023, with improvements in coordination and staffing structure, many outputs remain significantly behind schedule. The need for a no-cost extension is discussed further under a separate finding on extension justification.

¹⁴⁵ Source: Annual Financial Report 2024

¹⁴⁶ APR 2024.

¹⁴⁷ KIIs: UNEP.

¹⁴⁸ KIIs: UNEP; Manual Operativo, §4.2.

¹⁴⁹ APR 2022; KIIs : UNEP; National Ministries.

Finding 21 – The project has demonstrated several efforts to ensure cost-effectiveness, including the use of local procurement strategies and leveraging institutional partnerships. However, in a few cases, resource intensity does not appear to be relative to the scale of results achieved.

- 136 The project employed multiple cost-saving measures to maximize results within the fixed 50,000,000 USD budget. A notable example is **the construction of MADES's new building, where UNDP applied its long-standing expertise in infrastructure procurement to secure a cost per square meter significantly below the national market average.** The construction process incorporated energy efficiency and sustainability features aligned with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards, further enhancing long-term value for money¹⁵⁰.
- 137 Cost-effective procurement practices were also adopted. **UNDP and FAO made extensive use of Long-Term Agreements (LTAs)** to contract services such as catering, transport, IT equipment, and workshops. These LTAs ensured access to multiple vendors under pre-negotiated terms and conditions, combining **technical quality (weighted 70%) with financial competitiveness (30%)**, thus reducing transaction costs and procurement timelines¹⁵¹.
- 138 Field mission costs were also reduced through **joint supervision visits by UNEP and implementing agencies**, as well as through the alignment of safeguard, gender, and knowledge management missions to minimize travel and workshop expenditures¹⁵².
- 139 However, the sustainable production pilot in Caazapá may raise cost-efficiency concerns. For this pilot, **a team of two technical consultants covering the entire department, supported by one additional specialist serving all departments and districts, was contracted. As of March 2025, the pilot had reached** 46 producers across three districts, which raises questions about the proportionality of staffing relative to the number of beneficiaries currently engaged. Given that these pilots are still at an early stage of implementation, it is too soon to assess their cost-efficiency. The balance between investment and impact – particularly considering the potential for scaling and longer-term effects on reducing deforestation and forest degradation – will need to be reassessed at project completion.¹⁵³

Finding 22 – A no-cost extension appears justifiable in light of delays under Component 2 and the potential to deepen selected outputs under Component 1, though its added value will depend on institutional and political developments in the near term.

- 140 While the majority of outputs under Component 1 are expected to reach completion by the current project end date of November 2026, progress remains uneven. Most activities entered full-scale implementation only in 2023–2024, and several outputs—particularly **ecotourism investments, the MADES-INFONA interoperability platform, and FAO's sustainable production pilots**—remain at risk of being rushed. The implementing agencies (UNDP and FAO) have acknowledged that they are now advancing implementation at full speed to meet the targets. However, the Evaluation Team observed that this accelerated delivery has, in some cases, led to **rushed field deployments without sufficient coordination or communication with local stakeholders**, which has, in turn, limited beneficiaries' understanding of their participation and responsibilities as project participants.¹⁵⁴
- 141 Stakeholders also noted that **additional time could add strategic value** to certain outputs. The territorial governance component (POUTs), for example, has achieved its targets under budget. With more time, these interventions could be either expanded to additional municipalities or supplemented with capacity-building for local implementation¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵⁰ KIIs : UNDP.

¹⁵¹ KIIs : UNDP; FAO.

¹⁵² KIIs : UNEP; APR 2023.

¹⁵³ KIIs : FAO; National Ministries.

¹⁵⁴ KIIs: FAO; UNDP; Community Beneficiaries.

¹⁵⁵ KIIs: National Ministries; KII: UNDP.

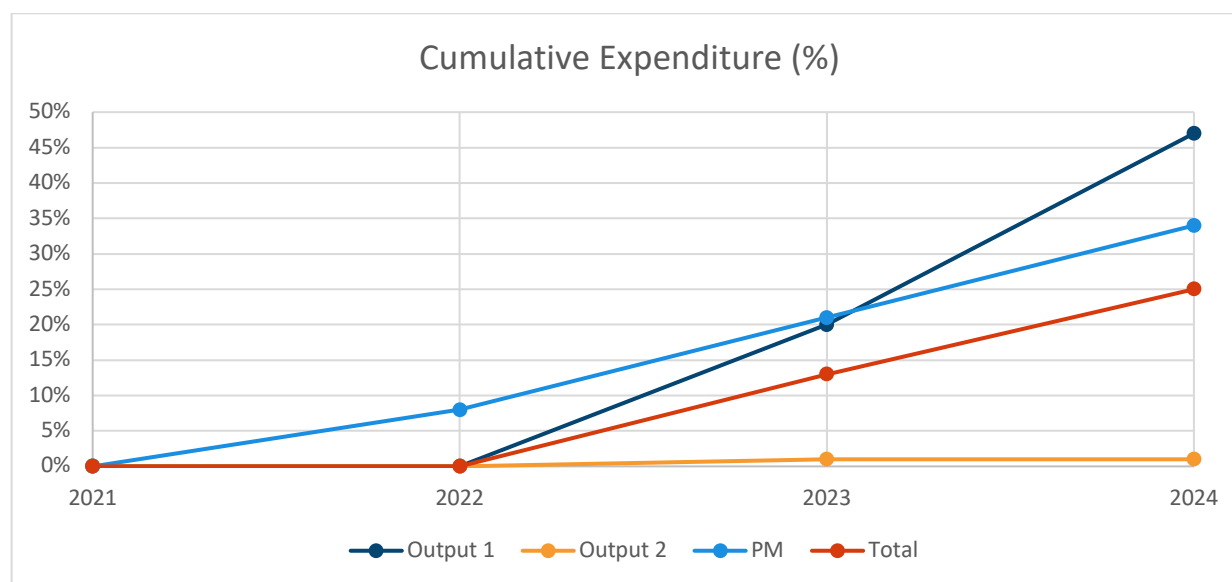
142 Under **Component 2**, progress has been significantly delayed. As of end-2024, no disbursement has occurred under Sub-output 2.2, which focuses on the capitalization of the NCCF¹⁵⁶. UNEP has indicated that a no-cost extension will be required to complete this component, and MADES has expressed strong support for this proposal¹⁵⁷. In contrast, both **FAO and UNDP have expressed reservations for an extension unless clear progress is made in creating and operationalizing the RBP window of the NCCF**. While acknowledging that a few activities under Component 1 may benefit from additional time, they raised concerns regarding **the financial and human resource implications** of an extension. Specifically, they noted that no cost-benefit assessment has been conducted to evaluate which activities truly require more time, and that maintaining full teams without additional budget would impose significant opportunity costs¹⁵⁸. Any extension, they emphasized, would need to be **highly selective in scope**, likely involving **downsized teams** and a limited operational footprint.

143 UNEP has similarly noted that an extension would require reconfiguring the PMU team. While some positions might be scaled back, others—such as the **financial specialist role**, which has remained vacant following delays in Component 2—may need to be **reactivated to provide technical support for the establishment of the NCCF's RBP window**¹⁵⁹.

144 The Evaluation Team finds that a no-cost extension could be warranted based on current progress and outstanding outputs. However, its effectiveness will depend on **whether enabling conditions for Component 2—especially the legal framework required to advance this work - are established in the coming months**. This includes the presentation of the bill to the Congress in June 2025, followed by the adoption of the law and the finalization of manuals to operationalize the fund by December 2025. Without clear indications of progress in this area, an extension could risk extending management costs without commensurate results.

145 Figure 5 below shows the cumulative expenditure of the project for Output 1, Output 2 and project management costs. It shows that output related activities only fully commenced in 2022. Since then, Output 1 activities have proceeded at a good pace, reaching a 47% expenditure rate by the end of 2024. However, the project has only achieved 1% of the planned expenditure for output 2 by the end of 2024.

Figure 5: Cumulative Expenditure (% of allocation)



¹⁵⁶ APR-INF.FINANCIERO- FP121-DIC.2024-27.01.2025.

¹⁵⁷ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

¹⁵⁸ KIIs: UNDP; FAO.

¹⁵⁹ KIIs: UNEP.

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Overall Rating for Monitoring and Reporting	Moderately Satisfactory
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Finding 23 – The project lacks a unified, results-based monitoring system, with no clear indicators or targets at the program level. While agency-specific M&E systems and safeguard monitoring have partially filled this gap, the absence of a centralized framework has constrained adaptive management, learning, and performance-based decision-making.

G1. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting	Not Rated
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146 As a REDD+ Results-Based Payment (RBP) initiative, the project was not required to develop a traditional results framework with indicators, baselines, and targets. The RBP pilot Terms of Reference confirm that funding is awarded based on verified historical emission reductions and does not impose ex ante requirements for output- or outcome-level performance measurement.¹⁶⁰ Accordingly, the program has relied on **Table 14 of the FAA** as its central planning tool, which outlines thematic measures and corresponding activities but does **not define indicators, baselines, or time-bound targets**¹⁶¹. While this structure allowed for flexibility, it has limited the project's capacity to track progress in a structured, measurable way. It has also limited the project's evaluability.

147 The implementing agencies (FAO and UNDP) have used their own M&E systems under their UN-to-UN agreements with UNEP. These include internal results frameworks with defined indicators and targets, though the quality of indicators varies: **UNDP's framework (Annex B of their agreement)** features outcome-level indicators linked to REDD+ processes but lacks disaggregation, while **FAO's framework (Annex B, Annex 1 of their agreement)** includes more operational-level indicators but remains weak on methodological consistency and baseline clarity. Crucially, **neither agency's framework is directly aligned with Table 14**, limiting coherence between agency-level and program-level monitoring.

G2. Monitoring of Project Implementation

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation	Moderately Satisfactory
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148 No comprehensive monitoring system has been established at the program level. Within the PMU, there is no dedicated M&E specialist¹⁶², and monitoring has largely been implemented through safeguard missions, led by the safeguard specialist and supported by gender and communications staff. While these missions generate valuable qualitative data—especially on social inclusion and FPIC—they are not designed to systematically track performance indicators across outputs and components. The recently hired Program Assistant has been tasked with conducting a retrospective analysis of progress and bottlenecks, but this function is backward-looking and insufficient to support real-time adjustments or forward planning¹⁶³. **While an internal review process is conducted annually to support APR preparation, this exercise is episodic and does not feed into an ongoing system for adaptive management.**

¹⁶⁰ KIIs: UNEP; RBP TOR.

¹⁶¹ FAA agreement.

¹⁶² KII: UNEP.

¹⁶³ KII: UNEP.

- 149 The absence of a comprehensive baseline is a further limitation. As of 2024, **FAO is developing a baseline for Activity 1.1.3.1 on sustainable production and income diversification**, covering 79 farms across Caazapá and Itapúa.¹⁶⁴ While this is a valuable initiative, it is limited in scope and does not compensate for the lack of a program-wide baseline¹⁶⁵. Ministries have also flagged concerns about unclear expectations for performance reporting. Several noted that because no predefined indicators were shared, **they were uncertain about what data to track and** occasionally received last-minute data requests from UNEP for the APRs. Similarly, they noted that several key achievements go under-reported because they are not captured in data requests for reporting from the PMU¹⁶⁶.
- 150 There is also **no evidence that performance data has been systematically reviewed in Steering Committee meetings**. While the committee approves annual work plans (POAs), meeting minutes reviewed do not indicate use of performance metrics or structured discussion of progress against indicators.

G3. Project Reporting

Rating for Project Reporting	Satisfactory
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- 151 Despite the above-mentioned gaps, the project has consistently produced **qualitatively strong Annual Performance Reports (APRs)**, which provide detailed narrative updates across Table 14 measures. However, due to the lack of indicators and baseline data, these reports are unable to assess progress quantitatively. This limits the usefulness of the APRs for performance-based management and outcome tracking.
- 152 Agency reporting through the UN-to-UN frameworks is conducted separately and feeds into UNEP's central reports. However, due to the disconnection between agency-level frameworks and program-level planning tools, **there is no consolidated performance dashboard** or core set of indicators shared across the project.
- 153 Finally, reporting to the GCF follows a detailed template but is resource-intensive: **APR preparation takes up to two months and requires the input of nearly half of the PMU team**, indicating a substantial administrative burden for a project without streamlined M&E systems¹⁶⁷.

H. Sustainability

Overall Rating for Exit Strategy and Sustainability	Moderately Likely
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Finding 24 – The project has been designed with an emphasis on long-term institutional and policy strengthening, which provides a promising foundation for sustainability. While there is no formal exit strategy outlined in the FAA or agency documents, the investment logic clearly prioritizes systemic reform over standalone activities, suggesting a focus on sustaining outcomes through national systems and mandates rather than through external project mechanisms.

H1. Socio-political Sustainability

- 154 There is strong evidence of national ownership and political commitment across multiple components. The project has reinforced institutional embedding of REDD+ processes through legal reforms, field implementation by government staff, and the institutionalization of systems. A major example is INFONA's establishment of a **dedicated fire monitoring and response department**, staffed and budgeted through public resources—something

¹⁶⁴ Table 14 also states that baseline data would be developed to measure and evaluate the impact of activity 1.6.2.1, but this data has yet to be developed.

¹⁶⁵ APR 2024.

¹⁶⁶ KIIs: National ministries.

¹⁶⁷ KIIs: UNEP; APR 2023.

that did not exist prior to the project. The creation of this unit reflects the institutionalization of capacities built under the project in wildfire monitoring and management.

- 155 Ownership is further demonstrated through the direct involvement of government personnel in technical execution. For example, public officials developed the POUTs with technical support and received on-the-job capacity strengthening, increasing the likelihood of continued use and internal replication after the project ends¹⁶⁸. The development and revision of environmental regulations and REDD+ strategies—such as those related to PES, forest governance, and climate policy—also strengthen the enabling environment for continued action¹⁶⁹.

H2. Financial Sustainability

- 156 Several outcomes remain dependent on continued funding. These include the maintenance of **ecotourism infrastructure in protected areas**, operations of the **soil laboratory**, and particularly **municipal implementation of POUTs**, where many local governments lack the budgetary autonomy to carry forward planning tools without external support¹⁷⁰. While pilot initiatives on sustainable production appear promising, **no formal commitments or financing streams have yet been established for their replication at scale**, although discussions with national counterparts are ongoing¹⁷¹.
- 157 Component 2 was originally conceived to support financial sustainability through the establishment of the NCCF composed of multiple funding windows—including a RBP window to channel project funds and additional windows to receive domestic, private, or donor contributions. As of 2024, only the RBP window is under design (pending the law granting MADES legal competencies to act as fideicomiso), and it is exclusively intended to manage project funds, meaning it does not yet function as a mechanism for post-project financing. In addition, the current NCCF design limits funding modalities to **technical assistance and grants**, excluding credit instruments, which constrains its potential to attract diversified climate finance and support long-term fund sustainability. As such, the financial sustainability function of the NCCF remains unrealized in its broader design¹⁷².

H3. Sustainability of the Institutional Framework

- 158 The project has supported the institutionalization of several national systems and governance processes. The NFMS is now operational and integrated within INFONA's institutional structure, with a dedicated technical team trained through the project, indicating a strong likelihood of sustainability. The system is used by INFONA to generate regular fire risk bulletins and deforestation alerts, which are publicly disseminated and inform response protocols¹⁷³.
- 159 The sustainable production platforms previously established under the Green Commodities Programme were revived through the project. However, their sustainability remains uncertain. While the project intent is for the platforms to be institutionalized in MADES, they are currently coordinated by a single focal point rather than a dedicated unit, which limits their stability and strategic influence¹⁷⁴. Similar risks apply to pilot projects that have relied on short-term consultant support and are not yet anchored in agency mandates. Moreover, **weak coordination between INFONA and the MAG** under the sustainable production component is likely to **hinder post-project follow-up and reduces the likelihood that pilot experiences will be scaled**, which is a core objective of these interventions¹⁷⁵.
- 160 A further gap in institutional sustainability relates to the **Dirección Nacional de Cambio Climático (DNCC)**, which is located in MADES and was established by law to lead national climate change policy. Despite its legal mandate and potential as a long-term institutional anchor for climate governance, the project, whose EE is located in MADES's Directorate of Strategic Planning, did not include DNCC in implementation arrangements or strengthen its

¹⁶⁸ KIIs: Local Authorities.

¹⁶⁹ FAA; APR 2023; KIIs: National Ministries.

¹⁷⁰ KIIs: Local Authorities; FAO.

¹⁷¹ KIIs: National Ministries.

¹⁷² APR 2024; KIIs : UNEP; National Ministries.

¹⁷³ KIIs : National Ministries; APR 2024.

¹⁷⁴ KIIs : UNDP; Local Authorities.

¹⁷⁵ KIIs : National Ministries.

operational role. This represents a missed opportunity to leverage an existing institution with both political legitimacy and formal permanence to help embed REDD+ and NCCF-related functions¹⁷⁶.

- 161 Although the FAA does not include a formal exit strategy, the project's design—centered on systems strengthening, policy reform, and national execution—reflects a clear intention to promote sustainability through institutional pathways. However, long-term sustainability will require continued budgetary commitment, formal adoption of governance frameworks, and stronger integration of successful pilot models into national programs.

I. Factors Affecting Performance

Overall Rating for Factors Affecting Performance	Satisfactory
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11. Preparation and Readiness

Rating for Preparation/ Readiness (Project Inception)	Moderately Satisfactory
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Finding 25 – The project's readiness phase was significantly delayed due to complex institutional negotiations and structural adjustments, though important groundwork was laid through stakeholder engagement and partnership agreements.

- 162 The REDD+ Results-Based Payments project was approved by the GCF Board on 14 November 2019, and the FAA was signed on 21 November 2019 for a total of 50,000,000 USD¹⁷⁷. However, the grant only became effective on 13 November 2020, and the first financial disbursement was made in 2021—marking a gap of over a year between approval and implementation¹⁷⁸.
- 163 Several factors contributed to these delays. First, the project's original design was reportedly based on a higher financing envelope (approximately 72,000,000 USD), but UNEP was not accredited to handle projects of that scale. This required a downward budget revision to 50,000,000 USD, which generated friction with national authorities and caused delays in securing consensus¹⁷⁹. Second, there were protracted negotiations between UNEP and the co-implementing UN agencies (UNDP and FAO) regarding the UN-to-UN agreements. In particular, the Government of Paraguay requested a reduction in agency fees. Ultimately, UNEP reportedly relinquished part of its fee allocation to enable agreement finalization¹⁸⁰.
- 164 During this preparatory phase, key cooperation agreements were signed with Investigación para el Desarrollo, FAO and UNDP—each laying out implementation roles, supervision, and deliverables¹⁸¹. These agreements defined technical mandates in areas such as territorial planning, forest monitoring, and policy support. While these arrangements formalized responsibilities, interviews suggest that partner capacities and coordination modalities could have been more systematically assessed and clarified during this phase¹⁸².
- 165 The project did make progress in stakeholder mobilization early on. The inception workshop, held in 2022, was broadly viewed as a successful platform to engage implementing partners, government institutions, Indigenous

¹⁷⁶ KIIs : National Ministries.

¹⁷⁷ FAA; PCA-WCMC, p. 3; PCA-ID, p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ APR Financial Report 2020; FAA Annex; APR 2021 APR-Financial Report.

¹⁷⁹ KIIs : UNEP, National Ministries; Civil Society.

¹⁸⁰ KIIs : UNEP, Civil Society; APR 2021 APR-FINANCIAL REPORT.

¹⁸¹ KIIs : UNDP UN-to-UN Agreement 20210; UN-TO-UN agreement FAO, UN-to-UN agreement ID.

¹⁸² KIIs : UNEP and Implementing Agency KIIs.

organizations, and civil society. The workshop helped validate initial work plans and deepen ownership among stakeholders¹⁸³.

12. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

Rating for Quality of Project Management /Supervision	Moderately Satisfactory
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FINDING 26 – The project’s supervision and management structure was marked by strong technical capacities and committed staff across agencies, but UNEP’s limited country presence and frequent staff turnover weakened coordination and oversight.

UNEP/Accredited Entity

- 166 As the GCF Accredited Entity and lead Implementing Agency, **UNEP has held responsibility for project supervision and coordination**, including fiduciary oversight and inter-agency alignment. While UNEP’s project team has shown strong commitment—particularly in technically complex areas like safeguards—its ability to manage and coordinate effectively has been hindered by its **limited in-country presence**. At the time of project launch, UNEP had no permanent office in Paraguay. Although a full **PMU** has since 2021 been established in-country and now plays a critical role in coordination and implementation, the **PMU team is largely composed of locally recruited consultants**, without professional-level UN staff. This limits its authority and capacity to lead inter-institutional engagement, particularly with national counterparts.
- 167 The project has benefited from the **ongoing involvement of the Task Manager based in Panama**, who has maintained strong engagement and provides regular backstopping through missions and technical support. However, this does not fully compensate for the absence of senior UNEP representation in-country. An effort to strengthen regional support by appointing a **P3-level staff member to Panama** proved unsuccessful: the working style of this individual was widely perceived as **demotivating for the Paraguay team and detrimental to relationship-building with government counterparts**. The episode disrupted internal dynamics without yielding the intended leadership benefits. There are currently no intentions to re-appoint a UNEP international professional staff in Paraguay.
- 168 **Staff turnover in the PMU** has further affected project continuity. Implementing partners and government stakeholders noted multiple changes in the PMU’s project coordinator and technical leads, which led to **delays in planning, weak follow-up, and inconsistencies in inter-agency communication**. These gaps contributed to lags in procurement and undermined leadership in cross-cutting components such as the NCCF¹⁸⁴. A similar issue was observed within **FAO**, where turnover in coordination roles also delayed implementation schedules and continuity in engagement with INFONA and other partners.

Implementing Partners

- 169 The three implementing agencies have brought complementary technical strengths that have positively shaped project execution. **UNDP has demonstrated strong project management performance**, particularly in components focused on **institutional capacity-building, territorial governance (e.g., POUTs), and high-level policy dialogue**. Government counterparts consistently highlighted UNDP’s sustained engagement with ministries and its ability to adapt to shifting institutional dynamics. **FAO has been highly effective in field-level delivery**, especially in relation to PES certification, fire management, and coordination with INFONA and Indigenous communities. **UNEP has provided substantive leadership on safeguards and gender mainstreaming**, producing

¹⁸³ Inception Workshop Systematization Report.

¹⁸⁴ KIIs: UNDP; FAO; APR 2022, 2023.

high-quality technical guidance, supporting CPLI processes, and ensuring engagement of INDI and the Ministry for Women in decision-making structures.¹⁸⁵

13. Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation

Rating for Stakeholder's Participation/Cooperation	Moderately Satisfactory
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Finding 27 – The Project Steering Committee has functioned as a high-level, multi-stakeholder body for approving annual work plans (POAs), with active Indigenous and gender representation. However, its strategic effectiveness has been constrained by factors that are beyond the Project's control, including limited inter-ministerial coordination, the absence of the Department currently assuming the NDA function within the MEF, uneven participation across government entities, and a limited role for civil society due to challenges affecting the MESA REDD+.

- 170 The PSC has served as the formal governance structure for reviewing and approving the annual work plan (POA) and providing strategic guidance to the Paraguay + Verde project. Stakeholders widely agree that the Junta has provided a **legitimate high-level space for intersectoral dialogue**, particularly in approving annual priorities and allocating responsibilities across agencies¹⁸⁶. Its composition reflects a strong commitment to inclusiveness, with **active participation from Indigenous organizations and the Ministry for Women**, which has contributed to the credibility and transparency of project decision-making. This is a notable example of good practice that has the potential to be replicated elsewhere.
- 171 Nevertheless, while the PSC has played a key procedural role, its **strategic and inter-institutional coordination functions have been uneven**. Participation from key ministries such as MAG and MEF has been inconsistent, and there have been instances where POAs were approved with delays in document circulation and limited technical preparation. Stakeholders noted that the Junta meets twice a year, and it has functioned more as a **formal decision-making forum** than as a space for substantive dialogue or problem-solving. The project **lacks a separate technical-level inter-ministerial coordination mechanism**, which has made it difficult to address emerging implementation challenges or facilitate adaptive management between formal steering meetings¹⁸⁷.
- 172 A critical institutional gap has been the **absence of the GCF NDA from the PSC**, despite the MEF becoming the NDA in 2023. This is largely due to the fact that the MEF's Directorate of Territorial Governance had been included in the PSC—given its role in coordinating the POUTs—but **the department within MEF that functions as the NDA was never formally integrated** into the project's governance structure. This situation reflects **broader internal coordination challenges within the MEF** and the fact that the institution is still consolidating its role as NDA, which goes beyond the project's control. Still, the fact that the NDA has limited knowledge of and involvement in the project is problematic given that the NDA will be responsible for issuing the **no-objection letter required for a potential no-cost extension** of the project.¹⁸⁸
- 173 While the Steering Committee's design has aimed to be inclusive, the effective participation of civil society has been limited. The MESA REDD+, intended as an advisory mechanism to channel civil society input into project governance, has not functioned consistently. Stakeholders noted that although the MESA REDD+ initially played a dynamic role—providing feedback loops between project decisions and civil society perspectives—this mechanism has lost momentum in recent years, with irregular convening and diminishing influence. The MESA REDD+ lacks formal institutional backing (e.g., decree or legal mandate), which has undermined its stability and role in governance structures, and that internal coordination among its members has received little support from MADES. Moreover, civil society organizations face significant internal organizational barriers, including the absence of

¹⁸⁵ KIIs: UNEP; UNDP; FAO; National Ministries; Local Authorities and Parc Management; Community Beneficiaries.

¹⁸⁶ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries; APR 2023–2024.

¹⁸⁷ KIIs: National Ministries; UNDP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

¹⁸⁸ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

formal legal status for some networks, lack of financial resources, and weak internal coordination. These challenges are compounded by an increasingly constrained civic space in Paraguay following the adoption of a law unfavorable to NGOs. While outside the control of the project, these structural shifts in the national context have weakened civil society's capacity to shape project direction or hold stakeholders accountable.¹⁸⁹

Finding 28 – Private sector engagement has remained limited throughout project implementation, despite the critical role private actors play in forest conservation and potential interest in environmental service markets.

- 174 Although private stakeholder engagement was anticipated in the project design—particularly in relation to environmental service certification, carbon markets, and sustainable land use—this has not materialized in a structured or strategic way. Several respondents acknowledged this is a gap and noted that no dedicated mechanism was established to facilitate engagement, consultation, or co-financing with private actors.¹⁹⁰
- 175 This is especially problematic in the Paraguayan context, where most forested land is privately owned. As civil society and government stakeholders noted, private landowners have been central to avoiding deforestation, yet they have not been formally acknowledged or integrated into the project's benefit-sharing mechanisms. In some cases, producer associations expressed frustration, arguing that REDD+ outcomes were being attributed solely to public policy rather than to their conservation decisions. This has contributed to tensions, especially regarding the perceived ownership of the 17,000,000 USD in results-based payments, which some private actors believe should be partially allocated to the productive sector.¹⁹¹
- 176 While some companies are beginning to explore carbon market opportunities, the absence of a national registry to track certified areas and a support mechanism to structure private sector participation limits the development of the market. Respondents proposed the creation of a dedicated "window" within INFONA or other agencies to provide technical guidance and incentives, such as payments for results or co-investment opportunities—but this has not been pursued under the current project structure.¹⁹²
- 177 Institutionally, stakeholders recognized that limited capacity within the project and government counterparts has hampered private sector outreach. Engagement was further complicated by early resistance from some producer associations, and the absence of clear rules or benefit-sharing mechanisms discouraged follow-through. The stalled operationalization of the NCCF, which could have served as a platform to mobilize and disburse funds to private actors under the RBP window, has further delayed potential engagement pathways.¹⁹³

14. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

Rating for Responsiveness to HRGE	Satisfactory
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Finding 29 – The project has taken meaningful steps to promote Indigenous Peoples' participation in governance and benefit-sharing mechanisms. However, gaps remain in communication, implementation in territories, and clarity on the short- and medium-term implications for Indigenous communities.

- 178 During the design phase, the project identified Indigenous Peoples as a key beneficiary group, especially in relation to **access to Payments for Environmental Services (PES), territorial governance, and safeguards**.¹⁹⁴ A significant institutional achievement has been the **installation of four Indigenous representatives (two men and**

¹⁸⁹ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

¹⁹⁰ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups

¹⁹¹ KIIs: National Ministries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups

¹⁹² KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups

¹⁹³ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

¹⁹⁴ FAA; APR 2020–2024.

two women, one from each two region) in the PSC. This was preceded by a consultative and intercultural process that identified these representatives through national-level organizations¹⁹⁵.

179 Participation in the PSC has been active and constructive. Indigenous representatives have made formal contributions to project planning and voiced concerns around implementation timelines, lack of information dissemination, and the need for earlier and deeper engagement¹⁹⁶. For example, the Indigenous representatives requested revisions to the POA 2023 before approval, and they later organized and held a separate workshop with all agencies and institutions to ensure their feedback was integrated¹⁹⁷.

180 However, while Indigenous participation in governance has been meaningful, **information has not consistently flowed back to communities**, creating a gap between national representation and local engagement¹⁹⁸. Indigenous representatives in the PSC and CPLI processes emphasized that **many communities lack clarity on what the project implies for them in the short and medium term**, especially regarding planned activities in their territories, how benefits will be shared, and their expected role in implementation¹⁹⁹. For example, in the **Indigenous community, near Ñacunday National Park**, the community had **not received any follow-up or confirmation** regarding their involvement in artisanal craft activities, even though the implementing agency had informed the Evaluation Team that the start of these activities were planned for 2025. Similarly, in Itajeguaka community, near **Cerro Corá National Park**, months after a visit by FAO to identify and demarcate PES-eligible areas, the community had **received no updates** and remained uncertain about next steps or timelines for certification and potential benefits²⁰⁰.

Finding 30 – The project has embedded gender considerations in its governance structures and programming, with clear institutional partnerships and targeted actions. However, institutional resistance, fragmented implementation, and limited follow-up have constrained full realization of the project’s gender commitments.

181 From its design phase, the project has incorporated gender equality as a cross-cutting priority. The Gender Assessment and Action Plan developed in 2019 outlined concrete measures aligned with Paraguay’s National Gender Strategy on Climate Change and called for institutional capacity building, training, and monitoring, with implementation roles for MADES, INFONA, STP, and MINMUJER²⁰¹. A dedicated gender specialist was hired to guide implementation and support coordination across agencies²⁰².

182 A **notable achievement has been the creation of the Red Nacional de Mujeres Rurales (RNMR)** in 2024, fulfilling a requirement under **Law 5446/2015**, which had remained unimplemented for eight years. The project supported two national forums that enabled the formation of a national executive committee, with participation from 16 of 17 Paraguay’s departments. The establishment of a women’s network has been widely recognized as a key step toward empowering rural women to engage in climate and forest governance, and to access future funding opportunities such as the NCCF. However, these advances remain fragile. As of mid-2025, the **network lacks legal status and an operational plan; UNEP has noted that support in this area is planned for the second half of 2025**. Still, an important funding gap hinders the ability of the network to initiate operations. For example, members of the network have **not met since its creation in October 2024**, and they report their inability to fund even basic planning or mobilization activities. This has constrained the network’s capacity to influence policy or expand its reach, despite high motivation and potential²⁰³.

183 The project has also actively promoted **women’s participation in activities and consultations**, with documented gender balance in multiple workshops and safeguard dialogues. Field teams adopted **practical strategies to**

¹⁹⁵ JDP Actas 2022–2024; UNEP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

¹⁹⁶ JDP Actas April and December 2023; April 2024; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

¹⁹⁷ Acta 3era JDP; Minuta de Coronel Oviedo, April 2023.

¹⁹⁸ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; UNEP; APR 2023.

¹⁹⁹ Minuta de Coronel Oviedo; APR 2024.

²⁰⁰ KIIs: Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; FAO; APR 2024.

²⁰¹ ANNEX 6 - GENDER Paraguay.

²⁰² KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

²⁰³ KIIs: UNEP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; National Ministries.

reduce barriers to women’s participation, including offering **childcare services and setting up communal kitchens (ollas populares)** during multi-day events²⁰⁴. According to APR 2023, **47% of participants across all project events were women**, which is a significant achievement in a traditionally male-dominated sector.

- 184 Women have also been integrated into governance spaces. **Gender parity was institutionalized in the PSC** through a policy of nominating one male and one female Indigenous representative per region. MINMUJER’s active participation in the PSC and the gender and safeguards technical working group has helped to solidify this integration²⁰⁵.
- 185 However, broader **institutional uptake of gender mainstreaming remains uneven**. While FAO was praised for proactive efforts at the field level (e.g., ensuring women’s visibility in PES and agroforestry pilots), stakeholders noted that **some agencies continue to treat gender as a peripheral or externalized responsibility**. The Community of Practice established by the project to facilitate learning and coordination on gender has not yet gained institutional traction²⁰⁶.

15. Environmental and Social Safeguards

Rating for ESS	Satisfactory
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Finding 31 – The project has established a strong and participatory safeguards system—anchored in a robust FPIC protocol and continuous capacity-building—but gaps remain in the monitoring of risks, clarity of responsibilities, and quality of some assessments.

- 186 The project was categorized as “moderate risk” during design and was required to develop and implement an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) in line with UNEP’s safeguard policies²⁰⁷. The ESMF was operationalized through an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and a specific safeguard implementation protocol that includes a detailed methodology for FPIC.
- 187 The FPIC methodology—designed and led by UNEP, FAO, and UNDP’s safeguards team—was highlighted across stakeholder groups for its rigor, cultural relevance, and participatory application. Indigenous leaders, civil society actors, and government representatives noted that the process strengthened community-level understanding of environmental service mechanisms and ensured ethical engagement in decision-making²⁰⁸. Notably, the capacity of public institutions such as MADES and INDI to apply CLPI and safeguard tools was reinforced through hands-on training and accompaniment from UNEP and FAO specialists. INDI has reportedly begun to adapt elements of the methodology for broader use in national processes²⁰⁹.
- 188 The operationalization of the project’s GRM provides further evidence of safeguard implementation. According to the grievance tracker, seven submissions have been formally registered to date—all from Indigenous stakeholders—and primarily consisted of constructive suggestions rather than complaints, demonstrating a degree of community engagement with the system²¹⁰. Several Indigenous representatives confirmed awareness of the mechanism and described how the project facilitates use of the GRM during in-person events by providing secure drop boxes for comments²¹¹. However, feedback from community-level interviews suggests that **not all Indigenous communities are fully informed** about the mechanism or its procedures, particularly those not directly involved in project activities²¹².

²⁰⁴ KIIs: UNEP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

²⁰⁵ KIIs: UNEP; Local Authorities.

²⁰⁶ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries.

²⁰⁷ Annex 4, FAA.

²⁰⁸ KIIs: UNDP; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; APR 2023, 2024.

²⁰⁹ KIIs: UNEP; APR 2024.

²¹⁰ Grievance Tracker, 2025.

²¹¹ KIIs: Indigenous Groups.

²¹² KIIs: Community beneficiaries.

- 189 Other gaps remain in the implementation of the safeguards system. The INDI reportedly lacks resources to conduct follow-up missions to Indigenous communities post-CLPI consultations, creating a disconnect between initial participation and sustained support²¹³.
- 190 While the safeguards system has generally functioned as intended, the construction of the new MADES building demonstrates that challenges can arise when infrastructure design depends on municipal data. An ESIA was conducted by UNDP prior to construction and identified no major environmental risks. However, once construction was completed, it was found that the approved municipal drainage point indicated by the Empresa De Servicios Sanitarios del Paraguay (ESSAP) would have discharged wastewater into a natural stream within Ñu Guazú Park, due to an error in the official sewage registry maintained by ESSAP. Subsequently, an alternative connection point was identified two blocks away, but its implementation initially generated opposition from local residents. UNDP and MADES held several community consultations to resolve the situation, leading to an agreement that would also allow approximately 270 households to connect to the proposed sanitation network. At the time of the evaluation, however, the building remained unconnected to the sewage system pending technical approval from ESSAP, and was therefore not operational. This situation points to the need for closer verification of public infrastructure data and stronger coordination among institutions during the design of such large infrastructures.²¹⁴
- 191 Finally, stakeholders also pointed to ongoing institutional differences between UNEP and UNDP regarding the application of FPIC under the project's safeguard system. UNEP and national stakeholders explained that the POUTs are developed at the district level and do not overlap with recognized Indigenous territories, in line with the principle of self-determination. However, where Indigenous communities are located within those districts, UNDP has applied a process of meaningful consultation consistent with national legislation, the GCF Indigenous Peoples Policy, and the Project's FPIC Guide, using instruments endorsed by INDI to document participation and agreement. While this approach aligns with national procedures, UNEP considers that the full FPIC process is still required under GCF policy. The issue remains under discussion between both agencies, and no common approach has yet been formalized.²¹⁵
- 192 More broadly, the project's safeguard system is supported by a Technical Roundtable on Safeguards and Gender, which has met regularly and effectively produced implementation tools, including the Safeguards Platform, a user-accessible repository of documents. Trainings have been conducted for more than 370 staff across institutions and agencies, and a participatory "Community of Practice and Learning on Equity and Equality" was established to promote safeguards awareness²¹⁶.

16. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

Rating for Country Ownership/Driven-ness	Satisfactory
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Finding 32 – The project demonstrates a high level of national ownership, anchored in the leadership of MADES, inclusive governance structures, and alignment with national strategies, although sustained political engagement across ministries remains uneven.

- 193 National ownership is strongly embedded in the project's structure. A clear indication of the project's ownership is that MADES serves as the executing entity and chairs the PSC, which also includes as voting members three other national entities (INFONA, MEF, and MAG) as well Indigenous representatives. This inclusive composition reflects the significant efforts that have been made to ensure the project addresses the interests of a broad range of national stakeholders, including marginalized groups²¹⁷.

²¹³ KIIs: National Ministries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups.

²¹⁴ KIIs: UNDP; UNEP; Direct Observation.

²¹⁵ KIIs: UNEP; UNDP; APR 2023.

²¹⁶ APR 2023, 2024.

²¹⁷ Acta de Junta, 11 April 2023; Acta de Junta, 11 June 2024.

- 194 The project was designed from the outset to ensure that its objectives and all planned activities directly respond to the nine strategic measures of **Paraguay's ENBCS**, reinforcing its role in advancing national REDD+ priorities. Multiple stakeholders confirmed that this alignment contributed to a sense of national commitment and relevance²¹⁸. These national stakeholders explained that the Strategy was the product of very extensive national consultations and that mere alignment with the Strategy is evidence of strong country ownership. The inception workshop, held in May – June 2022, was another critical milestone for national ownership, providing a broad-based platform to validate the project's structure, clarify institutional roles, and secure early buy-in from national and subnational actors²¹⁹. In addition, INFONA highlighted that the project is well aligned with its own institutional strategy, and that the institution has actively sought to be strategically strengthened across all areas through project support.
- 195 However, the strength of national ownership has varied across sectors and levels. While technical departments within MADES and INFONA have been actively engaged, the MAG has until recently shown only limited involvement. In addition, the involvement of the MEF is limited to the department spearheading the POUTs, indicating limited institution-wide ownership. Similarly, within MADES, the Directorate of Strategic Planning is responsible for acting as the EE, but the DNCC, which is responsible for climate change mitigation in the country, has had limited involvement in the project overall, again indicating the institutional fragmentation that hinders to some extent the full achievement of country ownership²²⁰. In addition, the Evaluation Team observed that while high-level officials (e.g., ministers) participate in the PSC meetings held twice a year, engagement outside of these meetings occurs primarily at the technical level. The limited involvement of senior political leadership—an important indicator of national ownership—has hindered progress, particularly in relation to Component 2. This indicates the need to create formal interinstitutional coordination mechanisms, including a working group for Component 2.

17. Communication and Public Awareness

Rating for Communication	Satisfactory
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Finding 33 – Communications and knowledge management efforts have progressively expanded, though their late strategic anchoring and weak integration with monitoring systems have limited their effectiveness.

- 196 Since project inception, the communications and knowledge management functions have been implemented through ad hoc initiatives that have only recently been consolidated under formal strategies. A diagnostic was conducted in 2023 and culminated in the development of a **Communications Strategy and Plan** (currently in draft and pending validation), along with a **Knowledge Management Strategy** in 2024. These strategies, developed under UNEP leadership, were comprehensive but arrived late in the implementation cycle and were therefore not optimal in guiding activities implemented by UNDP and FAO²²¹. As noted in Finding 33, the delayed adoption of the Communications Strategy led to disagreements among IAs in how to communicate project-related messages, even though Annex 4 of the Operations Manual included preliminary provisions for communications. Even though the Communications Strategy was developed relatively late in the project cycle, it was intentionally designed with a long-term vision focused on conservation, positioning communication as a tool for institutional strengthening rather than short-term visibility – aiming to serve as a knowledge legacy for institutions like MADES and INFONA, which can continue disseminating materials and methodologies beyond the life of the project.
- 197 Staffing arrangements for communications and knowledge management have evolved significantly over the course of implementation. Initially, a single specialist was tasked with both portfolios, which proved insufficient given the scale and cross-cutting nature of project activities. This **early configuration led to implementation gaps and**

²¹⁸ KIIs: UNDP; National Ministries; Civil Society and Indigenous Groups; FAA Annex 1.

²¹⁹ Sistematización del Taller de Arranque, 2021.

²²⁰ KIIs: UNEP; National Ministries; APR 2023.

²²¹ APR 2023; APR 2024; KII: UNEP, FAO, UNDP.

limited the ability to generate cohesive narratives across components²²². In response, the project restructured its staffing approach, creating two dedicated positions—one for communications and another for knowledge management—between 2023 and 2024. While this transition period generated some short-term disruption, it has since resulted in a notable strengthening of internal capacity. The current structure provides a more robust foundation for coordinated outreach, documentation of lessons, and support to learning across the PMU and implementing agencies²²³. Persistent challenges remain, particularly in aligning communications with field implementation timelines, which have been delayed significantly, and internal monitoring systems, which continue to limit real-time content generation and storytelling. Nonetheless, the institutional learning reflected in this **staffing adjustment marks an important step toward more strategic delivery**.

- 198 The project has **produced a variety of communication and knowledge management products**. These include audiovisual materials on safeguards and the GRM, bilingual brochures, a project brand identity (Paraguay+Verde), and a compilation of lessons learned and success stories—especially highlighting intercultural approaches to gender and Indigenous participation²²⁴. **Lessons learned have been shared via the Howspace platform**, a digital tool introduced in 2024 to enable structured knowledge exchange among project stakeholders²²⁵.
- 199 Institutional linkages have been established with the communications teams at MADES and INFONA, and all major project communication products undergo joint review before publication. Project materials are disseminated through the official websites and social media platforms of these institutions, particularly in the areas of forest monitoring, fire alerts, and safeguard-related awareness. For example, **daily fire and heat source maps generated by INFONA with project support are regularly published on INFONA’s website and social media**, ensuring public access to technical outputs²²⁶. Similarly, **key audiovisual materials on project safeguards, gender equality, and Indigenous participation were disseminated via MADES platforms**, reinforcing the institutions’ visibility and leadership in climate and environmental policy²²⁷. This approach has **strengthened national ownership** by positioning the project within existing government communication channels, rather than creating separate platforms.
- 200 Moreover, the **project developed a distinct brand identity—“Paraguay + Verde” (For a Greener Paraguay)**—through a participatory process supported by MADES and implementing partners. The brand was created specifically to communicate the project’s REDD+ objectives to broader audiences and is now used consistently across events, products, and institutional messaging²²⁸. These efforts have enhanced the project’s public visibility and created a recognizable identity, contributing to a stronger narrative around climate ambition and forest protection.
- 201 Despite this progress, stakeholders from the protected areas component noted that **communications have not yet been fully leveraged to promote public awareness or visitation of national parks**, which remains low despite investments in ecotourism infrastructure²²⁹. This suggests a missed opportunity to more directly support conservation objectives through targeted outreach.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1 – Strategic relevance and institutional alignment have enabled early momentum, particularly under Component 1.

- 202 The project’s foundation in verified REDD+ emission reductions and its alignment with Paraguay’s ENBCS, updated NDC, and forest governance priorities have underpinned broad-based national country ownership. Institutional

²²² KIIs: UNEP, UNDP.

²²³ APR 2024; KIIs: UNEP.

²²⁴ APR 2023; APR 2024; Knowledge Management Strategy; Anexo C – Espacios de cuidado; KIIs: National Ministries, UNDP.

²²⁵ APR 2024; Knowledge Management Strategy.

²²⁶ APR 2024.

²²⁷ APR 2024.

²²⁸ APR 2022; APR 2023; APR 2024.

²²⁹ KIIs: Park Management, UNDP.

mandates were clearly respected, with core technical institutions like INFONA, MADES, and subnational governments playing central roles in implementation. Component 1 activities—such as the operationalization of the forest monitoring system, development of POUTs, and initiation of PES certifications—have progressed due to this strong alignment, as well as the use of public sector personnel and legally grounded mandates. These foundations suggest that, where institutional roles are clear and capacities exist, the project has the potential to deliver scalable and sustainable results. (*Linked to Criteria: Strategic Relevance; Effectiveness*)

Conclusion 2 – However, key systemic gaps are limiting effective coordination and the pace of implementation.

203 Despite having a well-functioning PSC, its limited frequency and focus on administrative approvals have constrained its ability to serve as a platform for high-level strategic guidance and technical coordination. While systemic challenges in interinstitutional coordination goes much beyond the Project's control, the presence of formal interinstitutional coordination mechanisms, including a working group for Component 2, to support operational alignment at technical level across INFONA, MADES, FAO, UNDP, and other actors could help mitigate these challenges. Another challenge beyond the Project's sphere of influence is that the Department within the MEF that assumes the NDA function has limited knowledge of and involvement in the Project, despite its formal role in providing the GCF no-objection letter. This highlights a disconnect between national climate finance governance and project oversight that needs to be overcome. These gaps in inter-institutional collaboration have affected both implementation efficiency and the integration of project achievements into long-term public systems. (*Linked to Criterion: Factors Affecting Performance*)

Conclusion 3 – Component 2 remains the project's most significant bottleneck, with unresolved design, institutional, and political constraints.

204 While the project laid out a vision for financial sustainability through the creation of the NCCF, efforts to operationalize it have stalled. Weaknesses in the early design process—including limited clarity on legal and fiduciary arrangements—undermined shared understanding among key implementing institutions. Despite recent efforts to define a scaled-down RBP window under the NCCF, the fund remains legally unestablished and politically uncertain. Importantly, the RBP window was intended to channel approximately 17,000,000 USD in results-based payments to support activities at the territorial level, particularly for community-based groups, farmers, and women's associations. Without the execution of this component, the scope and impact of project interventions in rural and Indigenous territories remain significantly limited. A no-cost extension has been discussed as a possible measure to complete this component; however, no strategic analysis has yet been conducted on the staffing and institutional costs associated with extending project timelines. Without progress in the enabling conditions for the NCCF, such as legal reform and cross-ministerial consensus, a no-cost extension alone may not yield substantive gains. (*Linked to Criteria: Project Design; Effectiveness; Efficiency*).

Conclusion 4 – The lack of a unified results framework and real-time monitoring system has limited adaptive management.

205 The absence of a theory of change and logical framework within the project design, and inadequately defined or resourced M&E responsibilities within the PMU has posed challenges. The use of FAA Table 14 as the principal results tracking tool has provided structure for planning and reporting, but it lacks indicators and targets to support results-based management. While annual reporting has been consistent and qualitative in nature, the absence of timely, disaggregated, and outcome-focused monitoring has limited the project's ability to adjust course based on performance. This also affects how results are communicated and absorbed by national partners, creating uncertainty about what information is needed and when. (*Linked to Criteria: Monitoring and Reporting*).

Conclusion 5 – Gender equality and safeguards have been areas of strong procedural compliance, but with uneven systemic integration.

206 The project has invested consistently in gender-sensitive consultations, FPIC protocols, and safeguards application, supported by technical staff and clear procedural guidelines. Notable progress in areas such as the certification of Indigenous communities for PES and the legal recognition of a national women's environmental network is encouraging. However, institutional support for this network remains fragile, and engagement of women and Indigenous Peoples at local levels has not been systematically sustained across all territories. While safeguards have helped identify and manage social risks, their potential as a tool for inclusive development planning has not yet been fully realized. (*Linked to Criterion: Factors Affecting Performance*)

Conclusion 6 – Progress has accelerated since 2023, but efficiency and sequencing challenges remain.

207 Initial delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the elections and subsequent government change in 2023, multiple rounds of staff turnover, and slow administrative procedures—particularly within UNEP—have significantly compressed the implementation timeline. The low disbursement rates through to 2022, which only began to accelerate in 2023, led to rushed delivery in some areas, such as pilot initiatives, ecotourism, and subnational engagement, raising legitimate concerns about meaningful stakeholder participation and the quality of results. The project's lack of sustained in-country presence by UNEP, especially at project start, has been a constraint on responsiveness and coordination with national partners. While efforts to build the UNEP team's capacity and position itself vis-à-vis the government in Paraguay are notable, lack of senior professional staff continues to be a challenge that needs to be addressed. (*Linked to Criteria: Nature of the External Context; Financial Management; Efficiency; Factors Affecting Performance*)

Conclusion 7 – The foundations for sustainability are visible but require broader institutional integration.

208 The institutionalization of the NFMS, development of territorial governance tools, and creation of legal instruments around PES and forest restoration are strong signals of long-term potential. These outcomes are anchored in public institutions with legal mandates and operational capabilities, including INFONA and local governments. However, efforts to replicate and scale pilot initiatives—particularly those related to sustainable production—remain fragmented and underfunded. Coordination with key ministries such as MAG has been limited, and the limited participation of the DNCC, despite its legal mandate, represents a missed opportunity to embed REDD+ in national climate governance. The project's sustainability will ultimately depend not only on what systems have been created, but on the degree to which they are institutionally mandated, politically supported, and financially resourced in the remaining project period. Furthermore, the evolving design of the NCCF reflects a narrowing of ambition that risks limiting its role as a sustainable national financing instrument. Without the ability to accommodate diverse funding modalities or attract external contributions beyond project funds, its long-term impact may remain constrained. There may be opportunities in the future to use the NCCF as a mechanism to support the scaling up of actions initiated under Component 1, particularly those linked to sustainable production and environmental services. However, these pilots are still at an early stage of implementation, and the feasibility and value added of such an approach would need to be analysed at a later stage, once clearer evidence of results becomes available. The use of the NCCF to scale up Component 1 activities could also require reconsideration of the fund's design to ensure it is adequately structured to support such functions. (*Linked to Criterion: Project Sustainability*).

LESSONS LEARNED

Table 6: Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1: Project success in multi-agency contexts is enhanced when coordination platforms are embedded from the outset.	The Paraguay + Verde project relied heavily on existing institutional structures but lacked dedicated mechanisms for regular coordination among key agencies (e.g. MADES, INFONA, MEF, MAG). This limited strategic alignment across components and weakened implementation of cross-sectoral activities such as sustainable production pilots. In similar multi-agency projects, embedding structured, periodic coordination platforms into the design phase—beyond a formal Steering Committee—can facilitate joint planning, reduce overlap, and support sustainability. (Linked to Conclusions 2 and 3)
Lesson Learned #2: Investing in national systems for safeguards can promote both compliance and inclusive development.	The project applied strong procedural safeguards, including FPIC protocols and gender-responsive consultations, contributing to legitimate and accepted results among Indigenous and local stakeholders. The creation and initial support of the RNMR (National Women's Environmental Network) also provided a platform for gender-inclusive climate governance. In parallel, the participatory design and implementation of a formal mechanism for the election and representation of Indigenous Peoples in the Project Steering Committee (PSC) strengthened inclusive governance and accountability. As demonstrated in the Paraguay + Verde project, safeguards frameworks can operate not only as tools to mitigate risks, but also as mechanisms to foster institutional inclusion and strengthen capacities in national systems. (Linked to Conclusion 6)
Lesson Learned #3: Projects that invest in institutional capacity through hands-on implementation tend to generate stronger conditions for sustainability.	In the Paraguay + Verde project, activities that were implemented by UNDP using government staff—such as the preparation of municipal POUTs and the operation of the NFMS—contributed not only to technical delivery, but also to long-term institutional strengthening. By embedding new skills and systems within public institutions, the project enhanced the likelihood that these tools will continue to be used and adapted after project closure. This approach can be particularly valuable in contexts where continuity depends on national ownership and public sector engagement. (Linked to Conclusions 1 and 7)
Lesson Learned #4: Clear design and early dissemination of complex financing mechanisms are essential when project components involve significant institutional and financial complexity.	Component 2, representing nearly one-third of the project's budget, was designed to establish the NCCF as a national financial mechanism. However, the design was underdeveloped at the time of project approval, with critical aspects—including the need for a fiduciary mechanism (fideicomiso)—outlined only in Annex 8 of the FAA. This annex was not clearly communicated or discussed with key implementing institutions (e.g., MEF, MADES), leading to confusion, delays, and misalignment in expectations. This experience highlights the importance of pairing institutional financing components with robust, upfront design and thorough active dissemination of all related documentation to ensure a shared understanding among all parties. Where institutional reform or financial infrastructure is proposed, the design should be technically detailed, legally vetted, and collectively reviewed with national partners during the inception phase. (Linked to Conclusion 4)

RECOMMENDATIONS

209 The following eight recommendations are derived from the evaluation's findings and conclusions. They are directed primarily to the UNEP project team and have been refined based on their feedback to ensure their usefulness. Each recommendation is assigned a priority level—Critical, High, or Important—and is accompanied by targeted action points to support operational follow-through.

Table 7: Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	Consideration should be given to pursuing a no-cost extension (NCE) for: a) Component 1, to finalize activities for which progress has been slower; b) for Component 2, but only if progress has been made in establishing the required legal framework.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	There is a likely benefit to having more time through a NCE to further consolidate several Component 1 activities. As for Component 2, the NCCF remains non-operational, with the RBP window stalled due to legislative and institutional bottlenecks. A NCE, if pursued, would generate ongoing administrative costs, which would be justified only if visible progress is made in finalizing the required legal framework. • Action points for a NCE of Component 1: ○ Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of a limited no-cost extension focused only on selected Component 1 activities. ○ Through the M&E function, identify activities under Component 1 that are unlikely to reach their targets by the end of 2026. ○ Develop a clear continuation strategy for these activities, with trimmed staffing plans and targeted support. • Action points for a NCE of Component 2 (to be requested only if progress in establishing the legal framework is made): ○ Create a working group for Component 2 to ensure interinstitutional alignment and collaboration. ○ Clarify roles and expectations with MEF, MADES, and AFD on the timeline for presenting and passing the NCCF enabling law. ○ Set concrete milestones (e.g., draft law approved by Congress by end-2025) as preconditions for extension implementation. ○ If these conditions are met, seek a no-cost extension to the GCF for full implementation of Component 2.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	UNEP Project Team in coordination with MADES, MEF, and IAs
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q3 2025 to Q2 2026

Recommendation #2:	Establish a high-level coordination mechanism for cross-sectoral and technical alignment.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	The current governance structure (PSC) functions mainly as a formal approval body and lacks mechanisms for regular inter-institutional technical coordination. This has led to fragmented implementation and limited synergy between key actors such as MADES, INFONA, MAG, and MEF. The lack of sustained UNEP country presence has further hindered its ability to fully assume a strategic convening role in inter-agency coordination. • Action points: ○ Reinstitute a quarterly inter-agency technical coordination group under the PMU, with defined terms of reference. ○ Assign focal points from MADES, MAG, INFONA, MEF, and UNDP/FAO with decision-making capacity. ○ Use this platform to monitor joint activities (e.g. pilots, POUT implementation) and resolve overlaps or bottlenecks in real time. ○ To mitigate the absence of senior leadership in the UNEP Project Team, engage the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) in these coordination meetings to raise the project's visibility and policy relevance at the high-ministerial level.
Priority Level	High
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	UNEP Project Team and PMU Coordination
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Initiate by Q3 2025

Recommendation #3:	Integrate the NDA formally into the Project Steering Committee structure.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	The MEF, which serves as the NDA, has not been formally included in the PSC, creating a procedural and strategic gap. NDA involvement is critical for the no-objection letter of a possible no-cost extension and for ensuring alignment with the GCF's evolving institutional frameworks. • Action points: ○ Update the PSC membership formally to include the Directorate responsible for NDA functions within MEF. ○ Notify GCF Secretariat of the governance update. ○ Brief NDA focal points on project progress and future approval requirements.
Priority Level	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project-level/ Partner-level
Responsibility:	UNEP Project Team to coordinate with MEF
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Before next PSC meeting (Q4 2025)

Recommendation #4:	Ensure strategic institutional engagement with DNCC and mainstream climate finance mandates.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	The DNCC, established by law, has not been engaged despite its mandate to coordinate national climate policy. Its inclusion could strengthen institutional sustainability of climate finance and REDD+ efforts. • Action points: ○ Formally appoint a focal point from the DNCC to accompany MADES' DPE in PSC meetings, with the intent to promote interinstitutional collaboration. ○ Establish a liaison protocol between DNCC, the DPE and the Project Team to align NCCF rollout with national climate strategy. ○ Engage DNCC in the technical review and alignment of NCCF investment criteria and safeguards with Paraguay's NDC and climate adaptation and mitigation priorities. (only if a no-cost extension for Component 2 if sought)
Priority Level	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partner-level
Responsibility:	UNEP to formally communicate recommendation to MADES
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q4 2025

Recommendation #5:	Strengthen inclusive engagement mechanisms by institutionalizing support to the National Women's Network and improving communication with Indigenous communities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	Despite important steps toward inclusion—such as the creation of the RNMR and the appointment of Indigenous representatives to the PSC—both women's and Indigenous constituencies face structural barriers to sustained participation and benefit-sharing. The RNMR lacks legal status, dedicated funding, and operational capacity to carry forward its activities, an issue the PMU is aware of and committed to address in 2025. Meanwhile, feedback loops with Indigenous communities are inconsistent: while representatives participate in national-level governance, communities often lack timely and clear information on planned activities in their territories, creating confusion and diminishing trust. • Action points: ○ Continue to support the establishment of the RNMR, by allocating project resources to support the RNMR's legal registration, operational planning, and engagement in policy dialogue. ○ Require IAs to share tailored summaries of approved POAs with Indigenous communities in accessible formats (e.g., bilingual and visual materials), explaining activities planned in each territory. ○ Establish a feedback mechanism to ensure that Indigenous concerns raised through representatives or CPLI consultations are responded to and transparently tracked in implementation. ○ Integrate RNMR and Indigenous engagement processes into project communications and monitoring tools to enhance visibility and accountability.
Priority Level	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	UNEP Project Team in collaboration with MINMUJER
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q4 2025 to Q3 2026

Recommendation #6:	Reinforce the project's monitoring function to enhance learning and adaptive management.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	The lack of a unified M&E framework, real-time indicators, and timely data has undermined the project's ability to adjust implementation and communicate results. • Action points: ○ Develop and operationalize a light, harmonized M&E framework based on Table 14, with key output and outcome indicators. ○ Formally assign core M&E functions to the program assistant, in coordination with the staff responsible for knowledge management and communication, and ensure adequate support and training. ○ Establish biannual M&E reviews at the inter-institutional coordination platform (see Rec #2).
Priority Level	High
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	UNEP Project Team and PMU Coordination
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q3 2025 to project end

Recommendation #7:	Develop an exit strategy for selected pilots and tools.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	Several pilot initiatives and platforms (e.g., sustainable production pilots, POUTs, MADES-INFONA interoperability) risk discontinuation after the project due to unclear institutional anchoring or resource flows. • Action points: ○ Identify high-potential interventions and develop transition plans for each, specifying responsible agency and budget implications. ○ Engage key line ministries (e.g., MAG, INFONA) to integrate pilots into national programmatic and budget frameworks. ○ Ensure that these strategies are discussed and validated at the PSC. ○ Assess the feasibility and value added of using the NCCF as a potential mechanism to support the scaling up of selected pilots, including whether this would require adjustments to the fund's design and governance framework.
Priority Level	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partner-level
Responsibility:	UNEP Project Team to coordinate with IAs and national institutions
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q4 2025 to mid-2026

Recommendation #8:	Operationalize and report on Activity 1.2.2.2 to ensure meaningful strengthening of REDD+ human resource capacities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation	Activity 1.2.2.2 ("Strengthening HR capacities for REDD+ implementation") remains largely unimplemented, despite its inclusion in the FAA and its link to the construction of the MADES building. While the entire project contributes to REDD+ institutional capacity, this specific activity lacks a clear definition of outputs, dedicated resources, and consistent reporting. As a result, its contribution to long-term REDD+ capacity-building remains unclear. • Action points: ○ In collaboration with MADES, clarify the scope and expected outputs of Activity 1.2.2.2 (e.g. training modules, technical roles, institutional support). ○ Allocate dedicated resources in the upcoming POA to enable implementation. ○ Ensure progress on this activity is reported separately and transparently in APRs, including linkage to the operational use of the MADES building.
Priority Level	High
Type of Recommendation	Project-level
Responsibility:	UNEP PMU in collaboration with MADES
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Q4 2025 to Q4 2026

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Data Collection Itinerary and Photos

EVALUACIÓN DE MEDIO TÉRMINO DEL PROYECTO PARAGUAY+VERDE

Objetivos

La Evaluación de Medio Término, busca generar lecciones aprendidas, buenas prácticas y recomendaciones para el resto del ciclo de implementación y orientar posibles correcciones del curso del proyecto.

PROGRAMA DE LA MISIÓN

Objetivo de la Misión de campo a Parques Nacionales

Identificar los avances del proyecto Paraguay+Verde con relación al apoyo brindado para el fortalecimiento de las Áreas Silvestres Protegidas en los Parques Nacionales de Ñacunday y Cerro Cora.

Identificar las lecciones aprendidas, buenas prácticas y recomendaciones en el marco de la implementación del proyecto en las Áreas Silvestres

Participantes:

Equipos de guardaparques de los Parques Nacional de Ñacunday y Cerro Cora.

Equipo de Evaluación

Equipo del proyecto Paraguay+Verde

AGENDA DE LA MISIÓN

DIA 1 – LUNES 10 DE MARZO DE 2025		
Hora	Actividad	Observaciones
06:30	Salida del MADES	Integrantes de la Misión Equipo Evaluador: Esther Rouleau, jefa de equipo evaluación Emilio Valiente, Evaluador Nacional Equipo Paraguay+Verde: Roberto López, coordinador del proyecto, Fátima García, especialista de Salvaguardas MADES: Olga González, DPE
14:00 14:15	Llegada al Parque Nacional Ñacunday. (Act. 1.1.1.1 "Fortalecimiento de Áreas Silvestres Protegidas") Entrevista con el jefe de guardaparques, Osvaldo Godoy	Recibe a la Misión el Sr. Osvaldo Godoy, jefe del Parque Nacional Ñacunday Saludos y presentación del equipo a cargo de Olga González, MADES Distancia desde Asunción al Parque Nacional Ñacunday 406 Km, tiempo estimado: 6 horas
15:00 16:20	Breve recorrido con el móvil al Salto Ñacunday para verificar mejoras en infraestructura Visita a la comunidad indígena Mbya Guayaibi Poty (Act. 1.1.1.1 ASP, PNUD) <i>Con la comunidad se socializó el Plan de ASP de Ñacunday</i>	Acompaña el jefe de guardaparques Tiempo de traslado desde el parque Ñacunday a la comunidad: 20 minutos

17:30	Cierre	A cargo de Ing. Roberto López. Viaje para pernoctar a Ciudad del Este Opciones de Hoteles: Hotel Marambaia, Gran Asunción, opcional - Llegada: 19:30 h.
DIA 2 – MARTES 11 DE MARZO		
Hora	Actividad	Observaciones
09:00	Sesión de evaluación en el Parque Nacional Ñacunday, cuerpo de guardaparques: Presentación del equipo evaluador y de los objetivos de la visita. Explicación de la metodología de evaluación a cargo de Esther Rouleau, jefa de equipo evaluación	Participantes: Equipo de Guardaparques y equipo de Evaluación Salida del hotel de Santa Rita para el Parque Ñacunday. Tiempo estimado, 40 minutos Dirigen el recorrido: Jefe de guardaparques Salida del hotel a las 7:00 horas, distancia desde Ciudad del Este hasta el Parque Nacional 81 Km, tiempo estimado 1 hora y 45 minutos
10:30	Cierre y salida hacia Juan Eulogio Estigarribia	Llegada a J.E. Estigarribia: 14:00, almuerzo hasta las 15:00 horas. Lugar: Alf Restaurante Distancia: 195 Km, tiempo estimado: 3 horas y 15 minutos
15:00	Entrevista con el representante indígena, Sr. Isabelino Esquivel (Act. 1.3.1 "Salvaguardas y acciones de Género", PNUMA)	Lugar: Restaurante Alf
16:00	Salida para cruce Liberación	Llegada a las 19:00 horas Hotel Campo Blanco, opcional Distancia: desde Juan Eulogio Estigarribia 235 Km. Tiempo estimado 3 horas
DIA 3 – MIERCOLES 12 DE MARZO DE 2025		
Hora	Actividad	Observaciones
08:00	Salida desde Liberación a General Resquin	
08:30	Entrevista con Librada Torales, presidenta de la Red Nacional de Mujeres Rurales (Act. 1.3.1 "Salvaguardas y acciones de Género", PNUMA) Red conformada en octubre del 2024	Lugar: casa particular de la Sra. Librada. Distrito de General Resquin. Distancia: 20 Km, tiempo estimado, 20 minutos Salida desde Resquin a Santa Rosa: 09:30
10:30	Entrevista a la Sra. Intendente de Santa Rosa del Aguaray (Act. 1.5.1 "POUT", PNUD)	Lugar: Municipalidad de Santa Rosa del Aguaray, Distancia 59 Km, tiempo estimado, 1 hora
12:00	Almuerzo	Churraqueria Cristal, Santa Rosa del Aguaray Salida a la comunidad: 13:00 Distancia desde Santa Rosa hasta la Comunidad: 210 Km, tiempo estimado: 3 horas

16:00	Visita a las comunidades adheridas al régimen de servicios ambientales (Act. 1.4.6.1 "Servicios ambientales en comunidades indígenas", FAO) Presentación de la metodología de evaluación	Participantes: Equipo de Guardaparques Equipo de Evaluación Equipo del Proyecto A cargo de Esther Rouleau, jefa de equipo evaluación Se retira el equipo del proyecto Salida a las 17:30 horas desde la comunidad al parque Nacional Cerro Cora. Distancia: 120 Km, tiempo estimado, 1 hora y 30 minutos
19:00	Llegada al Parque Nacional para el pernocte	
DÍA 4 – JUEVES 13 DE MARZO		
08:00	Presentación del equipo de evaluación y del proyecto, a cargo de Olga Gonzalez del MADES	Recorrido dialogado por el parque Nacional Cerro Cora. Dirigen el recorrido: Perla Vázquez, jefa de guardaparque
08:15	Entrevista a la Sra. Perla Vázquez, jefe del Parque Nacional Cerro Cora (Act. 1.1.1.1 "Fortalecimiento de Áreas Silvestres Protegidas")	
09:00	Grupo focal con el equipo de guardaparques	
10:30	Breve recorrido en vehículo para observar mejoras en el parque	
11:30	Cierre de Misión al Parque Nacional Cerro Cora y salida para Asunción	Cierre a cargo de: Ing. Roberto López, coordinador del proyecto Perla Vázquez, Jefa del Parque Nacional Cerro Cora Salida desde Cerro Corá a Santa Rosa del Aguaray, distancia 166 km
18:00	Llegada a Asunción	Distancia 433 Km, tiempo estimado: 6 horas

Entrevistas Asunción – Evaluación de medio término de Paraguay + Verde

Fechas: viernes 14, lunes 17, martes 18, miércoles 19 y jueves 20 de marzo

Viernes, 14 de marzo, 2025				
Hora	Actividad	Lugar	Comentario	
13:30	Reunión con Daniela Benítez (Representante del Consejo Indígena de la Región Occidental)	MADES Sala FOLUR	Madame Elisa Lynch 3500, Asunción	
14:30	Reunión Teresita León, Asistente Técnica y Programática y Roberto Lopez, Coordinador General del Proyecto (PNUMA)	MADES sala FOLUR	Madame Elisa Lynch 3500, Asunción	
Lunes, 17 de marzo, 2025				
Hora	Actividad	Lugar	Comentario	

08:00	Reunión con Lilian Portillo	MADES Oficina de DPE	Madame Elisa Lynch 3500, Asunción	
09:00	Reunión con equipo MADES: Maria José Mendoza, Catherine Alonso, Ethel Estigarribia (Darío Mandelburger está de viaje)	MADES, Salón Laboratorio	Madame Elisa Lynch 3500, Asunción	
14:00	Reunión con el equipo de INFONA: Antonella Mascheroni, Gabriela Huttemann y Raquel Acuña	Dirección de Planificación, 3er. Piso	Avda. Mcal Estigarribia, San Lorenzo	
16:30	Reunión con Director General del MAG: Cesar Duarte	Oficina DGP/MAG	Pte. Franco y Ntra. Sra. de la Asunción	
Martes, 18 de marzo, 2025				
Hora	Actividad	Lugar	Comentario	
09:00	Reunión con equipo INDI: Ninfa Rodriguez y Alba Guillen	INDI	Gral. Gervasio Artigas 1211, Asunción	
09:30	Reunión con Petrona Fretes del MAG	Oficina del MADES	Se deben dividir los Evaluadores	
11:30	Reunión con el Equipo Consultor Investigación para el Desarrollo: Norma Barrios y Rossana Scribano	Oficina de ID	Masonería Paraguaya 7369 entre, Mecanicos de Aviacion y Francis Morices, Asunción	
14:00	Reunión con equipo MEF: Mabel Cubilla, Jefa de Ordenamiento Territorial (virtual), <i>equipo POUT-MEF: Jerónimo Morel y Ana Maria Ferreira + Adriana Samaniego (NDA)</i>	Sala 2 del MEF	Edificio ex STP 14 de mayo y Estrella, Asunción	
15:30	Reunión con Representante Mesa REDD+ Oscar Rodas	WWF	Bernardino Caballero N° 191 casi, Av. Mariscal López, Asunción	
Miércoles, 19 de marzo, 2025				
Hora	Actividad	Lugar	Comentario	
8:30	Gustavo Ruiz Díaz, Ex Coordinador del Proyecto P+V			
10:30	Reunión con MINMUJER: Mirtha Ruiz Diaz y Vanenesa Valeau	Ministerio de la Mujer, piso 13	Edificio Ayfra, Pdte. Franco y Ayolas, Asunción	
14:00	Raul Gauto, Fundación Moises Bertoni y Sylvis Forestal			
Jueves, 20 de marzo, 2025				

Hora	Actividad	Lugar	Comentario	
08:30	Reunión con PNUD	Oficina PNUD	Avda. Aviadores del Chaco, WTC, Torre 1 piso 6	
10:30	Reunión con FAO	Oficina FAO	Alberdi 226 casi Pte. Franco, Asunción	
14:00	Reunión devolución de hallazgos por parte del equipo evaluador: Equipo PNUMA/MADES (Rolando Corone, Director de Gabinete y Lilian Portillo, Directora de Planificación)	MADES, Gabinete	Madame Elisa Lynch 3500, Asunción	

Photos



Focus group in Indigenous Community Itajeguaka, Amambay Department



Waterfall, Nacunday Park



Indigenous women benefitting from project support related to environmental services



Metal protection fence and sign board installed by the project, Nacunday Park



Water infrastructure installed by the project resulted in water access to toilets that were previously not used because of lack of water



Fire extinguisher backpack provided through Project support in Cerro Cora National Park



Information panel developed with Project support in the historical museum of Cerro Cora National Park



Focus group in Indigenous Community Cerro Akangue, Amambay Department



Wooden table constructed by park rangers with tools provided through Project support in Cerro Cora National Park

Annex 2. Summary of Co-Finance Information and a Statement of Project Expenditure by Activity or Component

The tables below present the budget originally set by the FAA. In this case the project is entirely funded by GCF. The Second table presents the expenditure for each year, cumulative expenditure and ratio of completion broken down by project activity.

Figure 6: Planned budget (Signed Funded Activity Agreement 2019)

Output	Sub-output	Activity/Project	Relation to measures and actions in the ENBCS	Details	Budget
Output 1. Capacities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS	Sub-output 1.1. Early actions in the ENBCS delivered	Actions to improve conservation in public and private nature protected areas (legal titles; land use planning)	Measure 6. Sustainable Forest Management	Strengthening of the ASPs and update of the SINASIP, including strengthening of MADES, titling procedures, infrastructure improvement and management plans development.	9,220,000
				Implementation of ecotourism and integrated waste management programmes in public and private ASPs.	
		Rapid institutional response to alerts of deforestation and/or degradation	Measure 9. Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control, monitoring and penalization	Strengthening of the components (3) of the National Forest Monitoring System (MADES - INFONA).	
				Establishment of the system of monitoring, reporting and verification.	
				Establishment of an early response protocol and mechanisms to respond to eventual cases of deforestation, wildfires, post-fire and in the case of risks of loss of forest cover.	
			Measure 6. Sustainable Forest Management	Acquisition of equipment and technologies for wildfires prevention and control (tractors, sensors, installation of early warning system, etc.).	
				Development and pilot implementation of a countrywide plan for forest restoration.	

Output	Sub-output	Activity/Project	Relation to measures and actions in the ENBCS	Details	Budget
		Identification and strengthening of ongoing programs and actions to reduce deforestation	Measure 7. Sustainable financial systems and action; Measure 9. Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control, monitoring and penalization	Capacity building for wildfire control through training programs for firefighters, park rangers and others.	
			Measure 5. Adopt entrenchment (arraigo) policies	Strengthening of income diversification programs and sustainable production systems (medicinal plants, honey, yerba mate, fruits, ecotourism, organic products) and commercialization of products.	
				Support and training mechanisms for small producers, indigenous peoples and other local communities, including training on business plans, sustainable production, etc.	
			Measure 2. Sustainable Production Systems	Strengthening of existing platforms for facilitating the implementation of sustainable production action plans encouraging gender balance.	
			Action 2.3. Improve the efficiency in use of soil resources in production processes	Support to improve the efficiency in the use of soil resources in production processes (based on the National Soil Neutrality Strategy).	
	Sub-output 1.2. Strengthened capacity and inter-institutional coordination	Regulatory and institutional framework for strengthening the implementation of the ENBCS	Measure 8. Legal framework adaptation and policy articulation	Review/adjustment of the environmental and forestry legal framework and decentralization in participatory, multi-sectoral processes (including adequate management of environmental and social risks).	10,330,000
			Measure 1. Legal framework that prohibits land use change in the Eastern region of Paraguay	Support to political process to extend the prohibition of land use change in the Eastern region.	

Output	Sub-output	Activity/Project	Relation to measures and actions in the ENBCS	Details	Budget	
			Measure 9. Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control, monitoring and penalization	Strengthening of capacities of the national institutions involved in the implementation of the joint intervention protocol for complaints and whistle blowers.		
				Strengthening of the control system for enforcement of the environmental legal framework (MADES).		
				Strengthening of the control system for enforcement of the forest legal framework (INFONA).		
		Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control and penalization	Measure 9. Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control, monitoring and penalization	Strengthening of MADES infrastructure capacities (building, renovation, maintenance, amplifications, in the regional offices and in the headquarters) to ensure adequate operational capacities.		
				Strengthening HR capacities for REDD+ implementation.		
	Sub-output 1.3. Safeguards information and monitoring system	Implementation, monitoring and reporting on the full respect of safeguards and gender actions	Measure 9. Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control, monitoring and penalization	Implementation of the Safeguards Monitoring System and report in a participatory and multisectoral process based on CPLI guidelines.	450,000	
	Sub-output 1.4. System of payments for environmental services strengthened	RBPs will be invested in making the system for environmental services fully operational. This will include (i) simplifying and digitalizing processes to substantially diminish transaction costs for demand and supply actors; (ii)	Measure 3: Promotion of environmental services, valuation of natural capital and of environmental services in all their modalities and procurement mechanisms	Adjustment in regulations to Paraguay's National Policy on Environmental Services.	2,050,000	
				Digitalization of the process for entering the system of environmental services.		
Development and implementation of a digital platform in INFONA for the determination of forest deficit linked to SIAM to establish the compensation through environmental services.						

Output	Sub-output	Activity/Project	Relation to measures and actions in the ENBCS	Details	Budget
		strengthen enforcement and monitoring		Development of a digital platform for transactions of the Environmental Services Certificates.	
				Promotion of adherence to the system of payments for environmental services and access to market for small producers.	
				Development of mechanisms and assistance to indigenous communities for the commercialization of environmental services.	
	Sub-output 1.5. Strengthening territorial governance in the areas of environment and forestry	Strengthening of land use governance through improved planning and regulation	Measure 8. Legal framework adaptation and policy articulation	Strengthening of municipal governance through territorial use planning and regulation mechanisms (support to Territorial Planning including establishment of biological corridors).	3,000,000
	Sub-output 1.6. Project lessons and results communicated	Communication and knowledge management products	Applies to all actions of the ENBCS	Promotion and distribution of the results achieved in the implementation of ENBCS actions linked to the GCF Result based payments project.	1,050,000
		Impact on the behavior of key actors for the reduction of deforestation (officials, producers, producer associations)	Applies to all actions of the ENBCS	Systematization of life stories and lessons learned from the GCF Result based payments project.	
				Establishment of a baseline for measuring and evaluating the project's impacts.	
		Sub-total Output 1			26,100,000
Output 2. Governance and	Sub-output 2.1. Regulation,	Definition of rules of operation, safeguards requirements,	Applies to all actions of the ENBCS	Information dissemination and launching of the National Climate Change Fund	320,000

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Output	Sub-output	Activity/Project	Relation to measures and actions in the ENBCS	Details	Budget
operational procedures of National Climate Change Fund established and finance channeled to NDCs, the ENBCS and low carbon development plans	implementation and operation of the National Climate Change Fund	participation modalities and decision-making mechanism	Applies to all actions of the ENBCS	Definition of TORs for Steering Committee, Technical Committee, eligibility criteria, internal procedure for assessment and selection of projects, grant award and disbursement policy, financial products, E&S policy, procurement policy, gender policy, project monitoring and transparency and access to information policy.	
	Sub-output 2.2. Capitalization of the National Climate Change Fund	Disbursements to the National Climate Change Fund's account	Applies to all actions of the ENBCS	Capitalization of the RBPs window at the NCCF.	17,847,500
	Sub-output 2.3. Project monitoring and auditing	Team of local/international experts verify the correct use of RBPs resources in the National Climate change Fund	Applies to all actions of the ENBCS	Internal/external auditing; compliance with GCF/AE policies; reporting.	500,000
		Sub-total Output 2			18,667,500
		TOTAL			44,767,500
UNEP Direct Project Costs					1,152,620
Project Management Costs					4,079,880
Grand total					50,000,000

Aggregated Financial Reports 2021-2024

			2021			2022			2023			2024		
OUTPUT	SUB-OUTPUT	CUMULATIVE BUDGET (USD)	CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURE Jan-Dec 2021	EXPENDITURE January to December 2021	% IMPLEMENTED -	CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURE 2021 to Dec 2022	EXPENDITURE January to December 2022	% IMPLEMENTATION -	CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURE 2021 to Dec 2023	EXPENDITURE January to December 2023	% IMPLEMENTATION -	CUMULATIVE EXPENDITURE 2021 to Dec 2024	EXPENDITURE January to December 2024	% IMPLEMENTATION -
Capacities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS	Sub-output 1.1. Early actions in the ENBCS delivered	9,220,000	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	2,100,202	2,100,202	23%	4,549,748	2,449,546	49%
	Sub-output 1.2. Strengthened capacity and inter-institutional coordination	10,330,000	0	0	0%	0		0%	2,104,679	2,104,679	20%	5,556,885	3,452,207	54%
	Sub-output 1.3. Safeguards information and monitoring system	450,000	0	0	0%	7,572	7,572	2%	73,924	66,352	16%	165,451	91,527	37%
	Sub-output 1.4. System of payments for environmental services strengthened	2,050,000	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	177,314	177,314	9%	404,848	227,534	20%
	Sub-output 1.5. Strengthening territorial governance (environment & forestry)	3,000,000	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	767,494	767,494	26%	1,313,017	545,523	44%
	Sub-output 1.6. Project lessons and results communicated	1,050,000	0	0	0%	90,839	90,839	9%	125,916	27,207	12%	162,239	36,324	15%
	Output 1 Total	26,100,000	0	0	0%	98,411	98,411	0%	5,349,529	5,243,248	20%	12,152,188	6,802,660	47%
Output 2. Governance and operational procedures of National Climate Change Fund established, and finance channeled to NDCs, the ENBCS and low carbon development	Sub-output 2.1. Regulation, implementation and operation of the National CCF	320,000	0	0	0%	43,191	43,191	13%	100,142	56,951	31%	100,142	0	31%
	Sub-output 2.2. Capitalization of the National CCF	17,847,500	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
	Sub-output 2.3. Project monitoring and auditing	500,000	0	0	0%	33,057	33,057	7%	42,792	9,735	9%	42,792	0	9%
	Output 2 Total	18,667,500	0	0	0%	76,248	76,248	0%	142,934	66,686	1%	142,934	0	1%
Project Management Costs	Staff Cost		12,000	12,000		36,327	36,327		174,317	137,130		316,287	141,970	
	Local Consultants					229,656	217,656		482,163	252,507		626,598	144,435	
	International Consultant					102,570	102,570		172,713	70,143		172,713		
	Equipment					20,146	20,146		20,146	-80		24,629	4,483	
	Construction Cost					0	0					0		
	Training, Workshop & Conferences		8,036	8,036		16,271	8,235		26,962	9,704		26,962		
	Supplier-Mater-											87	87	
	Operational costs		220	220		11,283	11,063		20,784	9,502		37,399	16,614	
	Transfer/Grant to IP								172,011	172,011		480,999	307,998	
	Travel Cost		607	607		12,445	11,838		41,543	29,098		74,252	32,709	
	PMC Total	5,232,500	20,863	20,863	0%	428,698	407,835	8%	1,110,639	680,015	21%	1,759,926	648,297	34%
	GRAND TOTAL	50,000,000	20,863	20,863	0%	603,357	582,494	1%	6,603,100	5,989,948	13%	14,055,048	7,450,957,41	28%

Annex 3. Justification for Reformulation of ToC Results Statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
Not stated	Further reduction of emissions from degradation and deforestation in Paraguay in line with ENBCS objectives to meet NDC targeted emission reductions of 20% by 2030 (baseline 2020)	Added to reiterate, and show connection to, REDD+ purpose
	The Government of Paraguay is able to more effectively manage lands and forests and operate a sustainable financing platform (NCCF/RBP window) that provides incentives for reducing deforestation drivers in ways that ensure equitable distribution of benefits, including for women, and adhere to environmental and social safeguards	Added as an Overall Objective of Project as a level of result between Intermediate State and Impact
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
Not stated	Intermediate State 1: Robust institutional and regulatory systems and an enabling environment ensure effective and sustainable implementation of the ENBSC	
	Intermediate State 2: Climate Change Fund/RBP window operationalized with funds disbursed in compliance with GCF/AE policies	
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
Fund-level Outcome: Strengthened institutional and regulatory systems		
The capacities of MADES and INFONA to implement ENBCS are strengthened, with high levels of participation of stakeholders and compliance with safeguards.	1. Use of increased technical and institutional capacities for conservation of protected areas (facilities, processes) by MADES and INFONA	Increased capacities are captured in Outcomes 1 (for conservation of protected area) and Outcome 2 (for rapid response). Participation and safeguards are expressed as key drivers (cross-cutting)
The National Forest Monitoring System (National Forest Inventory, terrestrial monitoring satellite systems, and the INGEI of the LULUCF/AFOLU sector) is consolidated.	2. Use of systems/plans for rapid institutional response to alerts of deforestation /degradation by MADES and INFONA	Original outcome is now an output for Outcome 2.

An enabling environment to implement the ENBCS (includes piloting sustainable economic alternatives for local actors, such as peasant and indigenous communities) is created.	3. Successful pilot activities demonstrate improved enabling environment for ecologically sustainable economic development	Reformulation is more specific about how to measure enabling environment. Enabling environment also now reflected in Intermediate State
A safeguards compliance monitoring and reporting compliance system is consolidated	4. Application of improved regulatory and institutional frameworks and monitoring / enforcement processes by MADES and INFONA	Original outcomes is now an output for Outcome 4
Project lessons and results communicated to promote a paradigm shift on forest and sustainable development		Covered under Outcome 10
Fund-level Outcome: Improved management of land and forest		This is now presented as an objective-level result that will happen as a result of strengthened institutional and regulatory systems
A strengthened regulatory framework facilitates land use regulation and the control and monitoring of land use in forest lands and reduces deforestation.		This is now covered by Outcome 4 (application of improved regulatory and institutional frameworks, and monitoring/ enforcement processes) with reduced deforestation reflected at Impact level.
	6. Application of improved sustainable territorial governance mechanisms	Not explicitly covered in original objectives.
Financial incentives (subsidies, tailor-made credits, guarantee funds) reduce deforestation drivers.	7. GCF-approved governance and operational procedures enable NCCF/RBP Window to be capitalized and transparently managed	Original outcome now captured as Intermediate State 2 which is about the NCCF. This Fund which was previously reflected just at output level. Reduced deforestation drivers is reflected at Overall Objective level. The reformulated version is an outcome because GCF has to approve the related outputs before the Fund can be capitalized.
	8. Fundable applications received from diversity of stakeholder groups, including rural women	Added as an outcome to reflect the results/importance of financial inclusion outputs and activities to empower marginalized groups to participate.
Market for environmental services encourage forest conservation	5. Operationalization and use of platform for Payments for Environmental Services for forest conservation initiatives	Reformulation is more specific to project interventions and more measurable
	9. Cross-cutting Outcome on Gender Equality: MADES, INFONA and the NCCF/RBP window demonstrate the	Gender equality not explicitly reflected in original outcomes

	integration of human rights, gender and inclusion principles (in planning, decision-making, support services and resource allocation)	
Communication campaign positively affects people's behaviour towards forest conservation and sustainable production	10. Cross-cutting Outcome on Communications: Increased engagement of key actors (officials, producers, etc.) in reducing deforestation (from communications campaign to increase awareness/share lessons of actions and results of project and promote paradigm shift)	Reflects feedback from project staff requesting that communications be captured as cross-cutting theme.
PROJECT OUTPUTS		
Output 1 - Activities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS	Products developed for securing legal titles; land use planning for protected nature areas; ecotourism. Improved MADES infrastructure and waste management	The original framework has just two broad outputs and multiple sub-outputs, and there is no linkage shown to the outcomes. In some cases, what are called 'activities' are outputs. In the reformulated version, outputs and sub-outputs (and some activities) have been consolidated into the revised output statements.
	Upgraded and consolidated National Forest Monitoring and reporting systems; wildfire response plans and equipment; forest restoration plan provided	
	Training, supplies, equipment, etc. provided to local actors to strengthen sustainable economic production and economic development activities	
	Updated frameworks; guidelines, protocols; enforcement systems; and Safeguards Monitoring systems developed	
	Adjusted regulations; digitalization of processes, digital platform; certification of environmental services for indigenous communities developed	
	Updated tools for territorial management (e.g. land use plans) developed; creation of governance mechanisms	
Governance and operational procedures of Climate Change Fund established, and finance channelled to NDCs, the	NCCF/RBP Window Operational Procedures developed that include	The original output has been broken up as it reflects output,

ENBCS and low carbon development plans	safeguards; participation modalities; decision-making mechanisms	outcome and intermediate state results
	Monitoring reports, audit reports provided	
	Financial inclusion support delivered to empower vulnerable groups to access and use funds	

Annex 4. Evaluation Matrix

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Strategic Relevance and Coherence		
EQ 1. To what extent is the Project relevant to the priorities of key stakeholders?		
EQ. 1.1 To what extent is the Project aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities?	• Degree of Project's alignment with MTS 2022-2025, POW 2022-2023/2024-2025, BSP²³⁰, and S-SC²³¹ • Perceptions on contributions made to the relevant MTS and POW	• Comparison of FP/FAA with UNEP MTS, POW, BSP, and S-SC • KII with UNEP staff and project team
EQ. 1.2 To what extent does the Project adhere to or respond to Donor Strategic Priorities?	• Degree of alignment with GCF 'Forest and Land Use' results area. • Perceptions of GCF Secretariat staff on alignment with GCF priorities	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports) • KIIs with GCF Secretariat.
EQ. 1.3 How does the Project align with Global, Regional, Sub-regional, and National Environmental Priorities?	• Alignment with REDD+ priorities in LAC and in Paraguay • Alignment with national and sub-National plans that address GHG (e.g. NDCs²³²) • UNSDCF 2025-2028²³³, regional agreements, etc. • Alignment with the National Development Plan (PND2030) and government sectoral strategies. • Perceptions of key stakeholders on degree of alignment.	• Review of global, regional, national policies and frameworks • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP) and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)
EQ. 1.4 To what extent does the Project respond to the needs of key stakeholders including government institutions, communities and environmental service providers?	• Evidence of whole-of-government approach in project design and implementation • Evidence of needs assessment / community participation in project design • Inclusivity in addressing needs of all beneficiary groups (e.g. rural women, indigenous groups, persons with disabilities, the elderly, etc.)	• Review of the project design template and initial project proposal • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP) • KIIs with project stakeholders (national government, local authorities) • FGDs with community groups, indigenous representatives, environmental service providers
EQ 2. How coherent is the Project internally with UNEP's strategies and programmes and externally with the initiatives of cooperating partners?		

²³⁰ The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP) relates to the capacity of governments to comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies.

²³¹ South-South Cooperation (S-SC) is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

²³² Nationally Determined Contributions

²³³ UN Development Assistance Frameworks

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
EQ. 2.1 How does the Project ensure complementarity with existing relevant interventions and maintain coherence with them?	• Internal coherence with other UNEP initiatives in Paraguay • External coherence with initiatives of other vertical climate funds (e.g. GEF, CIF) in Paraguay • External coherence with initiatives of cooperating partners (e.g. bilateral donors, UN agencies, etc.) • Efforts in ensuring complementarity, synergy optimization, and avoidance of duplication	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); GCF Secretariat staff; and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities, civil society)
Quality of Project Design ²³⁴		
EQ 3. To what extent is the design of the Project's components appropriate to achieve the expected results?		
3.1 To what extent was the Project design and results framework in keeping with UNEP standards?	• Alignment with UNEP's Quality of Project Design Criteria²³⁵ • Perception of key stakeholders on quality of project design.	• KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); GCF Secretariat staff
3.2 To what extent has the Project developed the right partnerships to achieve results? Have these been strategic and are any partnerships missing to effectively support project implementation?	• Evidence of strategic partnership²³⁶ with UN agencies, civil society, academia, private sector • Evidence of whole-of-society approaches in implementation • Stakeholder perception on appropriateness of partnerships	• Desk review (project cooperation agreements, Annual Operative Plan) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)
Effectiveness		
EQ 4. How likely will Project results be achieved and what are the factors of effectiveness?		
EQ 4.1 Availability of Outputs: How successful has the Project been in producing and making available the programmed outputs to the intended beneficiaries?	• Quantity and quality of outputs relative to what was planned in the FAA • Stakeholders perception on the suitability and usefulness of the outputs	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, Annual Operative Plan, annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)

²³⁴ Once the present Inception Report is approved by UNEP, and in alignment with the questions related to the evaluation of the project design quality, the assessment will be incorporated into the evaluation report. The finalized template for this assessment, ensuring comprehensive evaluation, will subsequently be annexed at that stage.

²³⁵ UNEP's design assessment template scores the design according to 13 criteria: operating context; project preparation; strategic relevance; intended results and causality; logical framework and monitoring; governance and supervision arrangements; partnerships; learning, communication and outreach; financial planning and budgeting; efficiency; risk identification and social safeguards; sustainability/replication and catalytic effects; identified project design weaknesses and gaps.

²³⁶ According to WFP's Evaluation of Strategic Partnerships (2016), a "strategic partnership" is a collaborative relationship between different actors where partners combine and leverage their complementary resources to achieve better outcomes for the people they serve, working together in a transparent, equitable, and mutually beneficial way, sharing risks, responsibilities, and accountability to reach goals that could not be achieved alone; essentially prioritizing shared value creation over individual transactional benefits. These elements will be considered when looking at whether the Project has engaged in strategic partnerships.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
EQ 4.2 Were there any modifications or revisions made to the Project outputs during its implementation, and if so, have they led to improved performance?	• Number and nature of formal modifications/revisions relative to the original FAA • Clarity and justification of any output reformulations • Evidence that procedures were followed correctly	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)
EQ 4.3 Achievement of Project outcomes: To what extent are the outputs likely to contribute to expected outcomes by the end of the project timeframe?	• Performance against defined results framework • Stakeholders perception on the contribution of outputs towards expected outcomes • Evidence of change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes. • Evidence of use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries.	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities, environmental service providers)
EQ 4.4 What are facilitating and hindering factors in the project's performance?	• Internal facilitating and hindering factors (e.g. adequacy of financial resources, • External facilitating and hindering factors (e.g. political changes/government staff turnover, climate-related events, currency exchange, etc.)	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, Annual Operative Plan, annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)
EQ 4.5 Likelihood of Impact: Are there any indications at the stage that the project is likely to have a lasting, intended impact Including towards a paradigm shift (GCF goal)?	• Analysis of long-lasting effects articulated in the results framework • Verification of whether assumptions held true • Drivers to support transition from outputs to outcomes are in place • Contribution to developing an enabling environment for sustainable forests (e.g. strategies, legislation, etc.)	• Review of project objectives/goals • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)
EQ 4.6 Are there any unintended effects, both positive and negative, from the project's intervention?	• Identification of unintended consequences and their causal linkages to the intended impact • Analysis of potential positive/negative impacts on vulnerable groups	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities) • FGDs with community groups, indigenous representatives, environmental service providers
EQ 5. To what extent does the Project support the development of innovative solutions?		
EQ 5.1 What type of innovations (e.g. technological, social, etc.) is the project supporting?	• Number and type of innovative tools/strategies introduced • Type of challenges/barriers that innovation seek to overcome • Feedback on effectiveness of these innovations	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)
EQ 5.2 To what extent do innovations support the participation of women, indigenous people, and other vulnerable groups?	• Evidence of co-creation of innovations with vulnerable groups • Evidence of use of innovations by vulnerable groups	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP) • FGDs with community groups, indigenous representatives, environmental service providers)

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
Financial Management		
EQ 6. To what extent are UNEP's financial management practices being followed and supporting project performance?		
EQ 6.1 How well did the project adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures?	• Instances of deviations from UNEP's financial policies • Compliance rate with established financial procedures • Stakeholders perception on efficient use of financial resources • Timeliness/bottlenecks in funds disbursements	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, audit reports) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff
EQ 6.2 Is the rate of spend consistent with the project's length of implementation to date and how does it compare with the approved budget?	• Total expenditure against approved budget • Expenditure breakdown by output/component level	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, Annual Operational Plan and Budget) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff
EQ 6.3 Are there any financial management issues affecting project delivery or performance quality and, if so, are remedial actions taken?	• Number and nature of financial issues encountered • Impact of financial issues on project timelines and quality • Evidence of remedial actions	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, audit reports) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff
EQ 6.4 How effective is communication between the UNEP Project Manager and the UNEP GCF Unit (Nairobi) in relation to effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach?	• Frequency and quality of communication instances • Evidence of collaborative decision-making and adaptive management practices	• Communication records (emails, meeting notes) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff
Efficiency		
EQ 7. To what extent has the project optimized resource allocation to ensure cost-effectiveness and adequate human resources management?		
EQ 7.1 Has the project been implemented in a cost-effective manner?	• Evidence of cost-effective measures taken to support the project. • Evidence of compliance with UNEP, FAO and UNDP procurement processes • Evidence of cost-effective procurement (e.g. through tendering processes) • Lead time for procurement process/procurement bottlenecks in output delivery	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, audit reports, PSC meeting minutes) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); with the EE (MADES)
EQ 7.2 How adequate are human resources, both in terms of staff quantity and expertise?	• Stakeholder perception on availability of required expertise • Adequacy of staff workload • Staff retention/turnover	• KIIs with UNEP; FAO; UNDP; government partners; PSC members

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
EQ 8. How timely is the project's implementation?		
EQ 8.1 Are outputs being delivered on time?	• Percentage of activities delivered on schedule • Instances of project delays and their duration	• Desk review (annual reports, Annual Operational Plan and Budget)
EQ 8.2 How likely will the Project's results be achieved within the established timeframe and, if not, is an extension likely needed?	• Stakeholder perception on time required to complete the outputs	• KIIs with UNEP; FAO; UNDP; government partners; PSC members
Monitoring and Reporting		
EQ 9. How adequate was the design and is the implementation of the monitoring and reporting system, and to what extent has it supported decision-making for adaptive project management?		
EQ 9.1 To what extent is the project supported by a sound and adequately budgeted monitoring plan?	• Presence of SMART results in the monitoring plan • Inclusion of disaggregated indicators (e.g., gender, vulnerability) • Alignment of indicators with project objectives and outputs • Budget allocated for monitoring activities • Coverage of all key project components • Evidence of relevant and good quality baseline data	• Monitoring plan documentation • KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff)
EQ 9.2 To what extent is the monitoring plan being effectively implemented?	• Regular updates in the monitoring system • Timely tracking of progress towards objectives • Use of monitoring data for project adaptation and improvement • Expenditure on monitoring activities against allocated budget	• Monitoring system logs and reports • KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff)
EQ 9.3 Is project reporting fulfilling UNEP and donor reporting commitments	• Number and timeliness of reports submitted to UNEP and GCF • Inclusion of disaggregated by group effects in reports	• Desk review (annual reports) • UNEP's Project Information Management System (PIMS) and Integrated Programme Management Reporting (IPMR) • Donor reports • KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff)
Sustainability		
EQ 10. To what extent do Project design and implementation integrate principles of sustainability?		
EQ 10.1 Does the project have an adequate sustainability/exit strategy?	• Evidence of exit strategy at project design • Evidence of resource mobilization strategy	• KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff); EE (MADES)

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
EQ 10.2 To what extent do government partners and communities demonstrate ownership of the project?	• Evidence of ownership, interest, and commitment among stakeholders • Documentation of policy, regulatory, and administrative frameworks that ensure the sustainability of Project outcomes • Measures of financial, institutional, socio-economic, or environmental risks that could impact the long-term sustainability of the Project's results.	• KIIs with government partners; local authorities
EQ 10.3 To what extent has the Project strengthened the capacities of key stakeholders, at both individual and institutional levels?	• Number and quality of capacity-building initiatives • Evidence of continued use and application of developed capacities	• Training reports • Post-training surveys • KIIs with UNEP; government partners; local authorities
EQ 10.4 Are strategies in place to promote the institutionalization of good practices and innovations developed by the Project?	• Evidence of institutionalization of good practices and innovations	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); government partners; local authorities
Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues		
I. Preparation and Readiness		
EQ 11. Were preparations and readiness effectively executed?		
EQ 11.1 To what extent was project mobilization effectively undertaken?	• Measures taken to address project design weaknesses • Stakeholder engagement quality • Confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements • Usefulness of GCF processes to support project preparation and readiness	• Initial project documents • Stakeholder engagement reports • Partnership agreements • Interviews with project management and stakeholders
II. Quality of Project Management and Supervision		
EQ 12. To what extent do governance and management arrangements support project implementation?		
EQ 12.1 To what extent do Project governance arrangements provide strategic guidance and support decision-making?	• Clarity of roles and responsibilities of PSC members • Frequency and Quality of Governance Meetings • Stakeholder Representation in Governance Structure • Timeliness and Effectiveness of Decisions	• Desk review (Operations manual, PSC meeting minutes) • KIIs with PSC members

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
EQ 12.2 How effective is project management and coordination?	• Leadership effectiveness towards achieving outcomes • Management of team structures • Periodic coordination meetings • Clarity of roles and responsibilities among project partners • Maintenance of productive partner relationships and collaboration evident • Adaptive management evidence	• Project management reports • Interviews with project management and stakeholders • UNEP and implementing partner evaluations
EQ 12.3 Is there an adequate system to manage internal risks?	• Evidence of internal risks analysis (e.g. operational, reputational, etc) and mitigation strategies • Evidence of internal risk management by PSC and PMU	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports, PSC meeting minutes) • KII with UNEP staff (i.e PMU), PSC members
III. Nature of External Context		
EQ 12.4 How has the project's external operating context been rated at the review inception stage, considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters, and political upheaval, and have adequate measures been adopted to mitigate external risks?	• Evidence of external risks analysis (e.g. political, conflict, natural disaster, etc) and mitigation strategies • Evidence of external risk management by PSC and PMU • Evidence of adaptation to external events (e.g. Covid-19 crisis, etc.)	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports, PSC meeting minutes) • KII with UNEP staff (i.e PMU), PSC members
IV. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality		
EQ 13. To what extent do Project design and implementation integrate principles of human rights, gender equality and inclusion?		
EQ 13.1 To what extent is the Project contributing to strengthening the capacities of institutions to integrate principles of human rights, gender equality and inclusion?	• Gender analysis during design • Consideration of inequalities in resource access • Consideration of inclusion and vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups • Evidence of financial resources and thematic expertise	• Desk review (FP/FAA, annual reports, gender assessment and action plan) • KIIs with UNEP, FAO, UNDP; government partners; local authority • FGDs with community members, indigenous groups.
EQ 13.2 How adequate are the mechanisms to ensure the participation of vulnerable groups (e.g., women, youth, rural populations, persons with disabilities) in project activities and decision-making?	• Evidence of participation of vulnerable groups • Evidence of vulnerable groups in decision-making	• Desk review (FP/FAA, annual reports, gender assessment and action plan) • KIIs with UNEP, FAO, UNDP; government partners; local authority • FGDs with community members, indigenous groups.
V. Environmental and Social Safeguards		

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION
EQ 14. To what extent do Project design and implementation integrate environmental and social safeguards?		
EQ 14.1 How adequate are the Project's mechanisms for environmental and social safeguards, and how can they be improved?	• Regular risk ratings review • Monitoring of possible safeguard issues • Response to safeguard issues/ negative unintended effects • Alignment with safeguards stated in section E of the Funding Agreement • Availability of financial resources for application of mechanisms	• UNEP safeguard documentation • Environmental and social risk assessment reports • Project monitoring and evaluation reports • Interviews with project management and stakeholders
EQ 14.2 To what extent has the project promoted territorial governance spaces, particularly at the level of Indigenous communities?	• Evidence of Strengthening Governance at the Local Government Level • Evidence of mechanisms for land use planning and regulation establishment • Degree of implementation of the Safeguards Monitoring System and reporting through a participatory and multisectoral process based on FPIC guidelines.	• Desk review (FP/FAA and annual reports. • KIIs with UNEP, FAO, UNDP; government partners; local authority, community members, indigenous groups.
VI. Communication and Public Awareness		
EQ 15. How effective are communication and public awareness strategies?		
EQ 15.1 To what extent are the knowledge management and communication systems adequate, including public awareness strategies?	• Knowledge management and communication strategy • Existence and use of knowledge management/exchange platform • Social media metrics • Learning and experience sharing effectiveness • Public awareness activity influence on wider communities	• Desk Review (Communication reports, Public awareness campaign documentation)

Annex 5. List of documents consulted

Admin Documents	Name of File
GCF Funded Activity Agreement	1 - Annex 2 Funded Activity Agreement
Project Cooperation Agreement on the GCF project "REDD+ Results-Based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017" between UNEP and MADES)	2 - PCS RBP Paraguay English version
Project Cooperation Agreement on the GCF project "REDD+ Results-Based Payments in Paraguay for the period 215-2017" between UNEP and Investigación para el Desarrollo	3 - 0 Paraguay PCA for Investigación para el Desarrollo_Rev 5 25.02.2022_signed PM VV
Project Cooperation Agreement on the GCF project "REDD+ Results-Based Payments in Paraguay for the period 215-2017" between UNEP and WCMC	4 - 1. Paraguay PCA for WCMC_22Jul22 signed JA WCMC.pdf
Contribution agreement between UNEP and FAO	5 - UN to UN agreement FAO – PNUMA Annexes 1-9
Contribution agreement between UNEP and UNDP (Forest Activities)	6a - 0 UN2UN UNDP_Bosques Implementation 25062021 signed PM.pdf
Contribution agreement between UNEP and UNDP (Strengthening MADES)	6b - 0 UN2UN UNDP MADES Construction 25062021 signed PM.pdf
Breakdown of partner agency contributions to each outcome (sub-outcome) for 2022	7a - POA 2022 CD_final.pdf
Breakdown of partner agency contributions to each outcome (sub-outcome) for 2023	7b - POA 2023.pdf
Breakdown of partner agency contributions to each outcome (sub-outcome) for 2024	7c - 2- UV POA unificado 2024 actividades_6 de junio.pdf
FAA Annex 2: Environmental and Social Assessment	ANNEX 2 - ESA Paraguay REDD-plusRBP FP UNEP-20191010.pdf
FAA Annex 3: NDA	ANNEX 3 - LETTER NDA Paraguay REDD-plusRBP.pdf
FAA Annex 5: UNEP Environmental, Social and Economic Review Note	ANNEX 5 - ESERN Paraguay REDD-plusRBP FP UNEP-20191010.pdf
FAA Annex 6: Gender Assessment and Action Plan	ANNEX 6 - GENDER Paraguay REDD-plusRBP UNEP-20191010.pdf
FAA Annex 7: Buffer Calculations	ANNEX 7 - BUFFER Paraguay REDD-plusRBP UNEP-20191010.pdf
FAA Annex 8: National Climate Change Fund (Summary Document)	ANNEX 8 - NCCF Paraguay REDD-plusRBP FP UNEP-20191010.pdf

Admin Documents	Name of File
FAA Annex 9: National Forest Strategy for Sustainable Growth (Summary Document)	ANNEX 9 - ENBCS_Paraguay REDD-plusRBP FP UNEP-20191010.pdf
Operation Manual: Paraguay + Verde	Operation Manual
Operation Manual Annex 1: operational regulations board of directors	Annex 1
Operation Manual Annex 2: Protocol for implementing safeguards	Annex 2
Operation Manual Annex 3: Protocol for gender implementation	Annex 3
Operation Manual Annex 4: Guidelines for communication	Annex 4
Operation Manual Annex 5: Trademark Manual	Anexo 5. Manual de marcas del Proyecto Paraguay + Verde_documento en construccion.pdf
PCA with Investigacion para el desarrollo	0 Paraguay PCA for Investigación para el Desarrollo_Rev 5 25.02.2022_signed PM VV.pdf
Contract amendment Investigacion para el desarrollo	1_GCFPCA_FP121_ROLAC_2022 - Amendment 2_EN-01.06.2023 signed JB-VV.pdf
Contract amendment Investigacion para el desarrollo	1_UNEP_ID_GCFPCA_FP121_ROLAC_2022_Amendment_1_EN-05_10_22 signed JB VV Adenda.pdf
Contract amendment Investigacion para el desarrollo	UNEP_template_amendment 003- signed JB -VV-Enmienda 3.pdf
Contract amendment Investigacion para el desarrollo	Enm. 004 UNEP GCFPCA PyFP121 signed JB-VV.pdf

Project Documents	Name of File
Unified Operational plan 2024	2- UV POA unificado 2024 actividades_6 de junio.pdf
Operational plan 2022	POA 2022 CD_final.pdf
Operational plan 2023	POA 2023.pdf
Workplan (ID)	ANNEX 4- Plan de trabajo Id V2.pdf
FAO Lograme, budget and workplan	FAO-annexes-logframe-budget-workplan.pdf
FAO - Agency Project Document. Technical assistance	Annex 1b Agency Project Document Rev OSP verif 20.08.2021FECHA DE INCIOYCIERRE.pdf

Project supervision plan FAO	Annex 4 Project Supervision Plan.FAO_nov.pdf
Procurement plan FAO	Annex 8b_Procurement Plan FAO_adjust 27.09.2021.pdf
Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)	Paraguay Environmental and Social Management Plan - ENG.docx
Environmental and Social Management Plan (Plan de Gestion Ambiental y Social - PGAS)	Paraguay Environmental and Social Management Plan_23Sept20_ESP.pdf
Presentation on the project results up to the end of 2024	Presentación general de resultados_rv 10-1-2025-MTR.pdf
Kick-off workshop for the REDD+ Results-Based Payments REDD+ Results-based Payments" Project Paraguay for the period 2015 - 2017". PARAGUAY + VERDE	Sistematizacioin taller de arranque final.pdf
Terms of reference for the pilot programme for REDD+ results-based payments	Terms of reference for the pilot programme for REDD+ results-based payments
FIRST AMENDMENT AND RESTATEMENT AGREEMENT amending and restating the ACCREDITATION MASTER AGREEMENT between UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME and GREEN CLIMATE FUND	ama-unep.pdf
Meeting minutes - Discussion between MEF and MADES regarding operationalization of the FCC (Sept 2024)	Acta de Reu - MADES - MEF FONDO VERDE_09_2024.pdf
Meeting minutes - Discussion between UNEP, MADES-Id regarding operationalization of the FCC (14/10/2024)	Minuta de reunión FCC 14.10.2024.pdf
Meeting minutes - Discussion between MEF and MADES regarding operationalization of the FCC (22/10/2024)	ACTA DE REUNION MEF- MADES 22_10_2024_1.pdf
Meeting minutes - Discussion between UNEP, MEF and MADES regarding operationalization of the FCC (30/10/2024)	Minuta_Reunión sobre Fondo Cambio Climático_30-10-24.pdf
Board Meeting minutes 27/07/2022	270722 Acta_Primerá reunión Junta Directiva Paraguay + Verde Rev GRD 2022.pdf
Board Meeting minutes 05/09/2022	Acta firmada_5-9-2022.pdf
Board Meeting minutes 11/04/2023	Acta_3era Reunion Junta Directiva Paraguay + Verde 11-4-2023_REV.pdf
Board Meeting minutes 11/06/2024	Acta cuarta reunión JDP 11 de junio 2024.pdf
Board Meeting minutes 08/12/2024	PARAGUAY__VERDE_ Acta firmada 2024.pdf
MAC Grievance Tracker	Grievance Tracker - Template.xlsx

Financial Documents/Reports	Name of File
Annual Financial report 2020	APR-FINANCIAL REPORT-FP 121-PARAGUAY-31-12-2020.pdf
Annual Financial report 2021	APR-FINANCIAL REPORT- FP 121-PARAGUAY-31-12-2021.pdf
Annual Financial report 2022	APR-FINANCIAL REPORT- FP 121-PARAGUAY-31-12-2022.pdf
Annual Financial report 2023	APR-FINANCIAL REPORT- FP 121-PARAGUAY-31-12-2023.pdf
Annual Financial report 2024 (Jan-Jun)	APR-FINANCIAL REPORT- FP 121-PARAGUAY-30-06-2024.pdf
Annual Financial report 2024 (Jan-Dec)	APR-INF.FINANCIERO- FP121-DIC. 2024-27.01.2025-signed.pdf
Investigación para el Desarrollo (ID) financial reports	Project Reconciliation PCA ID_06.01.2023 Expenditure ReportID_30Sept.2022.pdf Annex 9. Expenditure statement_a Febrero 2023.pdf Project Reconciliation PCA ID_10.10.2023.xls Request for Service -ID- Desembolso 3-signed GL.pdf
WCMC financial reports	Financial Report - Audited -June 2023.pdf 8780_2022 Q3-Q4_Expenditure Report _2022-WCMC.pdf 240301 Grant audit report Project Paraguay GCF 2020 Project code 8780.00.R.pdf
FAO financial reports	EPPAR022UEP-Solicitud de desembolso.pdf PAYMENT REQUEST FAO-2ND. AGO 2024_Signed.pdf Reconciliation and UMOJA lines-Payment .xls Solicitud de desembolso PY+V 1 - Justif FAO.pdf Approved financial report Oct2022.pdf REPORTE FINANCIERO #2__Nov 2022 to Apr 2023-signed.pdf REPORTE FINANCIERO #3__May 2023 to Oct 2023-signed.pdf Reporte financiero 4 - de Nov.2023 a Abr.2024-FINAL-signed JW.pdf
UNDP financial reports	115142 0.4 Financial Statement Report 2021-2022_Signed_GL.pdf Informe Financiero Bosques 01 08 al 31 12 2023 - Firmado.pdf Informe Financiero PNUMA 01.01 al 31.07 2024 - Bosques FIRMADO_JW27.09.2024.pdf Informe Bosques a Jul 2023 -Final-signed GL.pdf 128060 Financial Statement Report 03_Bulding_2021_2022_Signed_GL Informe Edificio a Jul 2023-final-signed-GL.pdf Informe Edificio Financiero 01 08 al 31 12 2023 - SIGNED.pdf Informe Financiero PNUMA 01.01 al 31.07 2024 - EDIFICIO FIRMADO_Signed JW 27.09.2024.pdf

Communications Documents	Name of File
Diagnostic of the Paraguay +Verde Communication Situation	Diagnostico de la Comunicacion Paraguay +Verde_copia de última versión.pdf
Communication Strategy Final Version	Estrategia_Comunicación_versión_final_2024_12_18_copia de la última versión.pdf
Knowledge Management Strategy (Spanish)	Estrategia_GC_borrador_UV-7-3-2025.docx

Knowledge Management Strategy. Annex A - Diagnostic Methodology	Estrategia_GC_ANEXO A_Resumen metodología diagnóstico.docx
Knowledge Management Strategy. Annex B - Presentation - PROPUESTA DE ORGANIZACIÓN DE ARCHIVOS DIGITALES DEL PROYECTO	Estrategia_GC_Anexo B - PROPUESTA DE ORGANIZACIÓN DE ARCHIVOS DIGITALES DEL PROYECTO .pptx.ppsx
Knowledge Management Strategy. Annex C - Espacios de cuidado de la niñez y participación Espacios de cuidado de la niñez y participación efectiva de mujeres en la gobernanza del proyecto	Estrategia_GC_Anexo C- Propuesta de documentación de lecciones aprendidas_Espacios de cuidado de la niñez y participación.pdf
PLAN DE IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE LA ESTRATEGIA DE COMUNICACIÓN	Plan_Comunicacional_aportes_DIRCOM_2024_11_03_copia de la última versión.pdf
Success Case: CASO DE ÉXITO: La importancia de los Consejos Regionales Indígenas en el Proyecto Paraguay +Verde	Caso Éxito Consejos Regionales Indígenas en el Proyecto Paraguay.docx
Successful Case Judicial Branch	Caso Éxito Poder Judicial.docx
Successful Case Infona	Caso Éxito storytelling Infona.docx
Life Stories of MADES (Librada Torales, Virgilio Suarez)	Documentación y difusión de la historia de vida de Librada Torales.docx
Life Stories: Amado Valdez	Documentación_historia_2024_de_vida_Amado_Valdez_.pdf
Life Stories: Carlos Ortega	Documentación_historia_2024_de_vida_Carlos_Ortega.pdf
Innovación Tecnológica 1: Sistema Nacional de Monitoreo Forestal (SNMF)	INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 1.docx
INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 2: SISTEMA DE MONITOREO, REPORTE Y VERIFICACIÓN (MRV) MONITORING, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION (MRV) SYSTEM	INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 2.docx
INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 3: SISTEMA DE ALERTA TEMPRANA PARA DEFORESTACIÓN (SAT) Early Warning System for Deforestation (SAT)	INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 3.docx
INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 4: PLATAFORMA GEOPORTAL DE INCENDIOS FORESTALES Forest Fire Geoportal Platform	INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 4.docx
Innovación Tecnológica 5: Interoperabilidad SIGF-INFONA y SIAM-MADES interoperability between INFONA's Integrated Forest Management System (FMIS) and MADES' Environmental Information System (SIAM)	INNOVACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA 5.docx
Lessons Learned 1	Lección aprendida 1 2023 POA participación indígena.docx
Lessons Learned 2	Lección aprendida 2 2023 caso INDI reclamo FVC.docx

Lessons Learned 3	Lección aprendida 3 2024 - Espacios de cuidado de la niñez y participación.pdf
Lessons Learned 4	Lección aprendida 4 2024 - Karu Guasú en CCLPI.docx
Lessons Learned 5	Lección aprendida 5 2024 - Guía CCLPI.docx
Lessons Learned 6	Lección aprendida 6 2024 - Capacitación Guardaparques.docx
APR Communication Report	APR Communication Report

Project Narrative Reports	Name of File
Annual Performance Report 2020	8a - fp121-annual-performance-report-cy2020.pdf
Annual Performance Report 2021	8b - fp121-annual-performance-report-cy2021-v.pdf
Annual Performance Report 2022	8c - fp121-annual-performance-report-cy2022-v.pdf
Annual Performance Report 2023	8d - fp121-annual-performance-report-cy2023-v.pdf
Annual Performance Report 2024	Paraguay + Verde APR 2024_English DRAFT
ID - Report 1 Product 1 Report	Producto 1.pdf
ID - Report 1 Product 2 Report	Producto 2.pdf
ID - Report 1 Product 3 Report	Producto 3.pdf
ID - Report 2 Regulations of the NCCF, description of profiles and functions, evaluation criteria.	3.b. Regulations of the FCC, description of profiles and functions, evaluation criteria.pdf
ID – Report 2 - Report on estimated administrative and operative costs	3.c.Report on estimated administrative and operative costs.pdf
ID - Report 2 - Reporting containing three options NCCF logo	3.d.Reporting containing three options FCC logo.pdf
WCMC - Final narrative report for UNEP PCA with WCMC	8780 Paraguay Final narrative report_25Jul23.pdf
WCMC - Final deliverables for the international course "Safeguards week in Paraguay"	Deliverables 1- Strengthen capacities on safeguards.pdf
WCMC - Support continuous risk and impact management of project activities	Deliverables 2_Support continuous risk and impact management.pdf
WCMC - Project grievance redress mechanism	Deliverables 3-Project grievance redress mechanism.pdf
WCMC - Develop a project safeguard monitoring and reporting system	Deliverables 4-Develop a project safeguard monitoring.pdf
WCMC - Interim narrative report WCMC for reporting period 18aug-30dec2022	8780 Paraguay Interim narrative report-WCMC.pdf

WCMC - Final narrative report for UNEP PCA with WCMC (reporting period 1jan-30jun2023)	8780 Paraguay Final narrative report_25Jul23.pdf
UNDP - Final progress report	Informe final PNUD para APR_Signed_GL.pdf
UNDP - Narrative progress report 2023	Informe_Narrativo 2023._Bosques.pdf
UNDP - Narrative report - UNDP component - Building 2023	Informe_Narrativo 2023._Edificio-SIGNED.pdf
FAO – Narrative report 2022	Narrative report signed.pdf

Annex 6. List of Stakeholders Consulted and Stakeholder Analysis

	Stakeholder Group	Organization	Position/Role	Location	F	M
1	Project Team	UNEP	Task Manager	Panamá	1	
2		PUM/UNEP	Project Coordinator	Asunción		1
3		PUM/UNEP	Project Administrator	Asunción	1	
4		PUM/UNEP	Administrative Assistant	Asunción	1	
5		PUM/UNEP	Gender Specialist	Asunción	1	
6		PUM/UNEP	Safeguards Specialist	Asunción	1	
7		PUM/UNEP	Knowledge Management Specialist	Asunción		1
8		PUM/UNEP	Communicator	Asunción	1	
9		PUM/UNEP	Assistant programmatic	Asunción	1	
10		UNEP				1
11	Implementing Partners	UNPD	Coordinator for UNDP Component and Responsible for Result 4	Asunción		1
12		UNPD	Responsible for Result 2	Asunción		1
13		UNPD	Responsible for Result 3	Asunción		1
14		UNPD	Responsible for Result 5	Asunción		1
15		UNPD	Responsible for Result 1	Asunción	1	
16		UNPD	Program Officer	Asunción	1	
17		FAO	Specialist in indigenous peoples	Asunción	1	
18		FAO	Project Coordinator	Asunción		1
19		FAO	Program coordinator	Asunción	1	
20		FAO	Specialist in environmental sustainability of the forest and climate change	Asunción	1	
21		FAO	Especialista en suelo	Asunción		1
22		CCCI	Former Project Coordinator	Asunción		1
23		ID	Consultant	Asunción	1	
24		ID	Consultant	Asunción	1	

	Stakeholder Group	Organization	Position/Role	Location	F	M
25	Government	MADES	DPE Director (Focal point)	Asunción	1	
26		MADES	Alternate focal point	Asunción	1	
27		MADES	Director of Environmental Services	Asunción	1	
28		MADES	National Director (Climate Change)	Asunción	1	
29		MADES	Responsible for planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects	Asunción	1	
30		MADES	Director (Biodiversity)	Asunción		1
31		INFONA	Director General (Planning)	San Lorenzo	1	
32		INFONA	Director of the National Forestry Information System	San Lorenzo	1	
33		MAG	Director of the DGP	Asunción		1
34		MAG	Head of Environment and Climate Change department	Asunción	1	
35		MAG	Head of indigenous department (DEAG)	San Lorenzo	1	
36		MEF	Head of the Department of Territorial Planning	Asunción	1	
37		MEF	Technician	Asunción	1	
38		MEF	Technician	Asunción	1	
39		MEF	Coordinator of urban and territorial planning projects	Asunción		1
40		MEF	Safeguards Officer	Asunción	1	
41		MEF	NDA alternate	Asunción	1	
42		INDI	Director of Planning (focal point)	Asunción	1	
43		INDI	Head of Programmatic Area	Asunción		1
44		MINMUJER	Director of Equality and Inclusion	Asunción	1	
45		MADES	Chief Park Ranger Ñacunday	Ñacunday		1
46		MADES	Park Ranger Ñacunday	Ñacunday		1
47		MADES	Park Ranger Ñacunday	Ñacunday		1

	Stakeholder Group	Organization	Position/Role	Location	F	M
48		MADES	Park Ranger Ñacunday	Ñacunday		1
49		MADES	Chief Park Ranger Ñacunday	Cerro Corá	1	
50		MADES	Park Ranger Cerro Corá	Cerro Corá		1
51		MADES	Park Ranger Cerro Corá	Cerro Corá		1
52		Municipalidad de Santa Rosa	Técnica	Santa Rosa	1	
53		Municipalidad de Santa Rosa	Catastro	Santa Rosa		1
54		Municipalidad de Santa Rosa	Catastro	Santa Rosa		1
55		Municipalidad de Santa Rosa	Gabinete	Santa Rosa		1
56	Community	Indigenous Council of the Western Region	Board Representative	Chaco	1	
57		Indigenous community Nartanjaty	Leader	Ñacunday		1
58		Indigenous community Nartanjaty	Vice-Leader	Ñacunday		1
59		Indigenous community Nartanjaty	Religious Leader	Ñacunday		1
60		Indigenous Council of the Eastern Region	Board Representative	J. E. Estigarribia		1
61		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Leader	Bella Vista Norte	1	
62		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	School Supervisor	Bella Vista Norte		1
63		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Teacher	Bella Vista Norte		1
64		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Teacher	Bella Vista Norte	1	
65		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Teacher	Bella Vista Norte		1
66		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Member	Bella Vista Norte	1	

	Stakeholder Group	Organization	Position/Role	Location	F	M
67		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Member	Bella Vista Norte	1	
68		Indigenous community Itajeguaca	Member	Bella Vista Norte	1	
69		Indigenous community cerro akangue	Regional indigenous representative to the board	Bella Vista Norte	1	
70		Indigenous community cerro akangue	Vice-Leader	Bella Vista Norte		1
71		Rural women's network	President	General Resquín	1	
72		Chaco sustainable production platform	Member	Chaco		1
73		Meat and soybean platform Itapúa	Member	Colonias Unidas		1
74	Other	WWF	Mesa REDD+ Representative	Asunción		1
				TOTAL	40	34

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder	Role in the Project	Priorities	Involvement in the evaluation process
	UN Agencies (duty bearer)		
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)	Accredited Entity (AE) responsible for overseeing implementation, financial management, evaluation, reporting, and closing of proceeds. This also includes the application and monitoring of environmental and social safeguards and mainstreaming of gender equality. UNEP assumes co-presidency of the PSC. UNEP staff also comprise the PMU, which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of activities in collaboration with project stakeholders.	To ensure that project activities are carried out in a manner that meets UNEP and GCF requirements while maintaining environmental and social safeguards and mainstreaming gender equality. To ensure that project activities respond to the needs of the project stakeholders and beneficiaries and align with national laws and priorities. To maximize effectiveness of project implementation and coordination among stakeholders.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: inception phase to inform evaluation design; data collection phase as key informant; analysis and reporting phase to validate findings and recommendations.

Stakeholder	Role in the Project	Priorities	Involvement in the evaluation process
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Contributes to the implementation of activities under Output 1 to strengthen the capacity of government institutions to implement the ENBCS. Activities include assisting INFONA and MADES in establishing a Forest Monitoring and Early Warning System, enhancing the regulatory and institutional framework of INFONA for the implementation of the National Forest Strategy for Sustainable Growth (ENBCS), and operationalizing a strengthened payment for environmental services system, including the design and validation of a platform linked to the Environmental Information System (SIAM). Also provides support to indigenous and farmer communities for improved efficiency the use of soil resources in productive processes, based on the National Soil Neutrality Strategy.	To carry out activities the organization is responsible for while ensuring the application and monitoring of environmental and social safeguards and mainstreaming of gender equality. To provide regular and clear communication on progress and expenditures throughout the implementation process.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	UNDP supports the review and updating of regulatory frameworks to support the implementation of REDD+ actions. It also supports capacity strengthening of government offices involved in land use governance by promoting the participation of relevant actors, including indigenous groups. It also strengthens sustainable development platforms and supports the construction of MADES' new building.	To carry out activities the organization is responsible for while ensuring the application and monitoring of environmental and social safeguards and mainstreaming of gender equality. To provide regular and clear communication on progress and expenditures throughout the implementation process.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
National government (Duty bearer)			
Ministerio del Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (MADES)	MADES is the National Executing Entity (NEE) and coordinates execution through MADES' Directorate of Strategic Planning (DPE). It is accountable to the AE for effective and efficient use of resources in accordance with UNEP policies and procedures and assumes leadership and coordinates key state institutions for the implementation of the ENBCS. In addition to assuming project execution, MADES is a direct beneficiary that receives support from the Project to strengthen its human resources and operational capacity for sustainable environmental and forest management. Under Output 2, MADES also receives support to establish the governance for and operationalize the NCCF. MADES assumes presidency of the PSC. It is also the REDD+ focal point to the UNFCCC.	The smooth implementation of the ENBCS through support with infrastructure development, procurement of tools and equipment, capacity building, and legislative/land use adjustments. Establishing and operationalizing the NCCF. To ensure smooth coordination among government stakeholders of the project.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.

Stakeholder	Role in the Project	Priorities	Involvement in the evaluation process
Instituto Forestal Nacional (INFONA)	Is responsible for the enforcement of the National Forest Policy, manages the forest monitoring system, and has actively participated in the development of REDD+ PAMs. Under Output 1, INFONA receives support to strengthen its human resources and operational capacity to enforce the Policy. This includes, for example, support to strengthen inter-institutional coordination with MADES for integrated environmental and forest management, support for the development of a digital platform for forest monitoring, support to INFONA regional offices for planning and regulating land use, etc. INFONA is a full member of the PSC.	Improvements to the forest monitoring system including streamlined systems between MADES and INFONA.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería (MAG)	Since 2024, the MAG has collaborated with the FAO as an implementing institution. MAG is a full member of the PSC.	The smooth implementation of the ENBCS.	Medium Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena (INDI)	INDI serves as an advisory institution on policies related to Indigenous Peoples. INDI is an advisory member of the PSC.	Ensuring indigenous perspectives are incorporated into project decision-making processes and outputs.	High Priority: Secondary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
Ministerio de la Mujer (MINMUJER)	The Project works in coordination with MINMujer to strength the capacity of national institutions for gender equality and inclusions as well as for environmental and social safeguards. This includes, among others, the development of a Grievance and Redress Mechanism, development of mechanisms for the implementation of the Law on Public Policies and Rural Women, etc. MINMUJER is an advisory member of the PSC.	Ensuring women's perspectives are incorporated into project decision-making processes and outputs.	High Priority: Secondary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.

Stakeholder	Role in the Project	Priorities	Involvement in the evaluation process
Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas (MEF)	MEF is the National Designated Authority (NDA) and institutional link with the GCF since 2023. MEF is also expected to act as a trustee for the administration of financial resources for the NCCF. MEF is a full member of the PSC. Of note: Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo y Económico y Social (STP) was originally NDA to the GCF, when the FP was developed. The role of the NDA was then passed onto the MADES and, in March 2023, to the MEF. The STP was merged with the MEF in 2023 and had benefitted from a number of capacity building activities (e.g. risk management, application of environmental and social safeguards, support for development of Land-Urban Management Plans (POUTs), etc.). Therefore, it will be important to consult with individuals who can provide information on these activities.	Ensuring implementation effective implementation of the POUTs Establishing and operationalizing the NCCF.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
Local Authorities			
	The Project supports the development of municipal development councils and of territorial planning plans in selected municipalities. It also collaborates with some municipalities on ecotourism and supports the development of national sustainable production platforms in the departments of Chaco, Alto Paraná, and Itapúa.	Improving staff capacity to enforce the laws influenced by the project, to respond to the needs of the communities they serve and to smoothly implement the outputs produced by the project (e.g. Payments for Environmental Services, POUTS, ecotourism programming)	High Priority: Secondary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
Civil Society			
MESA REDD+	The Mesa REDD+ coordinates civil society and public institutions under the National Climate Change Commission, providing a forum for discussion and technical consultations on REDD+ issues. MESA REDD+ is an advisory member of the PSC.	Ensuring project programming meets the national and community priorities while aligning with REDD+ principles.	High Priority: Secondary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.
Indigenous Communities			
	Four Indigenous Peoples' Representatives (2 women and 2 men) are elected to the PSC by leaders from national, regional, departmental and local indigenous organizations, linking the Board's governance with the Territorial level. Indigenous Peoples' representatives are full members of the PSC (The four representatives collectively have a single vote). Regional Councils of the Chaco and the Eastern Region, with representatives from the various communities of both regions.	Ensuring indigenous perspectives are incorporated into project decision-making processes and outputs.	High Priority: Secondary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.

Stakeholder	Role in the Project	Priorities	Involvement in the evaluation process
	Donor		
GCF Secretariat	Provides funding for the Project. Reviews and approves narrative and financial reports. Develops policies and guidelines that the project must adhere to.	Ensuring project programming is aligned with GCF priorities and requirements. Smooth coordination and communication among project stakeholders.	High Priority: Primary user of the evaluation. Involvement: Data collection phase as key informants.

Annex 7. Data Collection Tools

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
Strategic Relevance and Coherence											
EQ 1. To what extent is the Project relevant to the priorities of key stakeholders?											
EQ. 1.1 To what extent is the Project aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities?	• Degree of Project's alignment with MTS 2022-2025, POW 2022-2023/2024-2025, BSP²³⁷, and S-SC²³⁸ • Perceptions on contributions made to the relevant MTS and POW	• Comparison of FP/FAA with UNEP MTS, POW, BSP, and S-SC • KII with UNEP staff and project team									
How is the project aligned with UNEP priorities, in particular the Medium-term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities?			X								
EQ. 1.2 To what extent does the Project adhere to or respond to Donor Strategic Priorities?	• Degree of alignment with GCF 'Forest and Land Use' results area. • Perceptions of GCF Secretariat staff on alignment with GCF priorities	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports) • KIIs with GCF Secretariat.									
How does the project align with GCF priorities, especially priorities related to forest and land use?											X

²³⁷ The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP) relates to the capacity of governments to comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies.

²³⁸ South-South Cooperation (S-SC) is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ. 1.3 How does the Project align with Global, Regional, Sub-regional, and National Environmental Priorities?	• Alignment with REDD+ priorities in LAC and in Paraguay • Alignment with national and sub-National plans that address GHG (e.g. NDCs²³⁹) • UNSDCF 2025-2028²⁴⁰, regional agreements, etc. • Alignment with the National Development Plan (PND2030) and government sectoral strategies. • Perceptions of key stakeholders on degree of alignment.	• Review of global, regional, national policies and frameworks • KII with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP) and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)									
To what extent and how is the Project aligned with REDD+ priorities in LAC and/or in Paraguay?			X	X	X						X
To what extent and how is the Project aligned with national and sub-national plans and strategies to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation?					X	X					
To what extent and how does the Project align with the UNSDCF 2025-2028? Was the Project developed in consultation with the UNCT to ensure alignment?			X	X							

²³⁹ Nationally Determined Contributions²⁴⁰ UN Development Assistance Frameworks

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ. 1.4 To what extent does the Project respond to the needs of key stakeholders including government institutions, communities and environmental service providers?	• Evidence of whole-of-government approach in project design and implementation • Evidence of needs assessment / community participation in project design • Inclusivity in addressing needs of all beneficiary groups (e.g. rural women, indigenous groups, persons with disabilities, the elderly, etc.)	• Review of the project design template and initial project proposal • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP) • KIIs with project stakeholders (national government, local authorities) • FGDs with community groups, indigenous representatives, environmental service providers									
Can you please describe the process for developing project design? Did it follow a participatory approach involving line ministries, civil society, indigenous groups, and others?			X	X							
Were you consulted during project design? To what extent does the Project respond to your needs/the needs of your organization? Please provide specific examples. *Inquire about needs at national and local level					X	X	X	X			
Can you please describe the project activities in which you have participated? How do these activities respond to your needs?									X	X	
EQ 2. How coherent is the Project internally with UNEP's strategies and programmes and externally with the initiatives of cooperating partners?											

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ. 2.1 How does the Project ensure complementarity with existing relevant interventions and maintain coherence with them?	• Internal coherence with other UNEP initiatives in Paraguay • External coherence with initiatives of other vertical climate funds (e.g. GEF, CIF) in Paraguay • External coherence with initiatives of cooperating partners (e.g. bilateral donors, UN agencies, etc.) • Efforts in ensuring complementarity, synergy optimization, and avoidance of duplication	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); GCF Secretariat staff; and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities, civil society)									
To what extent is the Project coherent with other initiatives of UNEP/UNDP/FAO in Paraguay?			X	X							
Are there other initiatives aimed at reducing emissions through deforestation that are implemented by other vertical funds in Paraguay? If so, to which extent is the Project coherent with these?			X	X	X						X
Can you identify initiatives implemented by other cooperating partners that seek to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in Paraguay? To what extent does the Project complement these initiatives? Are there any duplications of cooperating partners' efforts in this area?			X	X	X						X
Quality of Project Design ²⁴¹											
EQ 3. To what extent is the design of the Project's components appropriate to achieve the expected results?											

²⁴¹ Once the present Inception Report is approved by UNEP, and in alignment with the questions related to the evaluation of the project design quality, the assessment will be incorporated into the evaluation report. The finalized template for this assessment, ensuring comprehensive evaluation, will subsequently be annexed at that stage.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION		UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
3.1 To what extent was the Project design and results framework in keeping with UNEP standards?	- Alignment with UNEP's Quality of Project Design Criteria²⁴² - Perception of key stakeholders on quality of project design.	KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); GCF Secretariat staff										
What are your overall impressions of the project design quality? Describe what you consider to be the strengths of the project design as well as any weaknesses or areas for improvement you have identified.			X	X	X							X
How clear are the project objectives, and do you feel they are achievable?			X	X	X							
3.2 To what extent has the Project developed the right partnerships to achieve results? Have these been strategic and are any partnerships missing to effectively support project implementation?	- Evidence of strategic partnership²⁴³ with UN agencies, civil society, academia, private sector - Evidence of whole-of-society approaches in implementation - Stakeholder perception on appropriateness of partnerships	- Desk review (project cooperation agreements, Annual Operative Plan) - KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)										
What was the process for developing partnership agreements? How were partners selected and how does their selection allow to achieve strategic objectives?			X	X								

²⁴² UNEP's design assessment template scores the design according to 13 criteria: operating context; project preparation; strategic relevance; intended results and causality; logical framework and monitoring; governance and supervision arrangements; partnerships; learning, communication and outreach; financial planning and budgeting; efficiency; risk identification and social safeguards; sustainability/replication and catalytic effects; identified project design weaknesses and gaps.

²⁴³ According to WFP's Evaluation of Strategic Partnerships (2016), a "strategic partnership" is a collaborative relationship between different actors where partners combine and leverage their complementary resources to achieve better outcomes for the people they serve, working together in a transparent, equitable, and mutually beneficial way, sharing risks, responsibilities, and accountability to reach goals that could not be achieved alone; essentially prioritizing shared value creation over individual transactional benefits. These elements will be considered where looking at whether the Project has engaged in strategic partnerships.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
To what extent does the partnership approach allow to reach all levels of society? (e.g. different line ministries, civil society, private sector, etc.) Are any partners missing to facilitate the achievement of strategic objectives?			X	X	X	X	X	X			
Effectiveness											
EQ 4. How likely will Project results be achieved and what are the factors of effectiveness?											
EQ 4.1 Availability of Outputs: How successful has the Project been in producing and making available the programmed outputs to the intended beneficiaries?	- Quantity and quality of outputs relative to what was planned in the FAA - Stakeholders perception on the suitability and usefulness of the outputs	- Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, Annual Operative Plan, annual reports) - KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)									
What progress has been made in the delivery of outputs for Component 1? What progress has been made in the delivery of outputs for Component 2? Are any outputs likely to not be delivered as planned? If so, why?			X	X	X						
EQ 4.2 Were there any modifications or revisions made to the Project outputs during its implementation, and if so, have they led to improved performance?	- Number and nature of formal modifications/revisions relative to the original FAA - Clarity and justification of any output reformulations - Evidence that procedures were followed correctly	- Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports) - KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)									
Have any modifications or revisions been made to project outputs during implementation? If so, has this led to an improvement in project performance?			X	X							

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 4.3 Achievement of Project outcomes: To what extent are the outputs likely to contribute to expected outcomes by the end of the project timeframe?	• Performance against defined results framework • Stakeholders perception on the contribution of outputs towards expected outcomes • Evidence of change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes. • Evidence of use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries.	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities, environmental service providers)									
How has capacity strengthening efforts provided by the project helped you to ensure conservation of national parks? To what extent has the Project contributed to strengthening MADES/INFONA/park rangers to better manage forest fires? Can you describe the pilots that have been implemented to promote sustainable economic development? How has this contributed to increasing economic development of smallholders? What legislative framework has been developed with project support? To what extent are these frameworks implemented? What are the bottlenecks? To what extent has the project contributed to certification for environmental services? To what extent are POUT contributing to improved territorial planning? What progress has been made towards the creation of the RBP window of the NCCF? To what extent are beneficiaries capacitated to access these funds?			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
EQ 4.4 What are facilitating and hindering factors in the project's performance?	• Internal facilitating and hindering factors (e.g. adequacy of financial resources, • External facilitating and hindering factors (e.g. political changes/government staff turnover, climate-related events, currency exchange, etc.)	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, Annual Operative Plan, annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)									
What factors, internal to UNEP/FAO/UNDP, have facilitated or hindered project implementation to date?			X	X							

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
What (external) factors have facilitated or hindered project implementation?			X	X	X	X	X	X			
EQ 4.5 Likelihood of Impact: Are there any indications at the stage that the project is likely to have a lasting, intended impact Including towards a paradigm shift (GCF goal)?	• Analysis of long-lasting effects articulated in the results framework • Verification of whether assumptions held true • Drivers to support transition from outputs to outcomes are in place • Contribution to developing an enabling environment for sustainable forests (e.g. strategies, legislation, etc.)	• Review of project objectives/goals • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)									
How does the project's results framework articulate the potential for long-lasting effects, and to what extent have the assumptions made at the outset proven to be accurate? What key drivers are in place to support the transition from project outputs to sustainable outcomes, and how is the project contributing to the development of an enabling environment for sustainable forest management (e.g., strategies, legislation)?			X	X	X	X					
EQ 4.6 Are there any unintended effects, both positive and negative, from the project's intervention?	• Identification of unintended consequences and their causal linkages to the intended impact • Analysis of potential positive/negative impacts on vulnerable groups	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities) • FGDs with community groups, indigenous representatives, environmental service providers									
Has the Project had any additional benefits for beneficiary communities/organizations that were not anticipated? Has the Project had any negative consequences for beneficiary communities/organizations that were not anticipated?			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
EQ 5. To what extent does the Project support the development of innovative solutions?											

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 5.1 What type of innovations (e.g. technological, social, etc.) is the project supporting?	• Number and type of innovative tools/strategies introduced • Type of challenges/barriers that innovation seek to overcome • Feedback on effectiveness of these innovations	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); and project stakeholders (national government, local authorities)									
How does the GCF Secretariat/UNEP/FAO/UNDP define innovation when it comes to reducing emissions through deforestation and forest degradation?			X	X							X
What type of innovations has the project supported and how do these innovations support the achievement of project objectives? Is there room for the project to further innovate?			X	X	X				X		
EQ 5.2 To what extent do innovations support the participation of women, indigenous people, and other vulnerable groups?	• Evidence of co-creation of innovations with vulnerable groups • Evidence of use of innovations by vulnerable groups	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KIIs with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP) • FGDs with community groups, indigenous representatives, environmental service providers)									
Is the Project supporting the development of innovation solutions for communities? To what extent do these innovations consider the needs of women, indigenous groups, young people, etc.?						X	X	X		X	
Financial Management											
EQ 6. To what extent are UNEP's financial management practices being followed and supporting project performance?											

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 6.1 How well did the project adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures?	• Instances of deviations from UNEP's financial policies • Compliance rate with established financial procedures • Stakeholders perception on efficient use of financial resources • Timeliness/bottlenecks in funds disbursements	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, audit reports) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff									
How timely is the approval and disbursement of cash advances to partners?			X	X							
Are there any variations in expenditures (under or over expenditures) in relation to project timeline? If so, how can these be explained? Were any budget revisions made to address these variations and what are the implications for these revisions going forward?			X	X							
Is financial reporting aligned with GCF requirements? If not, what are the shortcomings and what steps have been taken to address these?											X
EQ 6.2 Is the rate of spend consistent with the project's length of implementation to date and how does it compare with the approved budget?	• Total expenditure against approved budget • Expenditure breakdown by output/component level	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, Annual Operational Plan and Budget) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff									
See KII questions for EQ 6.1.											
EQ 6.3 Are there any financial management issues affecting project delivery or performance quality and, if so, are remedial actions taken?	• Number and nature of financial issues encountered • Impact of financial issues on project timelines and quality • Evidence of remedial actions	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, audit reports) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff									

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
Are there any other financial management issues. If so, how has this affected project implementation and what actions have been taken to address these?			X	X							X
EQ 6.4 How effective is communication between the UNEP Project Manager and the GCF Secretariat in relation to effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach?	• Frequency and quality of communication instances • Evidence of collaborative decision-making and adaptive management practices	• Communication records (emails, meeting notes) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); GCF Secretariat staff									
How fluid is the communication between the UNEP Project Manager and the GCF Secretariat? How knowledgeable is your counterpart of project progress and to what extent does this facilitate communication? How conducive is the communication to collaborative decision-making and adaptive management?			X								X
Efficiency											
EQ 7. To what extent has the project optimized resource allocation to ensure cost-effectiveness and adequate human resources management?											
EQ 7.1 Has the project been implemented in a cost-effective manner?	• Evidence of cost-effective measures taken to support the project. • Evidence of compliance with FAO and UNDP procurement processes • Evidence of cost-effective procurement (e.g. through tendering processes) • Lead time for procurement process/procurement bottlenecks in output delivery	• Desk review (APR Financial Reports, audit reports, PSC meeting minutes) • KIIs with UNEP (finance staff); with the EE (MADES)									
Were any cost-saving measures put in place to maximise results? To what extent have procurement processes been followed as per procedures? What type of good and services have been procured? Have tendering processes been implemented to ensure that items/services are procured at the lowest possible cost? Have goods and services been procured in a timely manner? If not, what have been the bottlenecks?			X	X							X

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 7.2 How adequate are human resources, both in terms of staff quantity and expertise?	- Stakeholder perception on availability of required expertise - Adequacy of staff workload - Staff retention/turnover	KIIs with UNEP; FAO; UNDP; government partners; PSC members									
Has staffing been adequate, both in terms of number and staff expertise, to support project implementation in: UNEP FAO/UNDP MADES			X	X	X						X
If not, what type of expertise is missing?											
Has the project retained its staff? If not, what have been the reasons for turnover?											
EQ 8. How timely is the project's implementation?											
EQ 8.1 Are outputs being delivered on time?	- Percentage of activities delivered on schedule - Instances of project delays and their duration	Desk review (annual reports, Annual Operational Plan and Budget)									
Has the delivery of project output been timely? If not, what are the reasons for delays?			X	X	X						X
EQ 8.2 How likely will the Project's results be achieved within the established timeframe and, if not, is an extension likely needed?	Stakeholder perception on time required to complete the outputs	KIIs with UNEP; FAO; UNDP; government partners; PSC members									
In your view, is it likely that results will be achieved within the anticipated project timeline?			X	X							
Monitoring and Reporting											
EQ 9. How adequate was the design and is the implementation of the monitoring and reporting system, and to what extent has it supported decision-making for adaptive project management?											

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 9.1 To what extent is the project supported by a sound and adequately budgeted monitoring plan?	• Presence of SMART results in the monitoring plan • Inclusion of disaggregated indicators (e.g., gender, vulnerability) • Alignment of indicators with project objectives and outputs • Budget allocated for monitoring activities • Coverage of all key project components • Evidence of relevant and good quality baseline data	• Monitoring plan documentation • KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff)									
How do you monitor project results? We see that FAO, and to a lesser extent UNDP, have in their agreement a results framework. Are these connected to a project-level results framework? How is data from the Implementing Agencies rolled up at the project level? Do the project teams have a monitoring and evaluation officer? If not, have has this affected the Project's monitoring function?			X	X							
EQ 9.2 To what extent is the monitoring plan being effectively implemented?	• Regular updates in the monitoring system • Timely tracking of progress towards objectives • Use of monitoring data for project adaptation and improvement • Expenditure on monitoring activities against allocated budget	• Monitoring system logs and reports • KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff)									
How often does the monitoring system generate data? Are there any supervision visits? How often? To what extent has monitoring data been used to inform the POAs or to make any other decisions related to project performance?			X	X							

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 9.3 Is project reporting fulfilling UNEP and donor reporting commitments	• Number and timeliness of reports submitted to UNEP and GCF • Inclusion of disaggregated by group effects in reports	• Desk review (annual reports) • UNEP's Project Information Management System (PIMS) and Integrated Programme Management Reporting (IPMR) • Donor reports • KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff)									
Have there been any delays or challenges in meeting reporting requirements? To what extent do the project reports include disaggregated data on the effects of the project by different groups (e.g., gender, age, vulnerable populations)? How has this information been used to inform project decisions?			X								X
Sustainability											
EQ 10. To what extent do Project design and implementation integrate principles of sustainability?											
EQ 10.1 Does the project have an adequate sustainability/exit strategy?	• Evidence of exit strategy at project design • Evidence of resource mobilization strategy	• KIIs with UNEP (PMU staff); EE (MADES)									
Was a clear exit strategy included in the project design? How well does it ensure the sustainability of project outcomes beyond the project's duration? What steps have been taken to mobilize resources for sustaining project activities after its completion? Have any funding sources or partnerships been secured?			X	X							

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 10.2 To what extent do government partners and communities demonstrate ownership of the project?	• Evidence of ownership, interest, and commitment among stakeholders • Documentation of policy, regulatory, and administrative frameworks that ensure the sustainability of Project outcomes • Measures of financial, institutional, socio-economic, or environmental risks that could impact the long-term sustainability of the Project's results.	• KIIs with government partners; local authorities									
How have government partners and local communities demonstrated ownership, interest, and commitment to the project? Can you provide specific examples? To what extent have policy, regulatory, or administrative frameworks been established or strengthened to support the sustainability of project outcomes? What financial, institutional, socio-economic, or environmental risks could impact the long-term sustainability of the project's results? How are these risks being addressed?			X	X	X	X			X		
EQ 10.3 To what extent has the Project strengthened the capacities of key stakeholders, at both individual and institutional levels?	• Number and quality of capacity-building initiatives • Evidence of continued use and application of developed capacities	• Training reports • Post-training surveys • KIIs with UNEP; government partners; local authorities									
What capacity-building initiatives have been implemented for key stakeholders, both at the individual and institutional levels? How would you assess their quality and relevance to the project's objectives? Can you provide examples of how stakeholders have continued to apply the knowledge or skills gained through capacity-building efforts? What evidence is there that these capacities are being effectively utilized? How do you assess the overall impact of the project's capacity-building activities on the performance of individual stakeholders and institutions involved?			X	X	X	X			X		

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 10.4 Are strategies in place to promote the institutionalization of good practices and innovations developed by the Project?	•Evidence of institutionalization of good practices and innovations	• Desk review (e.g. annual reports) • KII with UN stakeholders (UNEP, FAO, UNDP); government partners; local authorities									
What strategies have been put in place to promote the institutionalization of good practices and innovations developed by the project? Can you provide examples of how good practices or innovations from the project have been integrated into the policies, systems, or processes of key institutions?			X	X	X	X					
Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues											
I. Preparation and Readiness											
EQ 11. Were preparations and readiness effectively executed?											
EQ 11.1 To what extent was project mobilization effectively undertaken?	• Measures taken to address project design weaknesses • Stakeholder engagement quality • Confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements • Usefulness of GCF processes to support project preparation and readiness	• Initial project documents • Stakeholder engagement reports • Partnership agreements • Interviews with project management and stakeholders									
Were any weaknesses in the project design identified, and what measures were taken to address them? How would you assess the quality of stakeholder engagement during project mobilization? Were key partners and beneficiaries adequately consulted and involved? How effective was the process of developing partnership agreement? How effective were the GCF processes in supporting project preparation and readiness? Were there any challenges or gaps in accessing necessary resources or approvals? To what extent was the project inception workshop effective to prepare for workshop implementation?			X	X	X		X	X			

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
II. Quality of Project Management and Supervision											
EQ 12. To what extent do governance and management arrangements support project implementation?											
EQ 12.1 To what extent do Project governance arrangements provide strategic guidance and support decision-making?	• Clarity of roles and responsibilities of PSC members • Frequency and Quality of Governance Meetings • Stakeholder Representation in Governance Structure • Timeliness and Effectiveness of Decisions	• Desk review (Operations manual, PSC meeting minutes) • KIIs with PSC members									
How clear are the roles and responsibilities of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) members? Have there been any challenges or ambiguities in their implementation? How would you assess the frequency and quality of governance meetings? Do these meetings effectively support strategic guidance and decision-making? To what extent do key stakeholders feel adequately represented in the project's governance structure? Have there been any gaps or concerns regarding stakeholder engagement? Can you provide examples of timely and effective decisions made through the project's governance arrangements? Have there been instances where decision-making was delayed or ineffective?			X	X	X		X	X			
EQ 12.2 How effective is project management and coordination?	• Leadership effectiveness towards achieving outcomes • Management of team structures • Periodic coordination meetings • Clarity of roles and responsibilities among project partners • Maintenance of productive partner relationships and collaboration evident • Adaptive management evidence	• Project management reports • Interviews with project management and stakeholders • UNEP and implementing partner evaluations									

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
How would you assess the effectiveness of project leadership in guiding the team toward achieving the project's outcomes? Can you provide examples of strong leadership or areas for improvement? How well are project team structures and roles defined among different partners? Have there been any challenges in coordination or role clarity? How has the project adapted to challenges or changing circumstances? Can you share examples of adaptive management approaches that have improved implementation?			X	X	X						
EQ 12.3 Is there an adequate system to manage internal risks?	• Evidence of internal risks analysis (e.g. operational, reputational, etc) and mitigation strategies • Evidence of internal risk management by PSC and PMU	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports, PSC meeting minutes) • KII with UNEP staff (i.e PMU), PSC members									
How are internal risks—such as operational, financial, or reputational risks—identified and assessed within the project? Can you provide examples of key risks that have been addressed? What mitigation strategies have been implemented to manage internal risks, and how effective have they been in ensuring smooth project operations? How have the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Project Management Unit (PMU) contributed to internal risk management? Can you share examples of decisions or actions taken to mitigate risks?			X	X	X						
III. Nature of External Context											
EQ 12.4 How has the project's external operating context been rated at the review inception stage, considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters, and political upheaval, and have adequate measures been adopted to mitigate external risks?	• Evidence of external risks analysis (e.g. political, conflict, natural disaster, etc) and mitigation strategies • Evidence of external risk management by PSC and PMU • Evidence of adaptation to external events (e.g. Covid-19 crisis, etc.)	• Desk review (e.g. FP/FAA, annual reports, PSC meeting minutes) • KII with UNEP staff (i.e PMU), PSC members									

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
At the project's inception stage, how were external risks—such as political instability, conflict, or natural disasters—identified and assessed? Were any specific risk analysis tools or methodologies used? What risk mitigation strategies were put in place to address these external risks? How effective have they been in ensuring project continuity and impact? How has the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Project Management Unit (PMU) managed external risks throughout the project's implementation? Can you provide examples of key decisions or actions taken? How has the project adapted to unforeseen external events, such as the COVID-19 crisis or other significant disruptions? What lessons have been learned from these adaptations?			X	X	X	X					
IV. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality											
EQ 13. To what extent do Project design and implementation integrate principles of human rights, gender equality and inclusion?											
EQ 13.1 To what extent is the Project contributing to strengthening the capacities of institutions to integrate principles of human rights, gender equality and inclusion?	• Gender analysis during design • Consideration of inequalities in resource access • Consideration of inclusion and vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups • Evidence of financial resources and thematic expertise	• Desk review (FP/FAA, annual reports, gender assessment and action plan) • KIIs with UNEP, FAO, UNDP; government partners; local authority • FGDs with community members, indigenous groups.									
What extent was a gender analysis conducted during the project design, and how has it influenced project activities and decision-making? How has the project addressed inequalities in resource access and the inclusion of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups? Can you share specific examples? What financial and technical resources have been allocated to support human rights, gender equality, and inclusion within the project? Do you think these resources have been sufficient? Has the Project helped your ministry/institution to better integrate gender equality and inclusion in your work? If so, can you explain how?			X	X	X	X					

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 13.2 How adequate are the mechanisms to ensure the participation of vulnerable groups (e.g., women, youth, rural populations, persons with disabilities) in project activities and decision-making?	• Evidence of participation of vulnerable groups • Evidence of vulnerable groups in decision-making	• Desk review (FP/FAA, annual reports, gender assessment and action plan) • KIIIs with UNEP, FAO, UNDP; government partners; local authority • FGDs with community members, indigenous groups.									
How have vulnerable groups (e.g., women, youth, rural populations, persons with disabilities) been engaged in project activities? Can you provide examples of their active participation? What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups in project decision-making processes? How effective have these mechanisms been? What is the Project's contribution to the network of rural women?			X	X	X	X		X		X	
V. Environmental and Social Safeguards											
EQ 14. To what extent do Project design and implementation integrate environmental and social safeguards?											
EQ 14.1 How adequate are the Project's mechanisms for environmental and social safeguards, and how can they be improved?	• Regular risk ratings review • Monitoring of possible safeguard issues • Response to safeguard issues • Alignment with safeguards stated in section E of the Funding Agreement • Availability of financial resources for application of mechanisms	• UNEP safeguard documentation • Environmental and social risk assessment reports • Project monitoring and evaluation reports • Interviews with project management and stakeholders									

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
How regularly are risk ratings reviewed throughout the project, and what mechanisms are in place to monitor potential environmental and social safeguard issues? How has the project responded to identified safeguard issues, and how effective were these responses in mitigating any negative impacts? To what extent do the project’s safeguard mechanisms align with the safeguards outlined in section E of the Funding Agreement? Are there sufficient financial resources allocated for the application of these mechanisms? Are there complaint and feedback mechanisms? To what extent are these mechanisms known to and used by communities?			X	X	X	X	X			X	
EQ 14.2 To what extent has the project promoted territorial governance spaces, particularly at the level of Indigenous communities?	• Evidence of Strengthening Governance at the Local Government Level •Evidence of mechanisms for land use planning and regulation establishment •Degree of implementation of the Safeguards Monitoring System and reporting through a participatory and multisectoral process based on FPIC guidelines.	• Desk review (FP/FAA and annual reports. • KIIs with UNEP, FAO, UNDP; government partners; local authority, community members, indigenous groups.									
What efforts have been made to strengthen governance at the local government level, particularly in relation to Indigenous communities? Can you provide examples of successful initiatives? Have mechanisms for land use planning and regulation been established or strengthened in collaboration with Indigenous communities? How have these mechanisms supported territorial governance? To what extent has the Safeguards Monitoring System been implemented, and how effective has it been in ensuring a participatory and multisectoral process that follows FPIC (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent) guidelines?			X	X	X	X	X			X	
VI. Communication and Public Awareness											
EQ 15. How effective are communication and public awareness strategies?											

EVALUATION CRITERIA	EVALUATION INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	UNEP	FAO/UNEP	Government	Local authorities	Indigenous Peoples	Civil Society	Service providers	Community Groups	GCF Secretariat
EQ 15.1 To what extent are the knowledge management and communication systems adequate, including public awareness strategies?	• Knowledge management and communication strategy • Existence and use of knowledge management/exchange platform • Social media metrics • Learning and experience sharing effectiveness • Public awareness activity influence on wider communities	• Desk Review (Communication reports, Public awareness campaign documentation)									
How would you describe the effectiveness of the current knowledge management and communication strategy in supporting learning and information sharing? Can you provide specific examples? To what extent do stakeholders actively engage with and use the knowledge management/exchange platform? What challenges or barriers, if any, have you observed in its use? How have social media and other communication channels influenced public awareness and engagement on key issues? Are there specific metrics or trends that indicate success? Can you share examples of public awareness activities that have successfully influenced communities? What factors contributed to their effectiveness?			X	X							

Annex 8. Communication and Outreach Tools Used to Disseminate Results

Preliminary Findings Presentation

Evaluación Intermedia del Proyecto Paraguay Más Verde

Presentación de hallazgos preliminares

10 de Abril 2025



Propósito de presentación y agenda

Propósito: Presentar y validar los hallazgos de la evaluación e identificar posibles vacíos en la información. Su retroalimentación será considerada en la elaboración del borrador del informe.

AGENDA:

- **Presentación de hallazgos:** 40 minutos
- **Retroalimentación:** 40 minutos
- **Próximos pasos y cierre:** 10 minutos



Propósito y Objetivos de la Evaluación

- Evaluación intermedia formativa encargada por la Oficina de Evaluación del PNUMA.
- **Enfoque en el aprendizaje:** identificar lecciones aprendidas, buenas prácticas y recomendaciones.
- Proponer ajustes para mejorar la implementación durante el resto del ciclo del proyecto.
- Evaluar la necesidad y justificación de una posible extensión sin costo más allá de 2026.
- **Usuarios principales:** Oficina Regional del PNUMA para ALC, Oficina del PNUMA en Paraguay, Unidad de Coordinación PNUMA-GCF, Administrador de Carbono GCF, PNUD y FAO.
- **Otros usuarios:** socios gubernamentales, Secretaría del GCF, sociedad civil, pueblos indígenas y grupos comunitarios.



Metodología

Métodos de recolección de datos:

- **Revisión de documentos:** Acuerdo de actividad de financiación, acuerdos con socios, informes anuales, etc.
- **Entrevistas:** Agencias, Gobierno, Sociedad Civil, Representantes Indígenas, Autoridades Locales
- **Grupos Focales:** Comunidades indígenas, Guardaparques
- **Visitas in-situ:** Parque Nacunday, Parque Cerro Cora

Consultas con partes interesadas:

Modalidad	Mujer	Hombre	Total
Consultas en campo	16	14	30
Consultas en Asunción	19	5	24
Consultas virtuales	11	10	21
Total	46	29	75



HALLAZGOS

Coherencia

Coherencia con prioridades PNUMA en materia de deforestación, bosques, biodiversidad, etc.

Alta coherencia con actividades del Agencias:

- GEF FOLUR
- Green Commodities
- CBIT

Desconocimiento de coherencia con portfolio GCF, debido en parte a desactualización Programa País y cambio NDA

Relevancia y Calidad de Diseño

• Relevancia

- Alta relevancia, vínculos con el Estrategia Nacional de Bosques para el crecimiento sostenible (ENBDCS).
- Alineación plena con los ejes estratégicos institucional del INFONA y con las actividades del MADES

• Calidad de Diseño

- Muchas actividades con deficiente priorización estratégica, lo cual dificulta progreso hacia impacto
- Falta de marco lógico y TdC: difícil planificación estratégica y seguimiento-evaluación
- Poco involucramiento del sector privado desde diseño
- Poca claridad para la ejecución de la actividad 2 del proyecto

Eficacia – Componente 1

Conservación	Monitoreo forestal	Pagos por servicios ambientales / producción sostenible/bosques	Participación institucional	Gobernanza territorial
AVANCES (Avances significativos a nivel institucional)				
• Mejora de parques nacionales (capacidades, infraestructuras, equipos) • Arreglos de Planes de manejo • Capacitación y protocolos de respuesta para deforestación	• Mejora de Sistema de monitoreo forestal con datos sobre uso de suelos y cultivos de commodities • Sistema de alerta temprana • Protocolo de respuesta inter-institucional • Mejora del Sistema de gestión INFONA – • Terceridad de todo el proceso	• 11 comunidades en proceso de certificación • Buen abordaje con comunidades indígenas • Finalización de los etapas de pilotos de producción sostenible • RNEIT: estrategia aprobada, comisión operativa y primer estudio de Acumulación (validación) de la línea base	• Construcción de edificio: Marco legislativo e institucional en apoyo para Decretos reglamentarios y resoluciones: certificación de los MADES INFONA, control de deforestación, manejo integral de fuego,... • Apoyo en reglamentación del la ley del carbono • Reactivación de las Plataformas	• Avances en creación de POUTA, vinculando ordenamiento urbano con zonas rurales • Protección de corredores de ecotonos
DESAFÍOS (Logro de avance a nivel de los territorios)				
• Pocos avances en ecoturismo • Calidad y pertinencia de oferta infraestructura y equipos • Dificultades de acceso • Visibilidad de los parques	• Interoperabilidad de sistemas entre INFONA y MADES	• Apoyo técnico con emisión de certificado y capacitación para el manejo de la transacción, pero no está programada acompañamiento en este proceso • No aborda vinculación con la demanda • Falta de abordaje institucional para pilotos (poco involucramiento MAQ)	• Construcción de edificio – cuestionamiento sobre Calidad de evaluación del impacto Ambiental y social • Capacitación institucional para REDD+ • Institucionalización de plataformas	• Capacidad limitada de municipios para implementar POUTA

Eficacia – Componente 2



Creación de FCC

Existen retrasos importantes en la creación del FCC:

- A pesar de ciertos avances, no hay acuerdo inter-institucional para creación del FCC → dificultad coordinación MADES – MEF
- Limitaciones legales
- No hay recursos planificados para costos administrativos ni para unidad de gestión

Capacidades para acceder a recursos del FCC

- Aun no hay claridad de quienes van a ser los usuarios
- Tampoco se tiene claridad sobre modalidad de acceso
- No hay claridad de como el fondo se opere a corto y mediano plazo.

DefinEdge

Resultados inesperados

Resultados positivos:

- Capacitación a jueces y fiscales → sentencias para compra de certificados servicios ambientales
- Mejoramiento de sistemas de INFONA → Emisión de facturas electrónicas aumenta transparencia en procesos administrativos
- Proceso de participación indígena → creación de consejo regional

Resultados negativos:

- Certificación servicios ambientales → conflictos potenciales en comunidades indígenas



DefinEdge

FACTORES DE EFICACIA

FACTORES FACILITADORES

- Compromiso del personal del PNUMA y de las agencias implementadoras
- Expertise de los equipos (salvaguardas, monitoreo forestal, SIG.)
- Capacidad de dialogo de las agencias

FACTORES OBSTACULIZADORES

- Cambio de gobierno
- Cambio de NDA (STP, MADES, MEF)
- Dificultad en coordinación inter-institucional
- Rotación de personal/coordinadores en equipos de PNUMA y agencias implementadoras
- Ausencia de representación del PNUMA en Paraguay
- Ubicación del PNUMA dentro del MADES permite alta coordinación con el mismo ministerio, disminuye independencia que UGP pueda tener en su rol de coordinación
- Alto compromiso del gobierno a nivel técnico, menos a nivel político

DefinEdge

EFICIENCIA

FORTALEZAS

- Buen manejo financiero de acuerdo a procedimiento del GCF, PNUMA y agencias implementadoras
- Implementación de medidas para costo-efectividad (precio edificio por M2, uso de consultores nacionales, etc.)
- Pero, bajo costo-efectividad en implementación de pilotos

DIFICULTADES

- Baja ejecución presupuestaria (35%)
- Pocos avances en territorio
- Retrazos en implementación (Covid, cambio gobierno, firma acuerdos, etc.)
- Retrazos contratación para personal administrativo de la UGP
- Procesos de aprobación para compras no son ágiles

DefinEdge

EFICIENCIA – EXTENSION SIN COSTO

Alcance de resultados:

- Probable que se realicen mayoría de actividades del Componente 1 para 2026, salvo:
 - Ecoturismo
 - Pilotos
 - Vinculación sistema INFONA-MADES
- Pero apuro para realizar trabajo en territorio no es óptimo
- Muy poco probable que se logren objetivos del Componente 2 para 2026

Justificación para extensión:

- Agencias no ven necesario extensión, salvo para algunas actividades
- Dificultad para mantener equipos técnicos y asumir costos administrativos adicionales
- Extensión valdría la pena si hay señales claras de avances con la creación de ventanilla RBP en FCC



Eficiencia - Gobernanza



- Espacio de alto nivel efectivo para toma de decisión sobre POA
- Participación limitada de algunos miembros (MAG, MEF)
- El MEF como NDA no participa en junta
- Participación activa de pueblos indígenas
- Aporte de MESA REDD+ reducido por propia limitación de sociedad civil de organizarse fuera del proyecto
- Espacio altamente político, Proyecto carece de espacio de coordinación interministerial a nivel técnico



Sostenibilidad



Avances:

- Fortalecimiento institucional e institucionalización de sistemas (p.e. sistema de monitoreo forestal)
- Fuente trabajo en normativa conlleva a sostenibilidad institucional

Retos:

- Capacidad financiera: para asegurar mantenimiento de parques, de laboratorio de suelo, etc.
- Incertidumbre en sostenibilidad de plataformas (aun en proceso)
- Sostenibilidad de los pilotos



Género



- Fuerte enfoque en participación de ambos mujeres y hombres (en gobernanza y también actividades de proyecto)
- Esfuerzos de fortalecer igualdad de género en instituciones
- Trabajo conjunto con el Ministerio de Mujeres
- Conformación de la Red de Mujeres Rurales, pero con avances lentos y falta de planificación estratégica y operativa





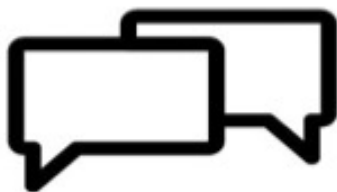
Salvaguardas y Pueblos Indígenas

- Proceso riguroso de consultas para consentimiento informado, pero indefinición y desacuerdo en cuanto a POUTs
- Buen seguimiento de salvaguardas
- Enfoque en Poblaciones Indígenas como beneficiarios (servicios ambientales, etc.)
- Balance entre no-dejar nadie atrás y riesgo de trabajar con comunidades sin título de tierra
- Consultación con poblaciones indígenas para identificación prioridades estratégicas → no hay devolución de información hacia comunidades
- Pueblos indígenas carecen de información sobre implicación a corto-mediano plazo en proyecto

DeftEdge

!Gracias por su atención!

Retroalimentación



Annex 9. Stakeholder Comments on Evaluation Findings Not Incorporated

This table highlights comments received from project stakeholders on the draft report that were not incorporated into the final report by the Evaluation Team, and justification for not accepting them in full or in part.

Place in Text	Entity	Comments	Evaluation Team's Response
Párrafo 140	FAO	Favor ajustar el párrafo 140, ya que el equipo de dos técnicos apoyará todo el departamento de Caazapá y un especialista adicional para todos los departamentos y distritos (la llegada hasta el momento de la EMT fue de 46) La relación costo-eficiencia es prematuro evaluar en esta etapa, considerando que el impacto que generará el escalamiento de las producciones sostenibles, tendrá un efecto directo en la disminución de la presión sobre los bosques nativos y en la reducción de deforestación y degradación forestal	Partially agreed. The paragraph was revised to specify that the team is composed of two technicians and a supporting specialist. We maintain that the number of staff is elevated for the current number of beneficiaries, but we have revised the paragraph to indicate that it is still too early to assess cost-efficiency, and that this would need to be evaluated at project-end.
Párrafo 212	FAO	Nos parece clave que este informe de EMT tome en cuenta que el mecanismo de acceso al fondo nacional (Componente 2 del Proyecto) debería estar diseñado de manera que se pueda asegurar y garantizar la escalabilidad y sostenibilidad de todas estas acciones que ya se están llevando adelante en el Componente 1, que FAO y PNUD puedan participar del mecanismo de este fondo alineados a las mismas actividades ejecutadas con el componente 1, por la ventaja comparativa que esto puede imprimir al impacto y sostenibilidad de los resultados en territorio, atendiendo sobre todo lo que respecta a producción sostenible y servicios ambientales, este mecanismo podría incluir distintas escalas de productores, estableciéndose un fondo rotatorio para los medianos y grandes productores, con bajos porcentajes de interés que sumen recursos al fondo. De este modo, se garantiza un impacto a largo plazo con verdaderos incentivos a la producción sostenible y actividades para la reducción de emisiones por deforestación y degradación forestal.	Partially agreed. Most of the components under Component 1 are aimed at institutional strengthening, with some community-level activities – including the pilots – which are at early stages of implementation. It is therefore too early for the evaluation to assess whether these pilots and other actions should be scaled through the NCCF and this would require a separate analysis. To capture this, the Evaluation Team has: Integrated the following sentence to Conclusion #7: “There may be opportunities in the future to use the NCCF as a mechanism to support the scaling up of actions initiated under Component 1, particularly those linked to sustainable production and environmental services. However, these pilots are still at an early stage of implementation, and the feasibility and value added of such an approach would need to be analysed at a later stage, once clearer evidence of results becomes available. This could also require reconsideration of the NCCF’s design to ensure it is adequately structured to support such functions.” Integrated the following action point to Recommendation #7: Assess the feasibility and value added of using the NCCF as a potential mechanism to support the scaling up

			of selected pilots, including whether this would require adjustments to the fund's design and governance framework.
Paragraph 70	UNDP Team	As part of the institutional strengthening efforts, UNDP provided equipment and supplies to the park rangers, who were directly responsible for the construction and maintenance of the perimeter fence. Due to subsequent deficiencies in the infrastructure, largely resulting from deterioration caused by use and lack of care by tourists, UNDP will reinforce monitoring and follow-up actions to mitigate this.	Not agreed. Thank you. However, we maintain our position that the material used is of insufficient quality and therefore cannot withstand environment or physical stress. To comply with security standards, the fence should have used galvanized wire to resist a humid environment and should have also used stronger anchoring to resist physical pressure from tourists. We have further elaborated the paragraph to explain this in greater detail.
Paragraph 75	UNDP Team	The planned activities were carried out within the national park. In a second stage will work begin with the communities in the buffer zone. UNDP commits to strengthening follow-up on communication, seeking support from the Project's Executing Unit (UEP).	Partially agreed. We have added the following sentence to nuance the analysis: "UNDP noted that activities involving communities are planned for 2025 and 2026, and that communications with these groups will be strengthened going forward." However, the Evaluation Team maintains its position that it is important to involve communities early on so that they have a greater understanding of the project and how they will benefit from it from the start, rather than involving them during the last phase.
Hallazgo 10 primer párrafo	DGDT - MEF	Señala "Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MEF)", la sigla debería sustituirse por MADES	Not agreed. In interviews, stakeholders noted that commodity-specific data was used by MEF and the Central Bank, not MADES.
Conclusión 14, Párrafo 102	DGDT - MEF	Es importante señalar que el proceso de asistencia técnica para la elaboración participativa del POUT se desarrolla conforme a una Guía metodológica que abarca todas las etapas hasta la capacitación para su implementación, la cual es dirigida a la Municipalidad local. A partir de ese punto, corresponde a la Municipalidad –como contrapartida– generar las condiciones necesarias para la puesta en marcha del plan. En este sentido, desde nuestra parte no se contemplan ni se están evaluando otras alternativas	Not agreed. Capacity gaps to implement the POUT was clearly identified during data collection. While the methodology for the POUT is something that has already been elaborated, it is important for the evaluation to identify any gaps that may affect outcomes related to the POUTs. In addition, UNDP has acknowledged and taken steps to address these gaps.

Página 13 "Naturaleza del contexto externo"	DGEES - MEF	En esta sección se hace referencia a una "fragmentación institucional que ralentizó la implementación". Al respecto, se reiteran las limitaciones identificadas en el diseño del proyecto, cuyo abordaje requiere tiempo.	Not agreed. This section talks about the nature of the context in general, and is not specific to Component 2. This is discussed in the effectiveness finding that outlines progress toward component 2 (see response to Comment 36).
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Annex 10. Evaluation Team Bios

Esther Rouleau (Team Lead) is an evaluation consultant with over fifteen years of experience in international development. She has successfully completed over 50 consultancy assignments for UN agencies, funds and programmes (FAO, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO), international financial institutions (ADB, AfDB, IADB, World Bank), global funds (GCF, GEF, Global Fund), bilateral donors (AusAID, Global Affairs Canada), NGOs (Nutrition International, Rights and Resources Initiative, CARE), foundations (C&A Foundation, One Drop, Porticus) and research institutions (IDRC, ACIAR). She has conducted a wide range of programme, policy and strategic evaluations, as well as organizational assessments and development effectiveness reviews. Ms. Rouleau has in-depth knowledge of the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and has significant experience reviewing the quality of evaluation products. A strong evaluation methodologist, she has also reconstructed, tested and validated numerous theories of change for clients seeking to improve the quality of programme design and implementation. She has also served as a gender specialist for several evaluation assignments, integrating gender equality and equity dimensions into evaluation design, data collection and reporting.

In the area of environmental sustainability and climate change, Ms. Rouleau has conducted multiple evaluations, including two evaluations of the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, RPSP (2018 and 2023), an evaluation of the comparative advantage of the GEF in preparation for its 8th replenishment, and multiple World Bank evaluations in areas such as water resources management. She is also currently part of the assessment team conducting the 2023 MOPAN assessment of the GEF. In the area of food security and agriculture, Ms. Rouleau was recently the Team Leader for the Regional Evaluation of WFP's contribution to Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean, and she is currently part of the team conducting the Midterm Evaluation of WFP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025. She also conducted the 2020 Strategic Evaluation of WFP's School Feeding Programme, the Evaluation of Timor-Leste's Country Strategic Plan (2015-2019), the 2016 Evaluation of WFP's Corporate Partnership Strategy, the Evaluation of IDRC's Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF), and the IDRC Cultivate Africa's Future Fund (CultiAF), among others. Esther has working experience in more than 25 countries globally and is fluent in English, French, and Spanish. She also has a good command of Portuguese and Arabic.

Emilio Valiente is a seasoned project evaluation specialist with over a decade of experience evaluating international development projects across Latin America. Since 2014, he has served as a Project Expert with IFAD, conducting final evaluations and preparing Project Completion Reports for multiple projects while leading biannual supervision missions in Paraguay and Argentina. His recent evaluation portfolio includes final evaluations for the EU-IFAD Farmers' Organizations Program (2024), a Peruvian Amazon agroecology project for Choba Choba Foundation (2024), and a major UNDP biodiversity conservation project in Paraguay (2020). With a Master's in Environmental Socioeconomics from CATIE Costa Rica and extensive experience as Executive Director of a \$20 million rural development project, Valiente combines technical expertise with practical implementation knowledge, making him well-positioned to assess both technical outcomes and institutional effectiveness across agricultural and environmental initiatives.

Ann Sutherland is the COO of DeftEdge and has worked for over 20 years as a program manager and evaluation consultant in the international and NGO sectors. Her work with DeftEdge has included evaluations, meta-evaluations and organizational reviews for UN agencies (ILO, WHO, WFP, UNICEF, UNDG), evaluation quality assessment processes, training in results-based management and evaluation, the development of MEL (monitoring, evaluation and learning) systems including theories of change/results frameworks/indicator reference sheets, and evaluation of NGO projects. She has served as team leader for an impact assessment of reconstruction projects in Haiti, of a multi-country climate resilient rice project in West Africa, and the first evaluation of gender-based violence initiatives in Zambia, among others. As Director of Programs for the Near East Foundation she oversaw natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, conflict mitigation and women's economic resilience projects in the Middle East and Africa, and managed several evaluations including of large livelihood and peacebuilding programs in Darfur that entailed extensive data collection in sensitive environments. An experienced facilitator, Ann has developed training materials and conducted results-based management and evaluation workshops for Swedish International Development Agency partners, and led strategic planning processes. She has also developed evaluation handbooks and guidance for UNODC, UNOCT, EU-UN consortium, and UNICEF. Ms. Sutherland holds a Master's degree in Environmental Studies with a focus on international development and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in the management of international organizations.

Mark Meisner, Ph.D. is a senior environmental and communication professional with expertise in sustainability, climate change, ethics, media, and evaluation. He was a professor of Environmental Studies at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) and Executive Director of the International Environmental Communication Association (IECA), and has also worked as an IT consultant and an editor. He has been with DeftEdge since 2009 where he has provided strategic technical communication and advisory services, has undertaken programme and project evaluations, and has conducted evaluation quality assurance reviews. He has also designed and developed project monitoring & evaluation communication tools, including reports, briefs, infographics, presentations, training materials, surveys, newsletters, and videos. As a professor at ESF and elsewhere, he has developed and taught numerous environment-related courses on science, ethics, media, policy and communication. Notable among those was an innovative interdisciplinary course, Climate Change: Science Perception and Policy. As a professor he has worked with colleagues and students from around the world, participated in qualitative and quantitative research projects, managed data sets, presented at conferences and published papers and book chapters. As the inaugural leader of IECA, he was responsible for launching and building the organization, recruiting and engaging members from over 40 countries, developing its vision and mission statements, creating its outreach plan, and developing the web site and member management and financial systems.

Elise Wall is a monitoring and evaluation specialist with over 8 years' experience. Her areas of expertise include qualitative research and analysis and developing monitoring systems for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies and governments. Elise has managed internal M&E programmes, led data collection teams implementing midterm and end-line evaluations, conducted gender assessments, and worked as a qualitative analysis expert on various evaluation studies, working with a variety of organizations to ensure projects and programming are designed and adapted based on both qualitative and quantitative evidence. She also has experience with organizational development and strategy, and evaluation meta-syntheses. Examples of Elise's work include working as the qualitative specialist for the Evaluation of WFP Contribution to Market Systems in South Sudan and Bangladesh, managing climate smart agriculture projects for SNV and leading a gender mainstreaming study to develop a gender monitoring system for IFAD's Project for Agriculture Development and Economic Empowerment (PADEE) in Cambodia. She also worked as the monitoring and evaluation officer for a natural resource management NGO, setting up internal monitoring systems for the organization and training staff to implement them. She speaks English French and Spanish and has a master's degree in international development and management from Lund University in Sweden and a B.A. in Global Political Economy from the University of Manitoba in Canada.

Annex 11. UNEG Ethical Pledge of Conduct



ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

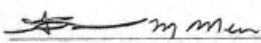
PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION



By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.

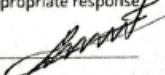
 INTEGRITY	 ACCOUNTABILITY	 RESPECT	 BENEFICENCE
I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be: • Honest and truthful in my communication and actions. • Professional, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice. • Independent, impartial and incorruptible.	I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be: • Transparent regarding evaluation purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation. • Responsive as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified. • Responsible for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.	I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure: • Access to the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability. • Meaningful participation and equitable treatment of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection. • Fair representation of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).	I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure: • Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits from evaluation processes. • Maximum benefits at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels. • No harm. I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated. • Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.



Esther Rouleau

Elis Vell

 **1- February-25** (Signature and Date)

Annex 12. Evaluation ToR (without Annexes)

Interim Evaluation, UNEP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

GCF Interim Evaluation of the UNEP project

REDD+ Results-based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017" (SB-016313)

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project Summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ¹ ID:	SB-016313	Grant ID ² (if applicable):	FP 121 GCF
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division/Adaptation and Resilience Branch/Climate Change Mitigation Unit		
Implementing Partners:	UNEP		
Sources of Funding:	Country ³ (ies): Paraguay	Institution ⁴ Name/Type: Green Climate Fund (GCF)	
Relevant SDG(s):	1, 5, 13, 15		
MTS (all that apply):		UNEP approval date:	21 November 2019
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):	POW Direct Outcome:	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):	MTS 2025 Outcome: 1A - Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways
OR	Private and public financial flows are aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement	OR	
POW Output(s) number/reference		POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	POW Expected Accomplishment:
Sub-programme:	Climate Action	Programme Coordination Project:	Adaptation and Resilience
Expected start date:	13 November 2020	Actual start date:	27 November 2020
Planned completion date:	13 November 2026	Actual operational completion date:	13 November 2026
Planned total project budget ⁵ at approval:	USD 50.000.000	Actual total expenditures reported as of 31-12-2023:	USD 6.603.100

¹ SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

² For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.

³ Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.

⁴ Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

⁵ Total budget may include: Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.

Interim Evaluation, UNEP

<i>Planned</i> Extra-budgetary Funds ⁶ :	Cash: N/A In-kind: N/A	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: N/A In-kind: N/A
		Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of [date]:	Cash:
First disbursement:	USD 50.000.000	Planned date of financial closure:	12-02-2027
No. of formal project revisions:	0	Date of last approved project revision:	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	11 June 2024
Interim Evaluation/ Evaluation (<i>planned date</i>):	15/09/2024	Interim Evaluation/ Evaluation (actual date):	
Terminal Evaluation (<i>planned date</i>):	25/12/2024	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Paraguay	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Paraguay
Dates of previous project phases:	In progress	Status of future project phases:	In progress

2. Project Rationale

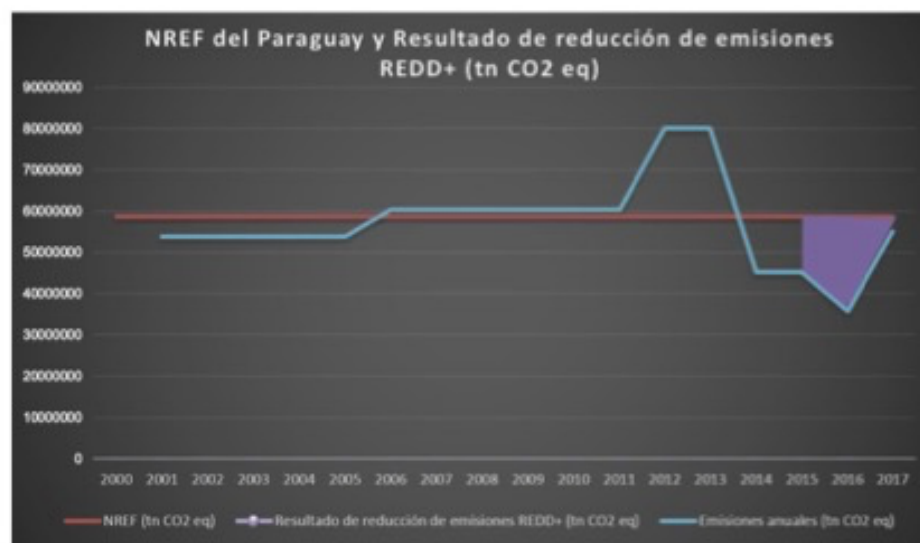
Paraguay has approximately 18.5 million hectares of forest areas. Its deforestation rate has been one of the largest worldwide with an average loss of 286,000 hectares per year ¹¹. However, this situation has begun to change through implementation of elements included in the [National Strategy for Forests and Sustainable Growth \(ENBCS\)](#). The ENBCS is based on a comprehensive analysis of direct and indirect causes of forest loss, barriers to change and legal/regulatory framework. This strategy is the result of an extensive participatory process of socialization and consultations with key stakeholders in which 306 representatives participated, 46% of which women, from the public and private sectors, indigenous peoples, producer organizations, academia, the financial sector, and civil society. In addition, the government of Paraguay has recently established the National Climate Change Fund, which is expected to have a key role in financing actions towards Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), REDD+ activities and low carbon development.

The Government of Paraguay submitted a total volume of emissions reductions (ERs) of 18,860,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂eq) as REDD+ RBP, which was approved by the GCF Board in November 2019 by its Decision B.24/09. The ERs volume submitted included a buffer of 18%. The final amount of 14,498,625 tCO₂eq (including a 2.5% of non-carbon benefits) which was approved by the GCF Board was determined based on a combination of stakeholders including the scorecard (Assessment procedure made by the GCF Secretariat and the independent Technical Advisory Panel - TAP) results and available finance for the pilot programme. Due to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s accreditation limit, FP121 was limited to US\$50,000,000, corresponding to 9,756,098 tCO₂eq emissions.

Figure1: FREL according to the average emissions per year (2000-2015), and emissions during the period 2015-2016-2017 for REDD+ results (tCO₂eq).

⁶ Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind)

Interim Evaluation, UNEP

Source: Paraguay's 2nd BUR; REDD+ Technical Annex, 2018

The REDD+ RBP Proceeds under FP121 are being used for (a) the implementation of the National Strategy for Forests and Sustainable Growth ("ENBCS") (FP Output 1 of the 'Use of Proceeds') and (b) the operationalization of the Climate Change Fund of the Republic of Paraguay ("FCC") (FP Output 2 of the 'Use of Proceeds').

The implementation of policies and measures (PAMs) that contribute to the reduction of deforestation are based on the development processes proposed by the [National Development Plan 2030](#), in coherence with the [National Environmental Policy](#), the [National Forestry Policy](#) and the [National Energy Policy](#) of the country. The ENBCS is a strategy that builds on the country's development processes and has a concrete approach to sustainable development, where natural capital and forest resources are an important part of the country's long-term development. ENBCS PAMs are consistent with the National Climate Change Plan and its [National Mitigation Strategy](#), which is focused on mainstreaming actions related to mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. In addition, the ENBCS and other related actions that seek to avoid or reduce deforestation are complementary and/or consistent with relevant international conventions and agreements.

The ENBCS contributes to the country's sustainable development goals, as defined in the National Development Plan, as well as to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation goals and objectives, including those defined in the [National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan](#), among others. The *First Summary of Information on Addressing and Respecting REDD+ Safeguards in Paraguay for the period 2011-2018* includes detailed information that demonstrates the complementarity and/or consistency of REDD+ actions in Paraguay throughout the design of the ENBCS and the implementation of other actions that seek to avoid or reduce deforestation, with national forest programmes and international conventions and agreements on the subject.

In view of the above, results-based payments of the Project are being invested in the implementation of the ENBCS and in the establishment and capitalization of the Climate Change Fund.

The strategic objectives of ENBCS are:

- To promote competitive agricultural and livestock production through the sustainable management of natural resources.

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- To reduce the loss and degradation of forests by incorporating sustainable management practices.
- To promote the sustainable use of forests by strengthening the natural and cultural heritage of indigenous communities.
- Promote land-use planning at the municipal level.
- Improve climate change mitigation planning in the LULUCF sector.

The cross-cutting strategic objective of the ENBCS is to strengthen institutional forest governance capacities including monitoring and enforcement. According to this, the use of RBPs have been divided into two main outputs, as follows

- Output 1 – Capacities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS: The set of activities grouped under this Output 1 are aimed at supporting several components of the ENBCS. These include securing legal titles for protected areas and completing their zoning plans, the strengthening of ongoing activities to reduce deforestation and support to sustainable production protocols in agroforestry, silvopastoral systems, forest management and biomass. In terms of strengthening governance, RBPs are being used to significantly strengthen human resources and operational capacities at both INFONA and MADES for the enforcement of existing law. Besides, its is also key the project objective of strengthening incentives for forest conservation through the PES scheme of Law 3001/0, by making this mechanism fully operational, including (i) simplifying and digitalizing processes to substantially diminish transaction costs; (ii) strengthening enforcement and monitoring.
- Output 2 – Governance and operational procedures of the Climate Change Fund established and finance channelled to NDCs, the ENBCS and low carbon development plans: The National Climate Change Fund (NCCF) was created in the year 2018, through the National Climate Change Act (Law No. 5875/2018), but to date it is still not operational. The project seeks to define the NCCF's governance structure, procedures for operation, responsibilities, accountability, the criteria for allocation of resources, safeguards to be applied, risk management, and the definition of the type/conditions of grant and financial products that the NCCF will offer (for further information on the project resulted framework, see section 3 below).

3. Project Results Framework

The following table provides information on the contribution of this proposal to the Fund Level Outcomes.

Table 11: expected outputs and fund level outcomes

Output 1. Capacities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS Output 2. Governance and operational procedures of Climate Change Fund established, and finance channelled to NDCs, the ENBCS and low carbon development plans	M5.0 Strengthened institutional and regulatory systems • <i>The capacities of MADES and INFONA to implement ENBCS are strengthened, with high levels of participation of stakeholders and compliance with safeguards.</i> • <i>An enabling environment to implement the ENBCS (includes piloting sustainable economic alternatives for local actors, such as peasant and indigenous communities) is created.</i> • <i>The National Forest Monitoring System (National Forest Inventory, terrestrial monitoring satellite systems, and the INGEI of the LULUCF/AFOLU sector) is consolidated.</i> • <i>A safeguards compliance monitoring and reporting compliance system is consolidated</i>
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	• <i>Project lessons and results communicated to promote a paradigm shift on forest and sustainable development</i>
	M9.0 Improved management of land and forest • <i>A strengthened regulatory framework facilitates land use regulation and the control and monitoring of land use in forest lands and reduces deforestation.</i> • <i>Financial incentives (subsidies, tailor-made credits, guarantee funds) reduce deforestation drivers.</i> • <i>Market for environmental services encourage forest conservation</i> • <i>Communication campaign positively affects people's behavior towards forest conservation and sustainable production</i>

4. Executing Arrangements

UNEP and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Government of Paraguay (MADES) are the executing agencies. In 2021, UNEP signed two UN-to-UN Agreements to support the implementation of the Project, detailed as follows.

A UN-to-UN Agreement was signed with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support delivery of Output 1 (sub-output 1.1.- Early actions in the ENBCS delivered: Activities 1.1.1 Actions to improve conservation in public and private nature protected areas; 1.1.2.2 Strengthening of the National Forest Monitoring System (MADES – National Forestry Institute (INFONA)); 1.1.3.3 Strengthening of existing platforms for facilitating the implementation of sustainable production action plans encouraging gender balance; 1.2.1 Regulatory and institutional framework for strengthening the implementation of the ENBCS; 1.2.2 Development of capacities for environmental regulation, control and penalization; 1.5.1 Strengthening of land use governance through improved planning and regulation.

A UN-to-UN Agreement was signed with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to support the delivery of Output 1 (Sub-output 1.1 Early actions in the ENBCS delivered: activities 1.1.2 Rapid institutional response to alerts of deforestation and / or degradation; 1.1.3 Identification and strengthening of ongoing programmes and actions to reduce deforestation; Sub-output 1.2 Strengthened capacity and inter-institutional coordination activities 1.2.1.1 Review/adjustment of the environmental and forestry legal framework and decentralization in participatory, multi-sectoral processes; 1.2.1.5 Strengthening of the control system for enforcement of the forest legal framework (INFONA); Sub-output 1.4 System of Payments for Environmental Services strengthened: activities 1.4.1.3 Development and implementation of a digital platform in INFONA for the determination of forest deficit linked to SIAM to establish the compensation through environmental services; 1.4.1.6 Development of mechanisms and assistance to Indigenous communities for the commercialization of environmental services.

5. Project Cost and Financing

	Funds approved and transferred in project document
Output 1: Capacities, enabling environment and monitoring systems put in place for the implementation of the ENBCS	26,100,000.00

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Output 2: Governance and operational procedures of Climate Change Fund established, and finance channeled to NDCs, the ENBCS and low carbon development plans	18,667,500.00
Project Management Cost: All actions for the implementation of the project, such as the preparation of the plans/programmes and annual budgets, including analysis and the reporting; elaboration of agreement for the administration of the funds.	5,232,500.00
TOTAL	50,000,000.00

6. Implementation Issues

The year 2023 was a year marked by presidential elections in Paraguay, held in April, in which new authorities were elected for the executive branch, the legislative branch and authorities at the departmental level. The transition process lasted until August, when the newly elected authorities took office. This political scenario at the national level had an impact on decision-making at the institutional level on regulatory and administrative issues that affected contracting, and others related to institutional management of the project. Consequently, this change of government in the country affected the development of project activities, delaying some of the proposed results, especially those related to regulations and administrative processes.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE INTERIM EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁷ and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual⁸, the Interim Evaluation (IE) is undertaken approximately half-way through project implementation to analyze whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

Interim evaluation findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

Possible questions to be considered include, (*MTE Evaluation Framework Questions available from Task Manager*):

- Does the TOC properly reflect the project's intended change process?
- Is the stakeholder analysis still appropriate and adequate to support the project's ambitions?

⁷ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114>

⁸ <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752>

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- Are results statements in keeping with UNEP definitions (e.g. outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)
- Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?
- Is there an effective monitoring mechanism for the project's implementation (this is separate from, and supports, reporting)?
- Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point?
- Have plans for inclusivity, equality and/or equity been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?
- Are safeguard identification and mitigation plans being monitored and steps taken to minimize negative effects?
- Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end being incorporated in the project implementation?
- (Where relevant) Have recommendations from previous learning exercises/performance assessments been appropriately addressed
- (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

A Interim Evaluation is a *formative assessment*, which requires that the consultant(s) go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance is and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance is as it is.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

Partners and Key Project Stakeholders. A key aim of the Interim Evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff, the implementing partners and key project stakeholders. The Evaluation Consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons.

9. Evaluation Criteria

All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory⁹ (HS = 6); Satisfactory (S = 5); Moderately Satisfactory (MS = 4); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU = 3); Unsatisfactory (U = 2); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU = 1). A Criteria Ratings Matrix is available, within the suite of tools, to support a common interpretation of points on the scale for each evaluation criterion. The Overall Performance Rating is calculated

⁹ Sustainability is similarly rated on a six-point scale but labelled from Highly **Likely** (HL) down to Highly **Unlikely** (HU).

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as a simple average of the ratings for each criterion (A-H). **Any criterion assessed as being in the 'Unsatisfactory' range should trigger corrective action in the Management Response.**

A. Strategic Relevance

The Interim Evaluation (IE) will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of UNEP, the donors, implementing regions/countries and target beneficiaries and is operating in a way that is complementary to other ongoing interventions.

The IE will assess whether there have been any changes in priorities since the project was designed and whether the project has/should adapt to address the changing policy/strategy context.

This criterion comprises two elements:

Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) strategic priorities

The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme Of Work (POW)¹⁰ under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building¹¹ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The IE will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities as well as alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the project is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

Complementarity/Coherence¹² with Relevant Existing Interventions

An assessment will be made of how well the project is taking account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups.

The IE will consider if the project team, in collaboration with all partners, is fulfilling any commitments to collaborate made at project design and is working to ensure their own intervention is complementary to other interventions. Examples may include work within UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Green Climate Fund	Coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities.
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B. Quality & Revision of Project Design

¹⁰ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as POW Outcomes and POW Direct Outcomes of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>.

¹¹ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

¹² This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

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The IE should provide a brief overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design and assess whether all elements of the project design have been initiated and/or are still planned for. Based on a review of the project design document, regular reports and meeting minutes, the Evaluation Consultant will confirm whether any amendments¹³ have been made to the activities and/or results of the project. This includes changes to the formulation of results statements as well as changes in results indicators and/or project targets and the associated budget. Where revisions have been made the Consultant should confirm that formal documentation for these amendments is available and that UNEP/donor policies for revisions have been followed. In the absence of such formalisation the Evaluation Consultant will make appropriate recommendations.

C. Effectiveness

The Evaluation will assess effectiveness across four dimensions: availability of outputs, progress towards project outcomes and adaptive management. The Evaluation Consultant will confirm that all results statements conform to UNEP's definitions¹⁴ and make recommendations for adjustments where necessary. At the project's mid-point emphasis is placed on the timeliness, quality and ownership of outputs and whether the project is adopting approaches or delivering activities to support the uptake of outputs (i.e. outcome level results).

i. Theory of Change

The Evaluation will assess whether the Theory of Change/Results Framework represents a coherent and realistic change process from a cause and effect perspective. Considerations will be given to whether the causal pathways are effectively shown/articulated and supported by a full set of contributing conditions (('drivers' are external factors largely under the influence of the project; 'assumptions' are external factors largely outside the influence of the project). The TOC should also reflect¹⁵ UNEP's commitment to increasing equality in line with the UN's commitment to human rights. If adjustments are needed they should be clearly presented and justified during the IE process and a recommendation made on how any revisions could be formally approved.

Key questions would be:

- Is the project Theory of Change (ToC) and intervention logic coherent and realistic? Does the ToC and intervention logic hold or does it need to be adjusted?
- Do outputs link to intended outcomes which link to broader paradigm shift objectives of the project?
- Are the planned inputs and strategies identified realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results? Were they sequenced sufficiently to efficiently deliver the expected results?
- Are the outputs supportive of the ToC and pathways identified?
- How realistic are the risks and assumptions of the project?
- Have project resources been utilized in the most economical, effective and equitable ways possible (considering value for money; absorption rate; commitments versus disbursements and projected commitments; co-financing; etc.)?
- To what extent did the design of the project help or hinder achieving its own goals?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?

¹³ The conditions and processes for amendments should abide by the terms of the funding agreement. For example, the GEF has specific requirements for the approval/reporting of 'minor' and 'major' amendments. This includes the provision that any minor and major (approved) amendments should be reflected in the PIR report of the same year.

¹⁴ UNEP, 2023, Glossary of Results Definitions.

¹⁵ This can be as a driver or assumption if there is no specific equality results statement.

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Availability of Outputs¹⁶

The Evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the planned outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document or any formal revisions. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its planned outputs and recommend corrective action as appropriate.

Progress towards Project Outcomes¹⁷

At the project mid-point the Evaluation Consultant will focus on the links between the provision of outputs and their adoption at the outcome level. The IE will explore whether the assumptions and drivers that need to be in place to support the uptake of outputs are evident/emerging and consider whether sufficient effort and attention is being directed towards reaching outcome levels.

The Evaluation Consultant will review the project Theory of Change (TOC) and confirm that it properly reflects all levels (outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and long-lasting impact) of results included in the project design. Where necessary, the TOC should be reconstructed, in discussion with the project team, to better guide and strengthen project implementation.

Unexpected results, both positive and negative – identifies the challenges and the learning, both positive and negative, that can be used by all parties (governments, stakeholders, civil society, AE, GCF, and others) to inform further implementation and future investment decision-making.

- What has been the project's ability to adapt and evolve based on continuous lessons learned and the changing development landscape? Please account for factors both within the AE/EE and external.
- Can any unintended or unexpected positive or negative effects be observed as a consequence of the project's interventions?
- What factors have contributed to the unintended outcomes, outputs, activities, results?

Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality.

The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

¹⁶ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)

¹⁷ An outcome is a change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries (UNEP, 2023).

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Innovativeness in results areas – focuses on identification of innovations (proof of concept, multiplication effects, new models of finance, technologies, etc.) and how changes that bring about paradigm shift can contribute or be attributed to GCF investment;

- What role has the project played in the provision of “thought leadership,” “innovation,” or “unlocked additional climate finance” for climate change adaptation/mitigation in the project and country context? Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.

Includes a discussion of coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities – looks at how GCF financing is additional and able to amplify other investments or de-risk and crowd-in further climate investment;

- Is there coherence and complementarity by the project with other actors for local other climate change interventions?
- To what extent has the project complimented other on-going local level initiatives (by stakeholders, donors, governments) on climate change adaptation or mitigation efforts?

Adaptive Management

The Evaluation will assess whether any adaptive management¹⁸ is evident, possibly reflected in annual reports or reports from field missions etc. The Evaluation Consultant will consider the project's performance to-date from a risk perspective considering: a) the likelihood of any non/late delivery of the project's workplan; b) likelihood of any negative effects, including reputational risks and safeguard issues and c) factors undermining the endurance of project achievements.

During the IE, forward plans should be reviewed and adaptive management strategies discussed such that the project's effectiveness and efficiency are maximized. Actions for adaptive management should be reflected in the IE recommendations, which may include recommendations on governance structures, implementation arrangements, project design elements, monitoring and/or exit strategies etc.

Green Climate Fund	The Evaluation should consider, under Effectiveness, the project's innovativeness in result areas – the extent to which interventions may lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways.
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D. Financial Management

Under financial management the Interim Evaluation will assess: a) whether the rate of spend is consistent with the project's length of implementation to-date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of outputs and b) whether financial reporting and/or auditing requirements are being met consistently and to adequate standards by all parties. Any financial management issues that are affecting the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. Expenditure should be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget.

Ratings should be provided for two sub-categories (*adherence to policies and completeness of financial information*), as assessed at the mid-point: i) the Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies; ii) the Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner.

¹⁸ Adaptive management is an **iterative process** in which practitioners test hypotheses and adjust behavior, decisions, and actions based on experience and actual changes (Stankey et al., 2005).

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The Evaluation may comment on the level of communication between the UNEP Task Manager¹⁹ and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

E. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion, the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. The Evaluation will assess the *cost-effectiveness and timeliness* of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities have been/are being delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events are being sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts being made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities²⁰ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The Evaluation will also assess ways in which potential project extensions can be avoided through stronger project management.

F. Monitoring and Reporting

The Evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across two sub-categories: monitoring of project implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring of Project Implementation

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART²¹ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and the achievement of the project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalization or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management.

The Evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system is operational and facilitates the timely tracking of results and progress towards project milestones and targets throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider how quality monitoring data are being used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring are being used to support this activity.

Project Reporting

²⁰ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

²¹ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

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UNEP has a centralized information management system²² in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant by the Task Manager. Donors may have specific reporting requirements and copies of reports will be made available by the Task Manager. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and Donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. This should include confirmation that meeting and field mission reports are being written and centrally stored.

Where the need for any corrective action has been indicated in any project reports (e.g. as an identified risk), the Evaluation Consultant will record whether this action has been taken. This may include responses made during the COVID-19 pandemic or other unpredictable external events of a disruptive or crisis nature. The Evaluation Consultant will also confirm whether formal reports have been appropriately authorized by both the author and the relevant supervisor.

G. Exit Strategy & Sustainability

Sustainability²³ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of the project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. It may be considered from the perspectives of socio-political, institutional and/or financial sustainability. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are *likely* to undermine or contribute to the endurance of benefits at the outcome level. Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. It is assumed that environmental sustainability is central to any UNEP project design but where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

The Evaluation will ascertain that the project has put in place *an appropriate exit strategy* and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. The Evaluation Consultant will consider a) the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards; b) the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance and c) the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. It will consider what are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability, scalability or replication of project outcomes/outputs/results.

- What are project lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities to date? What might have been done better or differently?
- What factors of the project achievements are contingent on specific local context or enabling environment factors?
- How has the project contributed to achieving stronger and more coherent integration of shift to low emission sustainable development pathways and/or increased climate resilient sustainable development (GCF RMF/PMF Paradigm Shift objectives)? Please provide concrete examples and make specific suggestions on how to enhance these roles going forward.

²² Project Information Management System (PIMS) or, from 2022, Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR)

²³ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

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H. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

i. Project Inception

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilization stage of the project. The Evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design, fill information gaps or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilization. In particular, the Evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity²⁴ and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. The Evaluation Consultant will confirm whether appropriate inception meetings were held and whether an inception report is available on file.

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

During the IE the consultant will review the planned implementation structure and the roles and responsibilities assigned to each partner or party. Where roles are not being played as planned, an appropriate recommendation to formalize correction action and/or a change in the implementation structure, should be made.

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to partners and national governments while in others it may refer to the project management performance of an implementing partner and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency, Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category is established as a simple average of the two.

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management to-date with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.

- Who are the partners of the project and how strategic are they in terms of capacities and commitment?
- Are the project's governance mechanisms functioning efficiently?

Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners; duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs; target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life to-date and the support given to maximize collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

²⁴ During 2023 UNEP is reviewing its Partnership Policy and Procedures and a future version is expected to include a requirement for risk mitigation against weak performance among partners.

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The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment²⁵.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately considered. In particular, the Evaluation will consider the extent to which project implementation has taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

- Are financial resources/project activities explicitly allocated to enable women to benefit from project interventions?
- Does the project account in activities and planning for local gender dynamics and how project interventions affect women as beneficiaries?
- Do women as beneficiaries know their rights and/or benefits from project activities/interventions?
- How do the results for women compare to those for men?
- Is the decision-making process transparent and inclusive of both women and men?
- To what extent are female stakeholders or beneficiaries satisfied with the project gender equality results?

Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening, risk assessment and management (avoidance or mitigation) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements²⁶ were met to: screen proposed projects for any safeguarding issues; conduct sound environmental and social risk assessments; identify and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, mitigate, environmental, social and economic risks; apply appropriate environmental and social measures to minimize any potential risks and harm to intended beneficiaries and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.

The Evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project is minimizing UNEP's environmental footprint.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project to-date. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards

²⁵The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

²⁶ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016..

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intermediate states. The Evaluation will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realized. This ownership should adequately represent the needs and interests of all gender and marginalized groups.

- To what extent is the project aligned with national development plans, national plans of action on climate change, or sub-national policy as well as projects and priorities of the national partners?
- How well is country ownership reflected in the project governance, coordination and consultation mechanisms or other consultations?
- To what extent are country level systems for project management or M&E utilized in the project?

Communication and Public Awareness

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behavior among wider communities and civil society at large. The Evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gender or marginalized groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Evaluation will comment on the plans to sustain, handover or decommission the communication channel at the end of the project.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Interim Evaluation will use a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the Evaluation Consultant maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings.

The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A desk review of:

Relevant background documentation, inter alia:

Project Document and Appendices

Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget.

Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.

Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

(b) Interviews (individual or in group) with:

- Task Manager and team members.
 - Judith Walcott, Task Manager
 - Mariano Cirone, Safeguards Specialist

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- Alberto Pacheco Capella, Head of Sub-Regional Office for the Southern Cone
- Gabriel Labbate, Director, Climate Change Mitigation
- Carolina Chiappara, Financial Management Officer for UNEP LACO
- Ximena San Cristobal, Administrative and financial Assistant
- **UNEP Project Management Unit (PMU)**
 - Roberto Lopez, Project Coordinator
 - Laura Melgarejo, Administrator
 - Cinthia Ramírez, Administrative Assistant
 - Venus Caballero, Gender Specialist
 - Fatima García, Safeguards Specialist
 - Cristina Ramírez, Communicator
 - Aldo Franco, Knowledge Management Specialist
- Representatives of Implementing Agencies and National Governments
 - **National Government**
 - **Ministerio del Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (MADES)**
 - Rolando de Barros Barreto, MADES Minister
 - Rolando Coronel, MADES Chief of staff
 - Victor González, MADES Legal Advisory Director
 - Lilian Portillo, MADES Strategic Planning Director, Project Focal Point
 - Ethel Estigarribia, MADES Climate Change Director, Alternate Project Focal Point
 - Edgar Rojas, MADES Geomatics Director
 - Maria José Mendoza, MADES Environmental Information Director
 - Claudio Velazquez, MADES Territorial Planning Director
 - Catherine Alonso, MADES Environmental Services Director
 - Rafael Sosa, MADES Protected Wild Areas Director
 - Eli Leon, MADES Protected Wild Areas Staff
 - Graciela Miret, MADES Director of the Office to Combat Desertification and Drought
 - **Instituto Forestal Nacional (INFONA)**
 - Cristina Goralewski, INFONA President, Project Focal Point
 - Antonella Mascheroni, INFONA Strategic Planning Director, Alternate Project Focal Point
 - Gabriela Huttemann, INFONA National Forest Information System Director
 - Ruth Benitez, INFONA Regional Office Director
 - Deisy Gill, INFONA Forest Director
 - **Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas (MEF)**
 - Carlos Fernández Valdovinos, MEF Minister (National Designation Authority) Primary
 - Adriana Samaniego (National Designation Authority) Secondary
 - Cristhian Trinidad (National Designation Authority) Tertiary
 - Maria Luz Centurion
 - Milciades Flecha
 - Jerónimo Morel
 - Ana María Ferreira
 - **Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería (MAG)**
 - Carlos Gimenez, MAG Minister
 - Cesar Duarte,
 - Sofia Jou
 - **Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena (INDI)**
 - Marlene Ocampos, INDI President

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- Alba Guillen, INDI Project Focal Point
 - Ninfa Rodríguez, INDI Alternate Project Focal Point
 - Claudelina González, INDI Safeguards Focal Point
- **Ministerio de la Mujer (MinMUJER)**
 - Cynthia Figueredo, Minister
 - Sonia Brucke, Vice Minister of Equality and Non-Discrimination
 - Mirtha Ruiz Díaz, MinMUJER Project Focal Point
 - Vanessa Valleau, MinMUJER Project Focal Point
 - Nancy Aquino, MinMUJER Alternate Project Focal Point
 - Luis Vallovera, MinMUJER Alternate Project Focal Point
- **MESA REDD+**
 - Oscar Rodas, WWF Paraguay
- **Indigenous Community Representatives**
 - Taguide Picanerai, Representative on the Executive Board of the Project
 - Daniela Benítez, Representative on the Executive Board of the Project
 - Marciano Chevugui, Representative on the Executive Board of the Project
 - Tania Vera, Representative on the Executive Board of the Project
- **Agencies**
 - **UNDP Team**
 - Rafael Gadea, UNDP Coordinator and Responsible Result 4: Plan to Strengthening the Regulatory and Institutional Framework Designed and Implemented to Promote the Implementation of the ENBCS
 - Cynthia Villalba, Responsible Result 1: Protected wild areas and Ecotourism
 - Daniel Coronel, Responsible Result 2. Plan To Strengthen the National System of Elaborate Forest Monitoring Implemented
 - Amilcar Cazal, Responsible Result 3. Action Plans the National Commodities Platform Sustainable Prioritized and Implemented in Key Areas
 - César Meden, Result Manager 5. Territorial Planning
 - Silvia Morimoto, UNDP Resident Representative
 - Fernando Adames, Deputy of UNDP Paraguay
 - Veronique Gerard, UNDP Paraguay Environment Project Officer
 - **FAO Team**
 - Karem Elizeche, FAO Coordinator
 - Claudia Gimenez, FAO Specialist on Indigenous Peoples
 - Ivan Leon, FAO Paraguay Resident Representative
 - Fabiola Alcorta, Assistant Program Representative
 - Leticia Caceres, Coordination of the Technical Unit

Field visits could include:

- *Parque Nacional Cerro Cora*
- *Parque Nacional Ñacunday*

Other data collection tools: If needed, to be decided by the Evaluation Consultant at the inception phase

10. Evaluation Deliverables and Evaluation Procedures

See Annex 1 of these TOR for a list of tools and guidance available, see Annex 2 for a list of evaluation criteria and sub-categories to be assessed. The Evaluation Consultant will prepare:

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Draft Report shared with the wider group of stakeholders	15.11.2024
Final Main Evaluation Report	30.11.2024
Final Main Evaluation Report shared with all respondents	25.12.2024

13. Contractual Arrangements

The Evaluation Consultant will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Project Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. Consultants who carry out a Mid-Term Evaluation may not be contracted for a Terminal Evaluation of the same evaluand. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the UNEP Project Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Report Template</i>)	40%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Task Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, IPMR, Anubis, SharePoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Evaluation Report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the Task Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch/Unit until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to the Task Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.

Annex 13. Project Performance Ratings Table

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic Relevance		HS
1. Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) strategic priorities	There is clear alignment with institutional priorities of UNEP and GCF, and with Paraguay's environmental priorities.	HS
2. Complementarity/Coherence ² with relevant existing interventions	There is strong external coherence with ongoing national and international initiatives in the forest and land use sector. The project builds on previous REDD+ investments.	HS
B. Quality & Revision of Project Design	The project design capitalized on strong strategic alignment and institutional engagement but was weakened by the absence of a results framework and limited risk anticipation.	MS
C. Effectiveness		MS
1. Theory of change	There was not a project TOC, however one was developed by the evaluation team.	N/A
2. Availability of outputs	The project has made substantial progress in delivering key outputs, especially those foundational to institutional strengthening and territorial governance. However, timeliness, operational readiness, and end-user accessibility have varied, with notable infrastructure and system-level delays and some quality issues.	MS
3. Progress towards project outcomes, including towards indicators	Component 1 has demonstrated progress across most outcomes, particularly in relation to the upgrading of forest monitoring systems, fire response capacity, and the development of municipal land-use plans. There has also been selective progress in ecotourism development and the certification of Indigenous communities for environmental services. In contrast, Component 2 has made more limited progress, with strong technical groundwork laid for the NCCF but no operationalization to date due to legal and political constraints.	MS
4. Likelihood of impact, includes innovativeness and replication and scalability	The project has made measurable contributions toward several intended outcomes, but the realization of long-term impact is only partially likely, given that critical assumptions around institutional coordination, fund operationalization, and community-level ownership have not fully held.	ML
5. Adaptive management	Project staff conduct field visits as part of safeguards to observe project activities and have made changes as a result of their findings. However, there is not systematic monitoring or a formal results framework with targets and indicators that would enable systematic adaptive management.	MS
D. Financial Management		S
1. Adherence to UNEP's/Donor policies and procedures	The project has adhered to UNEP's financial management policies, with annual financial reports submitted alongside performance reports and reviewed in line with standard procedures. However, the project has faced serious under-spending, particularly in Component 2, due to both internal and external factors.	S
2. Completeness of project financial information	The project has provided a robust set of standard financial documentation. Financial reports are detailed and structured, and disbursement documentation was shared for most partners. However, the evaluation team was not able to verify financial reporting from national government partners.	HS
E. Efficiency	The project has experienced substantial delays in both implementation and disbursements, particularly during its first three years. These delays are attributed to external disruptions, staffing turnover, and slow administrative procedures, especially related to	MS

	UNEP's procurement systems. The project has demonstrated several efforts to ensure cost-effectiveness.	
F. Monitoring and Reporting		MS
1. Monitoring of project implementation	There is not a unified monitoring system, although IPs have their own and monitoring missions are conducted. There is some, but limited, baseline data and some respondents reported uncertainty about what to track.	MS
2. Project reporting	The project has consistently produced qualitatively strong Annual Performance Reports (APRs), which provide detailed narrative updates. However, due to the lack of indicators and baseline data, these reports are unable to assess progress quantitatively.	S
G. Exit Strategy & Sustainability	The project has been designed with an emphasis on long-term institutional and policy strengthening, which provides a promising foundation for sustainability. While there is no formal exit strategy outlined in the FAA or agency documents, the investment logic clearly prioritizes systemic reform over standalone activities, suggesting a focus on sustaining outcomes through national systems and mandates rather than through external project mechanisms.	ML
H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues		S
1. Project Inception	The project's readiness phase was significantly delayed due to complex institutional negotiations and structural adjustments as well as delayed staffing arrangements, though important groundwork was laid through stakeholder engagement and partnership agreements.	MS
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The project's supervision and management structure were marked by strong technical capacities and committed staff across agencies, but UNEP's limited country presence and frequent staff turnover weakened coordination and oversight.	MS
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP and UN implementing partners have largely fulfilled their roles, however challenges were apparent in coordination and human resources.	MS
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	A full analysis of MADES was not conducted. However, the EE aptly fulfils the role of chairing the Project Steering Committee and ensuring overall progress of POA implementation.	S
3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation	The Project Steering Committee has functioned as a high-level, multi-stakeholder body for approving annual work plans (POAs), with active Indigenous and gender representation. However, its strategic effectiveness has been constrained by limited inter-ministerial coordination, the absence of the key representative for the NDA, uneven participation across government entities, and a limited role for civil society due to challenges affecting the MESA REDD+. Private sector engagement has remained limited.	MS
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality ⁵	The project has taken meaningful steps to promote Indigenous Peoples' participation in governance and benefit-sharing mechanisms. However, gaps remain in communication, implementation in territories, and clarity on the short- and medium-term implications for Indigenous communities.	S
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The project has established a strong and participatory safeguards system—anchored in a robust FPIC protocol and continuous capacity-building—but gaps remain in the monitoring of risks, clarity of responsibilities, and quality of some assessments.	S
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project demonstrates a high level of national ownership, anchored in the leadership of MADES, inclusive governance structures, and alignment with national strategies, although sustained political engagement across ministries remains uneven.	S
7. Communication and public awareness	Communications and knowledge management efforts have progressively expanded, though their late strategic anchoring and	S

	weak integration with monitoring systems have limited their effectiveness.	
Overall Project Rating		MS

Criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory²⁴⁴ (HS = 6); Satisfactory (S = 5); Moderately Satisfactory (MS = 4); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU =3); Unsatisfactory (U = 2); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU =1). The Overall Performance Rating is calculated as a simple average of the ratings for each criterion (A-H).

²⁴⁴ *Impact* and *Sustainability* are also rated on a six-point scale but labelled from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU);

Annex 14. Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

Evaluand Title:

Interim Evaluation: REDD+ Results-based Payments in Paraguay for the period 2015-2017
(Paraguay + Verde Project)

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the <i>Executive Summary</i> act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: • a clear summary of the evaluation object • evaluation objectives, scope and methodology • the overall project evaluation rating • a summary of main evaluation findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) • summary responses to key strategic evaluation questions • summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	Coverage/omissions: Most required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The Executive Summary is comprehensive, balanced, and well-structured, serving effectively as a standalone decision-making tool. However, it would have benefited from summary responses to the evaluation strategic questions.	5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the <i>key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand?</i> Consider how well the report presents: • an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address • timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) • geographic coverage (regions/countries) • total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources • implementing and funding partners • institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • implementation structure with diagram • UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome)	Coverage/omissions: Most required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report mostly succeeds in describing the evaluand's key parameters and complexity. This section would have benefited from a concise presentation of the Project Document's logical framework in table form and	5

• summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) • substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	an indication on whether there were significant changes in design during Implementation or not.	
Section C: Evaluation Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the <i>evaluation methodology</i>? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the evaluation: • statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the evaluation findings • data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) • criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited • number and types of respondents (including in a table broken down by gender) • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate • methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) • data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) • data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) • evaluation limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) • consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a clear, comprehensive, and adequate methodological description that aligns well with UNEP Evaluation Office and UNEG standards. It demonstrates gender sensitivity, and attention to ethics. The methodology section would have benefited from more explicit justification of methodological choices, clearer data analysis description, and a more visual summary of respondent data and sampling strategy.	5.5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the <i>Theory of Change</i>, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (<i>narratively and diagrammatically</i>)? Consider how well the report presents: • whether the project design included a TOC	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a clear reconstruction of the TOC, which includes both a	5

• how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>²⁴⁵ was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Evaluation report.) • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	narrative explanation and a diagrammatic presentation of the causal pathways, consistent with UNEP Evaluation Office guidance. This section would have benefited from including the reformulation table in the main body of the report (rather than only in the annex), to facilitate easier reference during the results analysis.	
Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on <i>sufficient and adequate data</i> and <i>clear and credible evidence</i>? Consider how well the report presents: • sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report • evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) • evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source • gaps in data are explained and justified • data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the evaluation	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report maintains internal consistency between sections (methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations). The evaluation consistently cites data sources. Triangulation is explicitly described in the methodology and demonstrated throughout the findings. The report openly acknowledges data gaps. The data set is robust and adequate for the scope of an interim evaluation. However, the report would have benefited from greater use of direct evidence illustrations (short quotes, data excerpts, examples);	5

²⁴⁵ During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

	and quantitative summaries or simple tables to balance narrative evidence.	
6. Does the report include <i>rigorous analysis</i> and <i>logical findings</i>? Consider the extent to which the findings are: - supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented - logical, clear and coherent - aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix - aligned with the evaluation framework - more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way - balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report demonstrates a rigorous and balanced analytical approach, with findings that are logical, coherent, and grounded in evidence with balanced treatment of project achievements and shortcomings. The report clearly applies UNEP's ratings matrix, and the analysis goes beyond description to explain why performance varied across areas. In a few sections (notably efficiency and financial management), analysis remains descriptive, summarizing expenditures without deeper examination of cost-effectiveness or opportunity costs.	5
Section E: Evaluation Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project <i>Strategic Relevance</i> with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: - Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities - Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities - Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report provides a clear, well-supported, and comprehensive analysis of the project's Strategic Relevance across UNEP,	5

Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation²⁴⁶), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	donor, and national frameworks. The report would have benefited from minor enhancements around complementarity analysis and historic MTS referencing.	
Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Quality of Project Design , based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report does include a summary assessment of the Quality of Project Design.	NOT RATED*
Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the Nature of the External Context under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval ²⁴⁷), and how they affected performance?	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report clearly recognises and describes the key external contextual factors that affected <i>the project's</i> performance. It provides a nuanced and credible account of political, institutional, and environmental conditions in Paraguay, explaining how these limited implementation progress and shaped project outcomes.	NOT RATED*
8. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Availability of	Coverage/omissions:	5

²⁴⁶ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

²⁴⁷ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

Outputs to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Most required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report provides a well-reasoned and evidence-based account of output delivery and accessibility to intended beneficiaries. It clearly indicates that systematic assessment of output achievement was not possible, as the project lacked a monitoring framework with clear output-level targets, indicators, and baselines. The report states, under the Likelihood of Impact section, that no major negative or harmful impacts were identified. However, the report would have benefited from a more detailed exploration of differential effects on disadvantaged or gender-specific groups. Also, numerical tables comparing planned vs. delivered outputs could have enhanced clarity.	
9. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Achievement of Outcomes, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a comprehensive, reasoned and well-substantiated assessment of outcome-level achievement. It demonstrates that key outputs were taken up and applied by institutions and partners. It explains clearly what changed, why, and how	5.5

those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	much can be attributed to the project. However, as an interim <i>evaluation</i>, many outcomes are still in progress rather than fully achieved, and quantitative evidence of behavioural or systemic change is limited. The report states, under the Likelihood of Impact section, that no major negative or harmful impacts were identified. The report would have benefited from a brief results-chain diagram linking outputs → uptake → outcomes to enhance clarity.	
10. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to <i>Likelihood of Impact?</i> Consider how well the report presents: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes • an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents • identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a well-reasoned, integrated, and ToC-guided analysis of the project's Likelihood of Impact. It explicitly links observed outcomes with the causal pathways envisioned in the reconstructed ToC and explains the roles of drivers, assumptions, and change agents. The report states that no major negative or harmful impacts were identified.	5.5
11. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under <i>Financial Management</i> and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following:	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are addressed.	5

• adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • completeness of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a coherent and integrated analysis of the project's financial management. It confirms adherence to UNEP's financial rules, demonstrates sound financial control, and provides a summary table of expenditures and co-financing. However, the report would have benefited from a clearer variance analysis table or graph showing each component's planned vs. actual expenditure (with variance %), which would make the analysis more transparent.	
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Efficiency? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Coverage/omissions: Most of the required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a comprehensive analysis of efficiency. It explains how the project maximised resources within its budget, identifies the implications of delays and extensions, and highlights the use of existing institutional mechanisms to optimise delivery. This section would have benefited from including a more explicit reflection on UNEP's environmental footprint during implementation.	5
13. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's	Coverage/omissions:	5

Monitoring and Reporting? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - the quality of <i>monitoring of project implementation</i> (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) - the quality of <i>project reporting</i> (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	Most of the required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a complete, well-reasoned, and credible analysis of the project's monitoring and reporting systems. It assesses both the quality of monitoring (data collection, progress tracking, adaptive management) and the quality of reporting (internal and donor reports). While the analysis is strong, it could be improved by including specific examples of how monitoring data directly informed adaptive management decisions.	
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: - socio-political sustainability - financial sustainability - institutional sustainability	Coverage/omissions: All the required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a well-reasoned, integrated, and evidence-supported assessment of sustainability across socio-political, financial, and institutional dimensions. However, the report would have benefited from more explicit risk analysis under socio-political sustainability, linking this section with paragraph 96, which indicates that incomplete integration of MADES's SIAM and INFONA's SIGF systems hinders PES automation, and full implementation depends on sustained political will and collaboration.	5

15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the <i>Factors Affecting Performance</i>, <u>either in this section or in cross-referenced sections</u>? These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: • quality of project management and supervision²⁴⁸ • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	Coverage/omissions: All the required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report provides a well-evidenced, analytically sound, and cross-referenced assessment of the Factors Affecting Performance. Each factor is analytically discussed with supporting evidence, demonstrating how it influenced overall ratings. This section would have benefited from a summary table or rating matrix aligning each factor with its performance score.	5
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
16. Do the <i>Conclusions</i> present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: • provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which	Coverage/omissions: Most of the required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report provides a coherent, comprehensive, and evidence-based set of conclusions that reflect on the project's overall performance. This section would have benefited from more explicit cross-referencing to strategic evaluation questions for traceability.	5

²⁴⁸ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations		
17. Does the report present Recommendations for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well the recommendations: • are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: (i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. (ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	Coverage/omissions: All the required elements are addressed. Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a strong, well-structured, and actionable set of recommendations, which are realistic, time-bound, include gender considerations, and clearly assign responsibility.	5.5
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report well-structured and complete? Does it: • follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines • include all required sections and annexes, as applicable • not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report present information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: • in clear and accessible language • largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors • in an adequate and professional tone	Coverage/omissions: All the required elements are addressed.5 Strengths/weaknesses: The report is well-structured, complete, and clearly written, adhering closely to UNEP's Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines. It presents information in a logical and accessible manner, uses professional	5

with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	language, and includes appropriate visual aids (tables, figures, and photos) that enhance readability and comprehension.	
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		5

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion, with half-point increments allowed (e.g., 3.5 or 4.5). Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall rating is based on a simple average of the ratings for each criterion.

* This criterion was not rated to avoid giving it disproportionate weight in calculating the overall score, as this section is typically brief. The remaining criteria are comprehensive and substantial enough to provide a balanced and meaningful overall rating for the report.

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1–6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.
3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.
2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. ***All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.***

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Consultant's independence:		
1. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	x	
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?	x	
3. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		x
4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
Project's engagement and support:		
5. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	x	
6. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	x	

7. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	x	
8. Were the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff, partners and interviewed stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on key deliverables, as appropriate (e.g. Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Draft Evaluation Report)?	x	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:		
9. Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?	x	
10. Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	x	
11. Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	x	
12. Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	x	
Transparency and commenting:		
13. Was the inception report, including the (reconstructed) TOC, sent to the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff and partners, with a minimum of eight working days to comment?	x	
14. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	x	
15. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office?	x	
16. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	x	
17. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	x	
Financial Resources:		
18. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? If not, comment in the table below on the sufficiency of the funds made available.	x	
19. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? If not, comment in the table below.	x	
Timeliness:		
20. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within six months after project operational completion and not more than three months prior? (Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?)		
21. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	x	
22. Were all submission and commenting deadlines met as set by the Evaluation Manager and as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? If not, comment in the table below on exceptional delays.	x	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

Evaluation Process Criterion Number	Evaluation Office Comments
13	Given the tight evaluation deadlines, consultation on the Inception Report was limited to the Project Team and UNEP senior staff. Despite these constraints, the Evaluation Office remained fully committed to upholding the quality and integrity of the evaluation process.