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## TERMINAL EVALUATION

### *Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme*

#### Ecuador

UNDP Project ID: 4518

GEF Project ID: 4375



**Evaluation Time Frame:** 21 work days (2/21/15 – 4/15/15)

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**Project Executing Agency:** UNOPS

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## ACRONYMS

ACBIO	Biocorridor Action Plan
ART	Articulation of Territorial Networks for Sustainable Human Development
ASOCIATE	Socio-Environmental Territorial Agreement
APR	Annual Project Report
CBD	Biodiversity Convention
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CO	Country Office
COMDEKS	Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative
COOTAD	Organic Code for Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
EQUIPATE	Regional Technical Assistance Team (Equipo de Asistencia Técnica)
EQUIPATEN	National Technical Assistance Team (Equipo de Asistencia Técnica Nacional)
GAD	Decentralized Autonomous Government (Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOE	Government of Ecuador
GTA	Global Technical Advisor
GTT	Territorial Working Group (Grupo de Trabajo Territorial)
IEPS	Instituto de Economía Popular y Solidaria, (Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion)
MAE	Ministry of Environment
MAGAP	Ministry of Agriculture/Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MTB	Biological Corridor Working Group
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NC	National Coordinator (of the SGP country programme)
NCU	National Coordination Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP	Operational Programme
OP5	Fifth Operational Phase
PA	Protected Area
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PRODOC	Project Document
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SIMONAA	Sistema de Monitoreo, Acompañamiento y Asistencia Técnica
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TEE	Terminal Evaluation Evaluator

TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE 1: PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:	Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Ecuador			
GEF Project ID:	4375		<i>at endorsement</i> <i>(Million US\$)</i>	<i>at completion</i> <i>(Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	PIMS 4518	GEF financing:	4,398,145	4,398,145
Country:	Ecuador	IA/EA own:	1,000,000	507,750
Region:	LAC	Government of Ecuador:	2,150,000	621,043
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	1,650,000	3,126,504
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	Biodiversity-SP2	Total co-financing:	4,800,000	4,255,297
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:	9,198,145	8,653,442
Other Partners involved:	MAE, MAGAP, COMDEKS-Satoyama Initiative, GADs, CSOs	PRODOC Signature (date project began):		02/10/2012
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 06/30/2015	Actual (anticipated as of time of TE): 06/30/2015

## Project Description

1. Ecuador has had an active Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) for the past twenty years, beginning in 1994. At the outset of its Fifth four-year Operational Phase (OP5), Ecuador's SGP became an "upgraded" country program meaning that it is implemented as a GEF full-size project financed under the country's STAR allocation. It is important to remember that SGP country programmes are comprised of many individual community projects. To avoid confusion, the term Small Grants Programme Project, or "SGPP", will be used to refer to the country programme, whereas the term "project" is used to refer to individual grant projects supported through the SGPP.

2. Operating as a four-year project has had important positive implications for the SGPP. This longer time frame permitted strategic programmatic planning and resulted in a fundamental change in approach from the previous OP. Of five countries evaluated in a study commissioned by UNDP, "Reflections Emerging from the Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluation of Five SGP Country Programs in Latin America and Africa", Ecuador's SGP was described as the one which had made the greatest transformation from previous operational phases.

3. The SGPP objective as stated in the PRODOC was to "conserve biodiversity by reducing habitat fragmentation and increasing ecological connectivity across production landscapes through community initiatives and actions in four priority regions of Ecuador". The SGPP aimed to achieve this by: "a) putting effective community land use governance and planning in place to increase ecological connectivity in four regions of the country, b) providing rural communities with increased sustainable livelihood options appropriate for fragile and globally significant ecosystems, and, c) systematizing and disseminating knowledge and training communities in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning."

4. At the outset of OP5, the Ecuador SGPP adopted an innovative landscape (“territorial” in Spanish) approach modeled on the UNDP ART (Articulation of Territorial Networks for Sustainable Human Development) Global programme which had a project in Ecuador from 2009 to 2011. This was a very strategic and important step for the SGPP as Ecuador’s “Organic Code for Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization (COOTAD)” had become law only a year before (in 2010). COOTAD made political and administrative decentralization compulsory, and devolved land use planning and decision-making regarding natural resource management to local (provincial, municipal and parish) government levels. Therefore, adopting the territorial approach would strategically align the SGPP approach with the Government’s decentralization approach and would ensure that the SGPP was working with those decision-makers at both local and national levels responsible for land use planning and natural resource management, and thus those responsible for biodiversity conservation.

5. Four “territories” were identified in which all OP5 projects would take place. These four territories strategically included a good representation of the ecological and cultural diversity within the country and were defined as: 1) the coast, 2) the Amazon, 3) the northern Andes, and 4) the Central/Southern Andes. A map of Ecuador showing these four territories is attached as Annex X. The selection of these four territories was based on where ecosystems of global significance existed, where the SGP had worked before, where organizations existed with capacity to offer technical and monitoring support to projects, where there were communities living within production-oriented landscapes willing to work together and for a common conservation purpose, and where local government entities had interest and were willing to buy into the effort. The specific area of each territory was defined through a highly participatory process in which a comprehensive group of key stakeholders defined the areas.

6. As per the ART methodology, a Territorial Working Group (GTT) comprised of community representatives, national Government representatives from the Ministry of Environment (MAE) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGAP), local Governmental entities (GADs) at the provincial, municipal and parish levels, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and academic institutions was established in each of these four territories and was tasked with developing a Territorial Action Agreement (ASOCIATE) and also with defining biocorridors within its territory. A total of 16 biocorridors were defined within the four territories. A highly participatory Biocorridor Working Group (MTB for its Spanish acronym) was formed in each biocorridor and these groups were tasked with developing a Biocorridor Action Plan (ACBIO). The Action Plan served as the framework for identifying projects to be supported by the SGPP within the various biocorridors.

7. A total of 63 projects within the sixteen biocorridors are included in the SGPP OP5 portfolio of projects. Of these, 53 work directly with communities through CSOs and NGOs, each receiving on average \$50,000, which is the upper limit for a GEF contribution. Forty-six of the 63 projects receive financial support from the SGPP. The remaining 17 projects receive financial support through either the COMDEKS or PASNAP projects. Six of those projects are projects financed by COMDEKS through the Satoyama Initiative but managed by Ecuador’s SGP. COMDEKS projects are to enhance socio-ecological production landscape resilience by developing sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities with local communities to maintain, rebuild, and revitalize landscapes. Eleven of the 63 projects are PASNAP projects financed by the MAE and also included in the SGP portfolio under a Memorandum of Agreement between MAE and the SGP. Five “strategic projects”, four to fund the EQUIPATE and one to fund the EQUIPATEN, all of whom are primarily engaged in project monitoring and management support, receive on average US\$150,000 each, which is the upper limit for a GEF contribution. Another five more conventional “strategic projects” support national NGO networks to strengthen capacities and support community participation at regional and national levels. Finally, there is also one “strategic” project which provides technical assistance on psiculture to communities involved in other SGP-supported projects.

8. All community-based projects took place in areas and with communities which had been involved in previous SGP-supported projects, and where other ongoing assistance complemented the SGPP effort and vice-versa. In most cases, all projects continued supporting some of the same types of activities which had been supported in previous OPs and added on to these “innovative” elements related to ecological connectivity and associativity (most already had sustainable production-oriented activities in previous phases). OP5 projects were expected to scale-up, replicate and consolidate previous experiences.

9. Of the total budget anticipated at project endorsement (including co-financing), 94% was actually committed, and 100% of that is expected to be spent by project completion. Fifty-four percent (\$3,133,360) of the total GEF budget of \$4,398,145 was spent on grant projects excluding the five “strategic” projects which funded the EQUIPATE and EQUIPATEN which together totaled \$750,000.

10. As with all upgraded SGPPs, UNDP was the GEF Implementing Agency and as with almost all upgraded SGPPs, UNOPS was the Executing Agency.

### Evaluation Ratings

11. In accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Terminal Evaluation (TE), project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), Implementing Agency (IA) & Executing Agency (EA) Execution, and Assessment of Outcomes, have been rated using the obligatory GEF rating scale presented in Annex 1, and included here below the Table for ease of reference. Table 2 (below) summarizes ratings on performance criteria.

Table 2: Terminal evaluation ratings assigned to the project

<b>Evaluation Ratings:</b>			
<b>1. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>2. IA&amp; EA Execution</b>	<b>Rating</b>
M&E Design at Project Start	S	Implementing Agency Execution	HS
M&E Plan Implementation	HS	Executing Agency Execution	HS
Overall Quality of M&E	S	Overall Quality of Project Implementation / Execution	HS
<b>3. Assessment of Outcomes</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>4. Sustainability</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Relevance	R	Financial Resources	ML
Effectiveness	HS	Socio-economic/political	ML
Efficiency	S	Institutional Framework and Governance	L
Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	S	Environmental	ML
		Overall Likelihood of Risks to Sustainability	ML
<b>5. Impact</b>	<b>Rating</b>		
Environmental Status Improvement	S		
Environmental Stress Reduction	S		
Progress towards Stress/Status Change	S		
Overall Project Results	S		

HS = Highly Satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Moderately Satisfactory; MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory; U= Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly Unsatisfactory; L= Likely; ML = Moderately Likely; MU = Moderately Unlikely; U = Unlikely; R = Relevant; NR = Not Relevant

## Summary of Conclusions & Recommendations

### Main Conclusions

The main conclusions are derived from meetings held during the terminal evaluation mission and documents reviewed by the Terminal Evaluation Evaluator (TEE), and are substantiated in the relevant sections of the text of this report. The main conclusions are:

1. This highly relevant project contributed significantly to enhancing awareness of local communities and others of the importance of conserving Ecuador's páramo, coastal dry forests, rain forests, and mangroves, and the viability of achieving this conservation through a community and landscape-based approach.
2. There is a high degree of project ownership amongst the communities involved in the SGPP.
3. There is great awareness of rural communities participating in the SGPP of the importance of conserving ecosystems; in part this can be attributed to the SGP efforts and in part this is attributable to Government of Ecuador (GOE) programmes. Most people consider water the most important reason for protecting ecosystems.
4. The innovative and highly participatory landscape approach within which "territories" and "biocorridors" were defined by local stakeholders serves as a framework not only for future SGP OPs but may also serve as an important input into the GOE's own efforts to work toward ecological connectivity.
5. Although the participatory approach adopted is time consuming and caused some delays in project implementation due in part to a highly participatory planning phase, it was well worth the time spent and indicative of the amount of time participatory approaches truly take.
6. The SGPP was very cognizant of the need to ensure the full participation of women in all activities and to strive for gender equity in every aspect of the SGPP. It did this very successfully within a challenging environment where gender inequity is still a strong reality, especially in the rural environment in which the SGP projects work.
7. At this stage, even though territorial agreements and Biocorridor management plans exist, these plans will take time to implement. It will take much longer than a couple of years to build the relationships, scientific approach, and regulatory framework required to fully implement the territorial/biocorridor approach. The Project is on the right track, however, in pursuing this.
8. The approach adopted by the project in working together with local Government entities at the national, provincial, municipal and parish levels (GAD) was well aligned with the country's legal framework which makes political and administrative decentralization compulsory, and was strategic in that the decentralization process devolves land use planning and natural resource management to the GAD and by working together with both national government entities as well as the GAD, efforts to conserve biodiversity conservation (which depend significantly on land use planning within production-oriented landscapes) have a higher probability of success. This approach was well thought out and should continue in OP6 even if few of the projects, most of which devoted significant effort to presenting their initiatives to the GAD, actually received any financial support from them and the high turnover of *técnicos* and other GAD staff presented significant difficulties to project implementation.

9. The involvement of universities through the establishment of a scholarship fund with SGP funds was a cost-effective way of assisting communities with product development and marketing as well as in helping to build a critical mass of organizations for advocacy of SGP efforts. This was also an effective mechanism for reaching out to urban-based youth and involving them in conservation and community-development efforts.
10. Government conservation programs such as Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar appear to be having a significant positive impact on the conservation of ecosystems. Although there are a few SGP-supported projects involving communities who are also involved in Socio-Bosque, there does not appear to be a strong collaboration between them. A closer collaboration both at the individual project level and between the programmes may be helpful in enhancing impact and sustainability of both efforts.
11. The SGPP funded several “strategic projects” undertaken with national NGOs, including the Coordinadora para la Defensa de la Naturaleza y el Ambiente (CEDENMA), the biggest network of ecological NGOs in the country, and the *Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de Agroecología* (CEA). These were successful and cost-effective projects that significantly enhanced capacity of communities and facilitated their involvement in dialogue and fora which they would otherwise not have access to.
12. To maximize impact and sustainability of SGP efforts in OP6, collaboration with larger-scale conservation and diverse agriculture projects (many of which are GEF-supported projects) may be helpful.
13. The Biocorridor Working Groups (MTBs) established by the SGP provide helpful fora for each project to share information and experiences with others in the same and other biocorridors and to begin to work toward a common strategic vision for these areas. The MTBs also serve to promote a sense of being part of a larger scheme.
14. There is some evidence that projects within the same Biocorridor are coordinating efforts with each other. At present, however, most projects still operate as isolated projects, even though they participate in broader-scale (Biocorridor and territorial) planning exercises and have benefited from understanding, and being part of, the bigger picture. It will be important to build further on coordinated efforts between projects in OP6 if ecological connectivity is to be achieved.
15. Some projects have interpreted ecological connectivity to simply mean enhancing vegetative cover on farm (though agro-forestry), or planting native plants around water sources. Even though these activities could in principle contribute to ecological connectivity, many have not served to do so in large part for lack of conservation science-based input/direction.
16. The Territorial Working Groups (GTTs) provide a forum for MTBs to present their projects to the GAD and other key stakeholders in the territories including universities, MAE, MAGAP, the *Juntas Parroquiales*, NGOs, and communities, and for the GAD to share information with these stakeholders regarding their plans for future investment in thematic areas of relevance to efforts supported by the SGP. These fora represent a rare opportunity for community organizations to have direct interaction with government authorities. Binding agreements have been subscribed to at GTT meetings and government authorities have used these occasions to publicly commit their support to territorial processes.
17. The four regional Technical Assistance Teams (EQUIPATE), which participated in the SGPP through a “strategic project” modality with an approximate cost of \$150,000 each, played a critical role in OP5 as the territories, biocorridors, and new associations were being defined and developed, and as a new monitoring system was being developed and put in place. The role of these four NGOs was to monitor and support the projects in the four territories (i.e., the coast, the Northern Andes, the Central/Southern

Andes and the Amazon). Given the large number of projects involved in this SGPP, and the inability of any NCU to effectively provide the technical and other support as well as the monitoring necessary for this large number of projects, engaging regionally-based NGOs through “strategic projects” was an appropriate and cost-effective means of providing necessary project monitoring and other support. This may serve as a good model for other country SGPs with large project portfolios.

18. The National Technical Assistance Team (Equipo de Asistencia Técnica Nacional or EQUIPATEN for its acronym in Spanish), a Cuenca-based NGO by the name of Oficina para la Investigación Social y del Desarrollo (OFIS), which also participated in the SGPP using a “strategic project” modality at a cost of \$150,000 for three years, provided services which complemented the work of the SGP National Coordination Unit (NCU). Their future existence should be carefully considered to determine whether this is an appropriate and cost-effective investment for the SGP in OP6.

19. The NCU is relatively large compared to other country SGP Programme Management Units, including those of other “upgraded” country programmes.

20. The National Steering Committee (NSC) has yet to take on the more strategic planning and oversight role recommended in the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the SGPP. The main function of this body remains as project approval.

21. The NSC is comprised of 10 very capable individuals, four of whom have technical backgrounds in environmental fields, but only one of whom has technical expertise in one of the four ecosystems which are the conservation focus of the SGPP. His expertise is in coastal dry forests. It is in part because of the lack of adequate scientific direction and oversight that ecological connectivity activities have not been as impactful as they might otherwise be.

22. The model of the pisciculture project which was a “strategic project” that provided specific technical expertise and technical monitoring to numerous communities involved in other SGP-supported projects was a very effective approach. It was the only project of its kind in the portfolio.

23. The monitoring system developed during OP5, called SIMONAA (*Sistema de Monitoreo, Acompañamiento y Asistencia Técnica* or Monitoring and Technical Assistance System), was a significant positive innovation in OP5 which can be built further upon in OP6, including enhancing ecological information used to establish the ecological baseline and application of an enhanced ecological monitoring system. Using a strategic project modality to achieve this may be a good option in OP6.

24. Some production-oriented activities supported by projects were not strategic in that they cannot truly be expected to either directly or indirectly result in decreased pressure on target ecosystems even if they undoubtedly enhance the well-being of people who live within the landscape. Both the type of activity and the specific people engaged in the activity are critical considerations.

25. With some exceptions, marketing strategies and strategies to achieve economies of scale regarding the so-called “products with territorial identity” or PITs, are still relatively weak. Involving universities and university students in this effort was strategic. The EQUIPATE, although experienced to a degree in this area, may not have the necessary expertise to take marketing to the next level beyond “ferias” and other limited marketing strategies. Greater involvement of private sector groups in these activities may be helpful.

26. The SGPP has done a great job in documenting its experiences, including a comprehensive documentation of the planning phase. This detailed documentation facilitates learning lessons from other experiences and is a cost-effective investment. Although the documentation of experiences has been extensive, and the SGP communications strategy has produced some excellent materials, as well as an excellent website, there is still a lack of information regarding the SGPP in some key stakeholders including some environmental NGOs and within partner national government entities such as MAGAP.

27. The SGP has enjoyed a good partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office (CO) both prior to and during OP5 and has been considered as part of the UNDP CO team, even contributing to the development of the country's United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) where the landscape approach and community initiatives are considered. This can be considered as a form of scaling-up.

28. OP5 was an ambitious undertaking given the resources and time available, but good progress was made toward achieving the objective set forth thanks to the strategy adopted of building on an already existing foundation, partnering with others, a capable and dedicated NCU, strong buy-in by local stakeholders, and a shared vision of something worth pursuing.

## **Main Recommendations**

These recommendations are directed at OP6. Greater detail regarding recommendations is in Section 4.2. Substantiation of recommendations is found in the appropriate sections of the main report.

1. A sixth operational phase of the SGP in Ecuador should most certainly be pursued, adopting the same basic approach developed during OP5 with modifications as described below.

2. It is important that the SGP continue its work in all four territories in OP6. The programme has already advanced significantly in the four regions and many communities count on continued support from the SGP. Some of the benefits to both communities and to ecosystems may be lost if the SGP does not continue to operate in these four territories, as many of the initiatives are not yet self-sustaining. It will not be possible to continue operating in the four territories with the current GEF budget allocated for OP6. It will be important to find additional funding to complement the GEF funds allocated for OP6.

3. Apply greater scientific rigour in pursuing the conservation objective.

4. Ensure all production-oriented activities supported by projects are strategic in that they can truly be expected to result in decreased pressure on target ecosystems (not just in enhancing the well-being of people who live within the landscape), and that the production-oriented activities are aimed strategically at the stakeholders who present the greatest threat to the target ecosystem and/or who have the greatest potential for conserving it.

5. Seek collaboration with other relevant larger-scale conservation and diverse agriculture projects (some of which are GEF-supported projects) and programmes in country to enhance impact and sustainability of SGP-supported activities. Do not expand into new territories except when linkages to other larger-scale conservation or agroecology efforts strongly compel such an expansion. Do not pursue urban-based projects in OP6.

6. Replicate the psiculture project modality to include a variety of other technical assistance "strategic projects" in areas such as community-based ecotourism, ecosystem restoration, shade coffee, etc., and contract experts from within existing successful projects to provide this technical assistance whenever possible.

7. Strengthen the relationship between the SGP OP6 and MAE to ensure a continued coordinated approach to the further development of biocorridors and to permit greater collaboration with Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar (assuming this important programme continues).
8. Pursue more agile mechanisms for collaborating with MAGAP & more sharing of SGP experiences with that Ministry outside the *Redes Comerciales* Unit.
9. Consider streamlining the NCU as described in the text of this document.
10. Consider whether or not the EQUIPATEN is really an appropriate, cost-effective, and strategic investment for the SGP in OP6. Ultimately the decision lies with the NSC. The opinion of the TEE is that the SGP should not continue to fund the EQUIPATEN.
11. To help ensure the NSC assumes a more strategic oversight role, the NCU should submit to the NSC for review and approval a written annual workplan and budget. The NSC should review and approve draft Project Identification Frameworks (PIFs) and draft project documents before these are submitted. Implementation of Terminal Evaluation (TE) recommendations related to strategic issues should be monitored by the NSC.
12. Further enhance the decision-making role of women in SGP-supported projects (not merely their participation), building on successful OP5 experiences, and attempt to quantify the benefits they derive from their involvement in the projects.
13. Expand upon efforts to involve youth in projects in OP6, building on successful OP5 experiences.
14. Expand upon university involvement in OP6, building on successful OP5 experiences.
15. Conduct a more in-depth threat analysis for each individual project. Develop a tool and format which projects can use to ensure a proper threats analysis is done.
16. Involve private sector groups, perhaps using the mechanism of a strategic project, in developing marketing strategies and strategies to achieve economies of scale regarding PITs.
17. Establish ecological baselines based on actual data regarding the size and distribution (distance between) of patches of target ecosystem over the landscape of interest and the conservation status of those patches.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Evaluation**

1. The evaluation was initiated by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency for this project in accordance with evaluation requirements set forth by the GEF. According to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the TE, the aim of the TE is “to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from the project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming”. In accordance with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, this TE is also intended to “promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives; including the global environmental benefits”.

## 1.2 Scope and Methodology of the Evaluation

2. The evaluation was conducted by one International Consultant over a 21 day work period during February/March 2015, almost four months before anticipated project closure and only six months after the Mid-Term evaluation. Thirteen of the twenty-one work days assigned for the evaluation were in-country. The total cost of the evaluation was \$11,022.

3. The TE was conducted in accordance with the “UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-financed Projects (2012)”, and the “*GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*”, and in line with GEF principles including independence, impartiality, transparency, and participation. It seeks to provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. In this regard, the Terminal Evaluation Evaluator (TEE) followed a participatory and consultative approach, and used a variety of evaluation instruments including:

4. **Evaluation Matrix:** An evaluation matrix was developed based on the set of questions covering the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact which were included in the TOR for the TE and which were amended by the TEE to be most useful to this particular TE. The matrix (presented in Annex VIII) served as a general guide for the interviews conducted by the TEE.

5. **Documentation Review:** The TEE reviewed documents including the project document (PROCOC), project reports including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report, progress reports, the GEF Tracking Tool prepared at project mid-term, project files, policy and national strategy documents, and other relevant documents. A complete list of documentation reviewed by the TEE is included as Annex IV to this report.

6. **Interviews:** In-person interviews were conducted with more than 100 stakeholders. Many of these meetings took place with small groups of up to 12 people such as, for example, with an organized group of women or a youth group involved in a project. The list of stakeholders met is included in Annex V.

7. **Follow-up Email & Skype Communications:** As time did not allow for all the necessary information to be gathered during the in-country mission, a significant amount of data was requested from the NCU following the return home of the Evaluator.

8. **Project Visits:** Because of the large number of projects in the Ecuador SGP portfolio (63), the time constraints of the evaluation, and the distances to be covered, the TEE was able to visit only some of the many projects. Visits were made to 14 projects in all four territories defined by the SGP (i.e., coast, Amazon, northern Andes, Central/Southern Andes). The projects to be visited were chosen by the NCU as requested by the TEE based primarily on logistics, i.e., project proximity to other projects and ease of access, and with the overall criteria that these should include a representative sample that would allow assessment of a variety of project types including those focused on agroforestry, agrosylvopastoral systems, artisanal fisheries, products with territorial identity (PIT), community-based tourism and others.

### 9. **Workshop Attendance**

The evaluation was purposefully timed to allow the TEE to attend two “*talleres de cierre*” -- workshops for the various projects to share the experiences, lessons learned and other reflections at the completion of OP5 (the one for the coast and the one for the Amazon) and also to attend the GTT meetings which directly followed these workshops. It was felt by the NC, and agreed by the TEE, that these presented important opportunities for the TEE to learn about the projects and also about the functioning of the MTB and GTT. Due to flight arrangements, it was only possible for the TEE to attend one of the two GTT

meetings (the one in the Coast), but both MTB workshops were attended.

10. ***Terminal Evaluation Mission Itinerary:*** The TE mission itinerary is presented in Annex III.

11. ***Ratings:*** In accordance with GEF guidelines for project evaluations, achievement ratings as well as sustainability and relevance ratings were assigned by the TEE. The TEE rated project achievements and outcomes according to the GEF project review criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Results and Sustainability), using the obligatory GEF ratings of: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). A full description of these ratings and other GEF rating scales is provided in Annex I. The TEE also rated various dimensions of sustainability of project outcomes using the GEF obligatory rating scale of: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), and, Unlikely (U).

### **1.3 Structure of this Report**

12. This terminal evaluation report documents the achievements and successes as well as the shortcomings and constraints encountered by the project and includes four sections organized as per the Table of Contents included in the TOR for terminal evaluations. Section 1 briefly describes the purpose, scope and methodology of the evaluation; Section 2 presents an overview of the project; and Section 3 presents the findings of the evaluation. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons are presented in Section 4. Lessons and recommendations are cross-referenced to the relevant paragraph in the report for fuller context. Lessons are highlighted in blue for ease of reference, while recommendations are highlighted in green. Annexes are found at the end of the report.

### **1.4 Code of Conduct adhered to by the TEE**

13. The TEE reviewed and agreed to adhere to the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations”. The “Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form” signed by the TEE is attached as Annex VI. All information gathered by the TEE is considered confidential. Stakeholders interviewed were routinely informed by the TEE at the outset of each interview about the confidentiality (anonymity) of the information shared and also about the purpose of the evaluation.

## **2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Ecological & Development Context**

14. To keep this report within expected page limits, the reader is referred to the comprehensive description of Ecuador’s biodiversity found in the project document (PRODOC). In summary, the ecological context are landscapes which include both protected areas/community nature reserves and production-oriented areas (primarily agricultural areas) in four diverse regions of the country (the coast, the Northern Andes, the Central/Southern Andes and the Amazon), and focused on four ecosystems of undeniable global significance (coastal dry forests, mangrove, páramo, tropical rain forest), all of which are highly endangered.

15. It is important to complement the ecological description with a description of the development context within which Ecuador’s SGP operates. Ecuador’s Constitution (2008) recognizes the rights of nature and adopts the “Living Well” or Sumak Kawsay paradigm translated in the country’s “National

Plan for Living Well” (*Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir*), conceived as an approach to development in which respect and harmony between human beings and “mother Earth” (*Pachamama*) is recognized as fundamental to well-being. Chapter Four of the Constitution addresses the rights of indigenous peoples, including their right to their ancestral lands and the right to participate in the management, conservation, use and benefits from natural resources in their territories, amongst other rights.

16. In 2013, the Government of Ecuador adopted a new “production-oriented framework” (*el cambio de la matriz productiva*) as a strategy to increase productivity related primarily to oil, agricultural and mining industries, and to increase revenues generated from these production activities. The new “*matriz productiva*” promotes intensive agriculture, including promotion of exotic monocultures such as sugarcane and African Palm (along with intensive use of agrochemicals), and promotes extractive industries including oil and mining. This framework has important implications for biodiversity and may affect incentives for community involvement in SGP activities as well as sustainability of benefits derived from SGP activities in the country.

17. The period covering OP5 has seen important changes in the level of involvement of international cooperation in Ecuador. International cooperation has significantly diminished during this period. The GEF has been the most important source of funding for environmental conservation initiatives in the country during OP5. The status of some important Government conservation programmes which have been financed primarily with donor support, such as the Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar programme administered by MAE, is uncertain at this time.

18. The design of OP6 will need to give serious consideration to how activities to promote agroecology and agroforestry can fit within the new *matriz productiva*, how its activities to promote ecological connectivity can be successful over the long-term within this context, and how government incentives and disincentives related to the new production-oriented framework may affect the sustainability of SGP activities and benefits derived from these efforts. It will also need to give careful consideration to how to maximize the impact it can have, and how it can act as strategically as possible in collaboration with larger conservation and diversified agriculture projects.

## 2.2 Project Start and Duration

19. Ecuador’s SGP OP5 began officially with the signing of the PRODOC in February 2012 and is expected to end on time in June of this year (2015). What was supposed to be a four year project in reality will be three years and five months. The project was to start July 1, 2011 but the PRODOC was not signed until February 2012, and funds weren’t received until May of that year. A prolonged participatory planning period which lasted almost nine months, compounded by delays related to the need to rework numerous weak project proposals, resulted in signing of grant projects only in May, 2013 (more than a year after SGPP signature). This resulted in a relatively short project implementation period of at most 20 months (many projects have been operating even less than this, some with only 14 months of implementation as of the time of this evaluation). The extended planning period was needed (and, in the opinion of the TEE, warranted) because of the adoption of the new territorial approach which involved a highly participatory process and, therefore, a longer time period.

20. **LESSON:** Truly participatory processes such as the ones undertaken by the SGP in OP5 take time. Although many projects claim to adopt a participatory planning approach, a good indicator of how participatory they really are is how much time is taken. Plan for longer time periods if participatory approaches are anticipated.

21. As is the case with all SGPPs, the Ecuador SGPP is not a typical GEF project with a start and end but rather a continuation of an ever-evolving programme which in the case of Ecuador began some twenty years ago.

## **2.3 Problems the Project sought to Address**

22. The main problems as defined in the PIF for OP5 that the project sought to address were: “Forest and grassland conversion (in the páramo) to other uses, ecosystem fragmentation across the landscape, and generalized ecosystem degradation from unsustainable harvest of timber and non-timber forest products (e.g. poaching), overgrazing, and invasive alien species. The primary cause of deforestation in the three ecosystems is land clearing for large-scale commercial agriculture, forestry or aquaculture, including plantations of oil palm (coast and Amazon) and pine (páramo), and shrimp farming (mangroves) but also by landless subsistence farmers. Land clearing for livestock is also a driver of deforestation in the Amazon and the dry coastal forests and, on a lesser scale, in the páramo. As land is cleared, forest or other patches of natural vegetation are left standing as islands or fragments in a sea of land uses that are generally incompatible with conservation goals. Another driver of forest and ecosystem fragmentation is the ongoing subdivision of communal lands in the three regions, under the responsibility of the Communes to provide new lands to landless young families, as well as due to the growing land market in which the Communes are pressured to sell to private owners (dry forest/mangroves), and where colonization and settlement occurs (Amazon). In the last 20 years, Ecuador’s dry forests have disappeared at an increasing rate. It has been calculated that the dry forest has been reduced to less than 5% of its original coverage. The main causes for this loss have been smallholder agriculture and livestock expansion, forest fires, commercial scale monoculture plantations, and tree cutting by local inhabitants. Unsuitable exploitation, primarily involving the selective extraction of fine woods for sale, and the slashing and burning of large areas for agriculture are two of the principal causes of deforestation in dry forests. Over 70% of the coastal mangroves have been eliminated through progressive destruction by encroachment, for logging, and shrimp farming by the shrimp industry. Since the early 1970’s, about 30% of the Ecuadorian Amazon has been deforested due to poorly planned or controlled colonization often accelerated by oil industry penetration through road building. Grassland burning, forestry operations and overgrazing represent the major threats to páramo ecosystems, even in protected areas. In the páramo there are numerous human settlements and highways that cross the highlands, breaking up the ecoregion. With the recent expansion of human activities, particularly agriculture and mining, these habitats are being altered and destroyed. Indigenous communities in the páramo cultivate lands for food and cash crops using techniques and practices that under current conditions (e.g., plots on steep slopes) lead to soil erosion and long-term reductions in land productivity. Endemic trees and shrubs are being cut and native vegetation and crop residues are being burnt. This loss of productivity, in turn, leads to the need to clear new lands either in the highlands themselves or, after abandonment and migration, in the Amazon region or the coastal dry forest. In the dry forest, smallholders clear land to plant food crops, cash crops or pasture, while harvesting timber and non-timber forest products unsustainably from the remaining forest, leading to progressive ecosystem degradation. At the same time, as in the páramo, smallholders current agricultural practices heightens vulnerability to soil erosion and the loss of long term productivity, a factor that leads to further forest clearance and degradation. Communities on the coast over harvest the products provided by mangroves ecosystems, including pole wood, firewood, fish, and crustaceans.”

23. In keeping with the GEF approach that projects should represent strategic interventions that attempt to remove critical barriers to the conservation of the biodiversity, the PRODOC described the barriers as:

***Barrier 1:** Communities lack the means and/or motivation to plan, manage or coordinate community production landscapes for conservation of biodiversity, enhanced connectivity and increasing long term productivity of ecosystem goods and services.*

***Barrier 2:** Communities are unable to adequately identify and adopt sustainable use practices and systems at scale in forest and grassland areas of high BD value.*

***Barrier 3:** Communities lack the information, knowledge and skills to design, implement, monitor and evaluate projects for effective learning and adaptive management.”*

## **2.4 Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project**

24. The objective of the project was to “reduce habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity across production landscapes through community initiatives in four priority regions of Ecuador (the Amazon, the Northern Andes, the Central/Southern Andes, and the Coast)”. The project aimed to accomplish this through three expected outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Effective community land use governance and planning is in place for increasing ecological connectivity in four target ecosystems (páramo, coastal dry forest, rainforest, mangrove) within the four defined priority regions of the country.

**Outcome 2:** Rural communities have increased sustainable livelihood options appropriate for fragile and globally significant ecosystems.

**Outcome 3:** Knowledge systematized and disseminated, and communities trained in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning.

## **2.5 Baseline Indicators**

25. To avoid duplication and to stay within page limits, baseline indicators are presented in Section 2.6 (Expected Results) which includes a description of baseline indicators and targets.

## **2.6 Main Stakeholders**

26. The project’s main stakeholders included:

- the flora and fauna within the four territories
- 324 rural communities in the Northern Andes, Central/Southern Andes, Amazon and Coast (including numerous women’s organizations and several youth organizations)
- many CSOs and local NGOs in the above-mentioned regions
- 5 NGOs with national presence in Ecuador (C-CONDEM, Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de Agroecología – CEA, CEDENMA, Amazonía por la Vida, Instituto de Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo)
- provincial, municipal, and parish governments in the four territories
- MAE

- MAGAP
- IEPS
- Nine universities and other academic institutions of higher learning, including the Universidad Técnica del Norte (Departamento de Agroindustrias), the Escuela Politécnica Nacional (Mercadeo), the Universidad Católica Sede Azoguez (Carrera de Ingeniería Empresarial), the Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo ESPOCH (Departamento de Marketing), the Universidad Católica de Cuenca (Carrera Emprendimiento), the Universidad Técnica de Ambato (Carrera de Economía), the Universidad Estatal del Sur de Manabí (Escuela de Comercio Exterior), the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (Carrera de Organización y Desarrollo Comunitario), and the Universidad Católica Sede Regional Manabí (Carrera de Turismo)
- Other projects with which the SGP collaborated including the “Sustainable Financing of Ecuador’s National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) and Associated Private and Community-managed PA Subsystems” and the “Supporting Sustainable Finance of Protected Areas” project. These projects are considered stakeholders as their own efforts affect and benefit from the success of this project and vice-versa.

## 2.7 Expected Results

27. The expected results are described in the project’s logical framework (logframe) in which performance indicators are described along with the baseline for these indicators at project start, and the targets to be achieved related to these indicators by the end of the project.

<b>Project Objective:</b> Community initiatives reduce habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity across production landscapes in four priority regions of Ecuador		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Targets End of Project</b>
Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in the following ecosystems: - Paramo - Mangroves - Coastal dry forests - Amazon tropical rainforest	Some 200 communities sustainably manage:  - 35,000 ha of Paramo* - 1,300 ha of mangroves† - 8,500 ha of coastal dry forest‡ - 72,300 ha of tropical rainforest in the Amazon§	At least 100 additional communities implementing strategies and carrying out activities that increase sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes: - 14,000 ha in the Paramo ecosystem - 600 ha in mangrove ecosystems - 10,000 ha in the coastal dry forest ecosystem - 20,000 ha in the Amazon tropical rainforest
Habitat coverage in hectares  And/or  Reduced habitat fragmentation rates in targeted areas	Target areas have various rates of ecosystem fragmentation (e.g. annual deforestation rate in Northeast Amazon is 3% and in the Coastal region varies between 2 and 4%). Habitat coverage will be determined for each area targeted by individual grants and, if information	Habitat coverage remains the same or higher in at least 70% of land in grant receiving communities

\* Páramo ecosystems in the buffer zones of: Lakes Mojanda and San Pablo; Cayambe-Coca National Park; Chimborazo Fauna Reserve; Sangay National Park; Cajas National Park; and Forest Reserve of Jeco.

† Buffer zones of: Río Chone estuary (Isla Corazón and Fragatas); Portoviejo river estuary; and El Palmar mangrove.

‡ Buffer zones of the Forest Reserve of Montecristi-Sancan-Cantagallo; Wildlife Refuge of Pacoche, Forest Reserve of Chongon-Colonche. Agroforestry in San Plácido and Honorato Vasquez.

§ Buffer zones of the Llanganates National Park; Sumaco National Park; and Antisana Reserve and Yasuní National Park and Biosphere Reserve.

	available, specific fragmentation rates will also be established.	
Number of biological corridors with community strategies to prevent habitat fragmentation	Connectivity areas identified for all bio-corridors but without governance or implementation mechanisms  Yanuncay Biological corridor with management plan and implementation mechanism	At least 12 bio-corridors with community implementation strategies to reduce habitat fragmentation among the following 15 potential areas identified: North Andean region (Paramo and Andean forest): 3 bio-corridors Central Andean region (Paramo and Andean forest): 5 bio-corridors Coastal region (mangrove and dry forests): 5 bio-corridors Amazon region (tropical rainforest): 2 bio-corridors
Increased number of communities that obtain certification against national or international standards	20% of communities have obtained certification.	At least 60% of communities obtain certification by relevant entities for their sustainable livelihood activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agro-ecological practices</li> <li>- Sustainable tourism</li> <li>- Sustainable use of species</li> <li>- Non-timber forest products</li> </ul>
Increased number of communities aware of importance of maintaining ecological connectivity and of existence of sustainable livelihood options	TBD. A survey will be conducted at project inception in a representative sample of communities in the target areas	At least 40% of adult community members in target areas are aware of the importance to maintain ecological connectivity and are able to quote environmentally friendly production practices

**Outcome 1:** Effective community land use governance and planning is in place for increasing ecological connectivity in 4 ecosystems

Number of biological corridor management plans developed by communities in partnership with CBOs, local government, private sector and NGOs	Yanuncay biological corridor covering 41,000 ha designed by 10 local communities and with a management plan (Andean region)	At least 12 additional biological corridors (among the 15 identified) with management plans covering an area of some 1'900,000 ha
Number of functioning coordinating territorial bodies	- One coordinating entity for the Yanuncay biological corridor functioning (Andean region) -Two coordination bodies for environmental management with working groups established for Paramo and mangrove ecosystems	At least 9 additional community biological corridor management bodies representing a total of 300 communities operating effectively and in cooperation with local and regional government, community organizations and other stakeholders
Increased number of watershed management plans in project focus areas	6 environmental management plans for the following watersheds: Tabacay in the Canar Province Yanuncay and Jubones in the Azuay Province Chimborazo and Ajuela in the Chimborazo Province Bigal River in the Amazon	15 micro-watersheds within biological corridor areas with management plans

**Outcome 2:** Rural communities have increased sustainable livelihood options appropriate for fragile and globally significant ecosystems

Improved food security of local communities through crop diversification using local cultivars, agro-ecological practices, and other sustainable	10 Andean crop species being recovered in the Paramo in 400 hectares involving 130 communities and 3,900 families	10 Andean crop species recovered (an additional 240 hectares) and incorporated in the family diet, contributing to food security of 60 communities and 1,000 families.  Mollusks and crustaceans available in a
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food production practices	2 marine species sustainably managed by local communities in 2 sites	sustainable manner in 4 communities involving 35 families
Increased number of communities generating income from sustainable production practices such as non-timber forest products, eco-tourism, and alpaca wool	280 communities currently obtain income from sustainable production initiatives	142 additional communities generate income from sustainable production practices involving some 1,500 families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-timber forest products (50 communities)</li> <li>• Alpaca wool (6 communities)</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism (21 communities)</li> <li>• Cocoa and coffee production in agro-forestry systems (65)</li> </ul>
Improved distribution of household income throughout the year as a result of sustainable production activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Income from 80% of local communities depends on the harvest of one cash crop</li> <li>- 5,000 families supported by SGP obtain additional income from sustainable production activities at least once a year in the last 5 years in project area</li> </ul>	At least 1,500 families obtain income at least 4 times a year from sustainable use of biodiversity
Improved gender equity as a result of increased income generation opportunities for women	20% of SGP-funded initiatives in the project areas managed by women with benefits accruing to them.	40% of SGP-funded initiatives will be controlled by women and benefits will accrue to them

<b>Outcome 3:</b> Knowledge systematized and disseminated, and communities trained in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning		
Percentage of successful community projects	90% of SGP-funded projects rated as successful by evaluations (outcomes, outputs and targets met and likelihood of sustainability).	The current 90% rate of successful projects will be maintained or increased during this SGP phase.
Increased number of community leaders active and with demonstrated socio-economic and environmental capacity to represent communities in bio-corridor governance bodies and other relevant policy and sustainable development activities	30 leaders (80% male and 20% female) with improved capacities in each selected area	At least 10 individuals per project with enhanced knowledge and leadership capacities to work with communities in sustainable ecosystem and resources management and to represent them effectively in various bodies and fora. Of these 60% male and 40% female.
Number of community projects that apply adaptive management as a result of timely input from SIMONA	80% of previous projects use SIMONA inputs for adaptive management	At least 80% of projects show evidence of timely course change or improvements in project delivery based on SIMONA inputs

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Project Design and Formulation

##### 3.1.1 Appropriateness of Project Strategy, Approach and Scope

28. According to the PIF for OP5, “A fundamental project strategy is the creation of sustainable production landscapes that diminish habitat fragmentation and enhance ecological connectivity. The

majority of small grant projects will include a sustainable livelihoods component to secure the maximum possible socio-economic benefits for the local population while generating global environmental benefits. Grants will assist communities to carry out activities that generate income, improve food security, enhance community resilience to severe weather events in coastal areas and other risk prone areas, and help maintain the provisioning services of ecosystems that are essential to their livelihoods and well-being. Previous SGP Country Program experience will be used to identify feasible activities such as ecotourism, fisheries management, alpaca breeding, agroforestry systems, low input, agro-ecological production among others. Local capacities at individual and organizational levels will be strengthened for sustainable, conservation-compatible production and access to niche markets. The project will help strengthen indigenous peoples organizations and help them access technical and legal assistance for ecosystem protection in their territories in partnership with relevant national institutions. The project will help develop capacities among CBOs, NGOs and networks for constructive participation in environmental policy consultations at all levels. Finally, an effort for local-regional-national up scaling will be made through public advocacy of environmental policy, and by promoting local, provincial and national government agendas to strengthen public-community alliances for environmental conservation.”

#### The strategy to focus exclusively on biodiversity conservation

29. The SGPP portfolio includes 63 projects, all in the GEF Focal Area of Biodiversity. With such a large number of projects to manage, and with Ecuador being a “megadiverse” country, it was an appropriate strategy for the SGPP to focus on a single Focal Area (Biodiversity). This single focus had numerous benefits including management efficiency, maximizing sharing of lessons learned and applied between projects, facilitating marketing of PITs, and achieving greater impact compared to what could be anticipated given a more dispersed effort including projects in several GEF Focal Areas.

#### Selection of target ecosystems

30. The choice to focus on coastal dry forest, mangrove, tropical rainforest and páramo as target ecosystems for conservation was appropriate as all these ecosystems are of global significance. This evaluator has no way of judging whether the specific areas of these four ecosystems which were chosen were strategic in terms of their conservation value compared to other remnant patches of these ecosystem types within Ecuador as no such comparative analysis was made. **LESSON:** Although it is not anticipated that the SGP would do such studies, when designing a project, consultations with experts in the field and a literature review should be done to find out if such comparative studies have been done and should take those studies into consideration when designing a project to conserve biodiversity, and the results of these consultations should be presented in the PRODOC.

#### The strategy to focus on defined territories rather than the entire country

31. OP5 covered a large and diverse geographic area. The SGPP worked in four territories in distinct regions of the country. Although territory and biocorridor boundaries may be further refined as more detailed biogeographic information is considered, there should be no expansion into new territories during OP6. One exception is made to this recommendation. The SGP may wish to expand into new territories, defining new biocorridors in which to work in those areas, if there are important larger-scale conservation or diversified agriculture initiatives in those areas with which the SGP will collaborate closely and which will lead to enhanced impact and sustainability of the SGP effort.

32. No matter what territories and ecosystems the SGP decides to work in during OP6, this is the right time to enter into a greater level of resolution in defining exactly where to work within a biocorridor, whom exactly to focus work with (which communities and which individuals), and to begin to define more precise and practical management plans for ecosystem conservation which include delimitation of

core ecosystem protection areas, the buffer zones of these areas, activities and levels of activities allowed/disallowed in these areas, etc.

33. It is also the time to focus collaborative efforts with GAD and other government entities on ensuring that *ordenanzas* are in place which favor ecosystem conservation in the territories in which the SGP works.

#### The strategy to adopt a territorial/landscape approach including definition of biocorridors

34. Just because a programme defines certain regions of a country in which it will work, does not mean it has adopted a “landscape approach”. SGP OP5 not only defined certain territories in which to focus its activities in OP5, it also adopted a true landscape approach. This is considered highly appropriate. Within the four territories, biocorridors were defined by local stakeholders. This too is considered highly appropriate, although more conservation science could have usefully been involved in defining the biocorridors and also defining more precisely the “ecological connectivity” to strive for within each of the biocorridors. This does not mean a theoretical definition of ecological connectivity. It refers to defining a specific plan for ecological connectivity within each of the biocorridors, using detailed maps showing remnant ecosystem patches, communities and specific incursion points into ecosystem patches, etc.

#### The three-pronged approach of ecological connectivity, production landscapes and alliance forming

35. The three-pronged approach adopted by SGP OP5 which ensured that activities to pursue ecological connectivity, sustainable livelihood options, and associativity were included in all projects, is very much in keeping with the philosophy of the SGP and the GEF as a whole. Nevertheless, in some SGP-supported projects, it seems to have been somewhat misunderstood. Some projects interpreted this to mean simply that every project must have these three elements rather than that the three elements should be integrally linked to one another. During several interviews with groups, such as for example the women’s sewing group or the women’s group that is producing “chicha”, when asked by the TEE how they perceived their activity might help conserve the ecosystem of interest, there was little recognition of this link.

#### Approach to identifying projects and CSOs with whom to work

36. The approach of working exclusively in areas where previous successful SGP-supported projects had worked before was strategic given limited time and resources and the benefits derived from building on an existing foundation. As a result of this approach, there was no open call for project proposals as there had been in previous operational phases.

37. SGP OP5 also placed importance (although this was not a strict criteria) on choosing areas in which to work where other projects were working and whose work would complement that of the SGPP and vice-versa. This too was a good approach.

#### Approach to identifying who to focus efforts on within communities

38. It is of course important to involve the entire community in some project activities, e.g., planning, *mingas*, decision-making, etc... But it is also important to identify specific families and individuals within that community to focus project efforts on, especially production-oriented activities. It is best to ensure that production-oriented activities supported by projects are aimed strategically at the stakeholders who present the greatest (and usually most direct) threat to the target ecosystem and/or who have the greatest potential for conserving it.

### Approach of establishing associativity

39. SGP OP5 required project proposals to stipulate partnerships and associativity with several entities (e.g., several communities, GADs, CSOs, etc.). Although this makes projects more difficult to manage, it was a very good approach as in most cases long-term conservation is not in the hands of a single entity and does depend on the buy-in and coordinated efforts of numerous stakeholders.

40. Establishing associations between CSOs and local government entities was a strategic approach. Some difficulties were experienced in that: 1) local government *técnicos* are often moved every year making continuity difficult, and, 2) oftentimes the GADs did not provide their contribution on time (e.g., seedlings were provided too late for planting). Nevertheless, these associations are important and effort should be made to continue strengthening them in OP6.

41. The assessment of specific partnerships within the overall context of associativity is presented in section 3.2.2 of this report.

### Approach to identifying project activities

42. Many projects in the SGP portfolio successfully link production-oriented activities supported by the project directly with ecological connectivity. On the other hand, there are projects where activities do not address threats but appear rather to adopt a general prescription whether or not it relates to the problem adopting “the same medicine is good for everyone” approach. There appears to be little connection between production-oriented activities supported by those projects and enhancing ecological connectivity. A few examples from projects visited by the TEE illustrate this point in Section 3.3.6 on impact. A rigorous threats analysis should be undertaken for each project. A good threats analysis was done for the SGPP, but less rigour was applied to defining threats within each project. A format and a good concrete example of a threats analysis could be shared with communities as a guide/tool.

### **3.1.2 Analysis of Project Logical/Results Framework**

43. The TEE recognizes the difficulty of developing a single project logframe for what is really a portfolio of more than 60 individual projects. Given the challenge, the logframe is certainly acceptable. There is, naturally, some room for improvement. Although it would be impossible given the time frame for the TE to critically analyze each of the 63 individual project logframes, the TEE did review those of the projects she visited and concludes that many have similar weaknesses as described below. The following brief analysis may serve to help in the development of future logframes.

- Use precise and correct terminology. For example, The Baseline for Indicator 2 related to the project objective uses ‘habitat fragmentation’ and ‘deforestation rates’ as if these are interchangeable. They are not the same thing and should not be confused. The next example is related to the same indicator. It is not clear what is meant by the “selected zones”. It is best to be precise with terminology. Avoid use of vague terms.
- Some targets appear to be randomly established rather than based on meaningful criteria. This can and often does result in unreasonable expectations of a project. Moreover, randomly set targets, even if achieved, do not necessarily result in the desired outcome. Targets should not specify random quantitative amounts/increases/decreases, but rather should be based on projections that are meaningful. For example, the target related to the Indicator (2) for the project objective is “habitat coverage remains the same or higher in at least 70% of land in grant receiving communities”. Why 70%? The target appears to be arbitrary. No explanation is provided as to why this specific target was chosen. Furthermore, the baseline and the target are

not consistent, as the target does not relate to fragmentation but rather to coverage.

- In some cases project outcomes are combined that really have nothing to do with each other and appear to be combined for the sole purpose of streamlining the logframe by reducing the number of Outcomes. This practice should be avoided, as it brings no benefit and can be problematic. Ex: Outcome 3. “Knowledge systematized and disseminated, and communities trained in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning.” This is really 2 different outcomes, “knowledge systematized and disseminated” could be one outcome and “communities trained in project design...” should be a separate outcome.
- Some of the indicators defined are not S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and/or Time bound), and ecological indicators need to be strengthened if impact is to be measured.

Those aspects of the logframe pertaining to the baseline are addressed in section 3.2.5 of this report.

### 3.1.3 Analysis of Assumptions and Risks

44. Assumptions and Risks were properly identified as were mitigation measures to address them and the design of the project adequately took these into account.

45. The main risks identified by the SGP as described in the PRODOC were:

Risk	Rating	Mitigation Measures
Difficulties in accessing markets for communities' products	Medium	Some products already have reliable markets and are traded for a reasonable price (e.g., alpaca wool). New products or services to be introduced during this SGP phase will require market analysis to assess their economic viability. SGP will work with existing networks and groups engaged in fair trade and marketing of community-based products to ensure timely and effective support, and will encourage private sector engagement. SGP will also link communities to other initiatives such as the UNCTAD Biotrade initiative, BioCAF, and the Corporate Citizen Business Initiatives promoted by the National System of PA with GEF funding. The global GEF SGP launched at CBD COP10 the first catalogue of communities' biodiversity-based products as a further step towards tapping into international markets for these products.
Vulnerability of community projects to severe weather events and other climate-related risks	Medium	Grants will be made keeping in mind potential climate-related risks, and steps will be taken to build mitigation measures in the project design to minimize the risk and/or adapt to new conditions when possible (e.g., using drought-resistant species/varieties in agro-forestry projects, locating project infrastructure in higher areas to prevent damage from floods, etc.). SGP-Ecuador will analyze with the NSC the possibility of replicating the method developed by SGP Mexico to “climate proofing” projects and to reduce their vulnerability to natural disaster risks.
Failure by local governments to fulfill their commitments towards community-implemented projects	Medium	SGP grant approval policy in Ecuador requires committing a counterpart contribution of >50% of the total budget from communities and local government. Experience has shown that sometimes local government commitments do not materialize due to factors such as illiquidity, shifting priorities, change in authorities, and so on. SGP will take the following mitigation measures: signing agreements endorsed by legislative chambers, incorporating local governments as stakeholders sharing responsibility for project implementation, and making pledges to the project public.
Weak governance and social leadership guiding organizations' participants	Low	A common organizational weakness is the limited supply of social leaders committed to their organizations and sustainable development. This situation curtails organizations' effective involvement in projects, because the absence of clear, proactive leaders can generate conflicts and delays in implementing a community project. Project actions to mitigate this risk will include strengthening CBO governance mechanisms, developing the capacity of local leaders, apply participatory monitoring and evaluation to ensure

		transparency, and enable communities to take ownership of the project for continuity.
Insufficient professionals specializing in the SGP focal areas in the project zones	Low	Because of socio-economic conditions and territorial location, there are few local professionals in SGP working zones to provide technical backstopping for communities. SGP will therefore support training of community leaders and will work with existing networks of practitioners to help train local technicians who, with project motivation and incentives, can specialize and continue providing technical assistance to communities after SGP's support winds down. The NSC will also make available its expertise during the life of the project.
Community failure to protect ecologically sensitive zones within the project areas from large-scale extraction or productive activities	Medium	The project will contribute through its first three components to generating sustainable livelihoods and community development strategies committing societal support and public opinion to conserve environmentally important territories and to reduce the threat of large-scale economic activities that may seriously damage these ecosystems. It will also help strengthen negotiations skills of community leaders so that they can successfully engage in dialogue with the Government and the private sector at the local and national levels. SGP through the NSC will also help open the door for dialogue with the central Government.

### 3.1.4 Lessons from relevant Initiatives incorporated into Project Design

46. A program that has operated for two decades has had ample opportunity to learn from its own experiences as well as those of other projects/initiatives. Ecuador's SGP has made a strong and successful effort to carefully and comprehensively document its experiences and to incorporate lessons learned from those experiences in the design and management of new projects.

47. In addition to learning from its own experiences, the SGP incorporated experiences from other relevant initiatives in the country including the UNDP Ecuador ART project, COMDEKS, and the experiences of environmental NGO networks, PASNAP, MAGAP, IEPS, Universities, and local governments.

### 3.1.5 Stakeholder Participation

48. Ecuador's SGP OP5 placed great importance on participation of stakeholders at all stages of project design, development, implementation and monitoring. The planning for this and the actual implementation of it were excellent. The SGP planned to involve (and did involve) a great variety of stakeholders including CSOs, NGOs (local, regional and national), academic institutions, national government (MAGAP, MAE, IEPS) and many GADs from the various project areas. Communities were intimately involved in all facets of OP5.

49. The gender equity approach adopted by the SGP was excellent. All project frameworks specify activities to ensure participation of women in both benefit sharing as well as decision-making. Projects are monitoring this well and are ensuring through targets set around participation of women that this is a reality. Many men proudly mention the exact statistics regarding women's participation in the projects they are involved in. Because gender inequity is still a serious problem in rural communities in Ecuador, it is critical that the SGP continue to focus on gender equity in future and place even greater importance on ensuring the decision-making role of women within projects.

50. The design of OP5 was highly participatory and very well documented. Perhaps the only type of participation that still needs to be enhanced is greater participation of conservation and ecosystem scientists to ensure greater scientific rigour related to planning and implementation of conservation activities.

### **3.1.6 Replication Approach**

51. The NCU is very much aware of the need for the SGPPs to serve as a model which can be replicated and to replicate as well as scale-up efforts as much as possible. One very successful project which the TEE visited which grows coffee in an agroforestry system on the coast, CEPROCAFE, had written to the NCU stating that they no longer wished to participate in the project. They felt they no longer needed the project as the project has been so successful, the effort is now self-sustaining. Nevertheless, the NC contacted CEPROCAFE to ask them to stay in the project as it was essential for replication of the effort within their immediate area that they do so. Had they discontinued involvement, even though the effort could have certainly been viewed as a model, it would not have been viewed by nearly as many people. Indeed, this project has already been successful in getting other coffee growers to replicate their model and it is rightly with pride that they boast that one of their members is now asked to consult as an expert on growing coffee within agroforestry systems and has been paid to share his expertise, gained in part through the SGPP, with other coffee farmers. There has also been successful scaling-up and CEPROCAFE expects to acquire all the necessary registrations to market their coffee soon. On the other hand, CEPROCAFE is battling an uphill battle when they informed that recently MAGAP has held several meetings with coffee growers and potential coffee growers in the immediate vicinity of CEPROCAFE to promote large-scale coffee production (not grown in an agroforestry system).

52. Another example of replication is between projects. Both the “Sustainable Financing of Ecuador’s National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) and Associated Private and Community-managed PA Subsystems” project and the “Adaptation to Climate Change” project replicated the SGP mechanism for inviting and selecting project proposals. The first-mentioned project also adopted the OP5 monitoring system, SIMONAA, to monitor its own projects.

53. The above-cited examples are presented for illustrative purposes. It is not possible to cite all examples of replication in the portfolio, but the overall assessment is that there is a strong awareness and a concurrent effort on the part of the SGPP to ensure that replication and scaling-up happens.

### **3.1.7 UNDP Comparative Advantage**

54. UNDP is the administrator of the SGP and as such has a great comparative advantage as the Implementing Agency for the SGPP. Moreover, the UNDP CO has a great deal of experience with biodiversity conservation projects and with GEF projects. It is well informed of all UNDP/GEF projects in country and periodically convenes all of the project directors of those projects to share information and experience with each other and with UNDP.

55. UNOPS, the Executing Agency for this SGPP, does not have presence in the country, whereas UNDP does, enabling UNDP to assume some of the administrative tasks that would normally be assumed by the Executing Agency.

56. UNDP has extensive experience working both with Governments and with civil society. UNDP’s mission involves enhancing the well-being of people while protecting the environment and as such it is perfectly suited to be the Implementing Agency for this project.

### **3.1.8 Linkages with other Interventions in the Sector within the Country**

57. Linkages were made between the SGPP with several other relevant initiatives as anticipated at project design. These included with:

- The “Sustainable Financing of Ecuador’s National System of Protected Areas (NSPA) and Associated Private and Community-managed PA Subsystems”, a UNDP/GEF project.
- The “Management of Chimborazo’s Natural Resources” a FAO/GEF project aiming to conserve and sustainably manage the Chimborazo páramo and the biodiversity of mountain ecosystems, and to improve local livelihoods through strengthening policy, legal and institutional frameworks and local awareness, capacities and incentives for participation in planning and sustainable natural resource management.
- The Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation Project, an IADB/GEF project to “improve the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity in Ecuador through the promotion of a network of representative and well managed marine and coastal protected areas and targeted actions for the protection of key threatened marine species”.
- And, the “Conservation of the biodiversity of the Páramo in the Northern and Central Andes” a UNEP/GEF project to develop páramo management plans, and enhance the replicability potential of sustainable natural resources management initiatives.

### **3.1.9 Management Arrangements**

#### The National Steering Committee (NSC)

58. The NSC includes 10 individuals from a variety of institutions and organizations as prescribed in the SGP guidance regarding NSCs. The NSC includes only one expert in any of the ecosystems of conservation focus (coastal dry forest). It does not include conservation experts in any of the other ecosystems the SGP in Ecuador is trying to conserve. The NSC is not meant to be a scientific group but rather a group with strategic oversight of the SGPP. Nevertheless, ensuring adequate science is applied to both strategy development related to the SGPP and that conservation science is applied to individual projects, is essential if the goal of conserving ecosystems of global significance is to be achieved. As it may not be practical to include one expert in each ecosystem type (e.g. páramo, tropical rain forest, coastal dry forest, mangrove) covered by the SGP on the NSC, and even if it were, this may not achieve the desired result, it is recommended that a “Scientific Ecosystem Conservation and Ecological Connectivity Working Group” be comprised to advise the NSC on strategic directions related to ecological connectivity, to provide a scientific review of the ecological connectivity activities proposed in individual projects, and to help ensure strategic linkages with relevant conservation programmes and projects. The Scientific Working Group should be comprised of conservation biologists, ecologists, geographers, ecological monitoring experts, wildlife ecologists and botanists. These scientists could come from conservation NGOs, universities and government institutions such as MAE. All project proposals should be vetted by that group before being approved by the NSC. A strategic project modality may be considered to enable implementation of this recommendation.

59. The TOR for the NSC have remained unchanged since the MTE which recommended that the NSC’s TOR be modified to ensure the body assumed more of a strategic planning and oversight role. At present, as before, the main role of the NSC is to review proposed projects and approve them. It is time for the NSC to adopt a greater oversight role for the SGP program. Members of the NSC interviewed by the TEE expressed their concern that they would not have the necessary time to devote to truly directing the program. Given that the NSC members are volunteers and all have busy schedules, it may not be realistic for this group to design the strategic direction of the SGP, but it is certainly reasonable to expect it to assume a role of overseeing the SGP program. Beginning in OP6 it is recommended that the NCU present an annual workplan with budget to the NSC for its review and approval.

### The NCU

60. The NCU is somewhat bigger than most SGP NCUs in other countries. It is comprised of the National Coordinator (NC), the Programme Assistant (PA), the Projects Assistant, the driver, the Communications Consultant, and the monitoring consultant. All except the monitoring consultant are paid for with GEF funds. The monitoring consultant was contracted with both project and COMDEKS funds. In comparison, the NCU in Costa Rica has three people, Mexico had two (plus interns), Peru has two, Kenya had three, and Pakistan has four to five. All the aforementioned are also “upgraded” SGPs.

61. Although all of the individuals are capable and hard-working, it may be worthwhile to consider streamlining the NCU in OP6, especially as the GEF allocation will be less than half (40%) of that of OP5. Another option would be to seek non-GEF funding if the current number of persons is to be maintained. Finally, consider whether some positions, for example, the Projects Assistant, could be a field-based rather than a Quito-based position. The role of the monitoring consultant should evolve in OP6 to involve planning and managing the ecological mapping recommended in this report in another section. Thus, this individual should be a Geographer/GIS Consultant with expertise in ecological monitoring.

62. There are several “layers” between the NCU and the projects as described in the paragraphs which follow.

### THE EQUIPATEN

63. The EQUIPATEN, an NGO by the name of *Oficina para la Investigación Social y del Desarrollo* (OFIS), provided services including monitoring of the EQUIPATE, drafting of the PIF, systematization of the planning phase of the project, facilitation of workshops, design and validation of SIMONAA, periodic validation of the application of the ART/SGP methodology, conflict management, fund raising, and assistance with ensuring that the territorial approach was consistently applied, amongst other services.

64. The EQUIPATE and the EQUIPATEN provide their services through the modality of “strategic projects” with an approximate cost of \$150,000 each over a three year period. There were four EQUIPATE (one for each region) and one EQUIPATEN, so the total cost of these was approximately \$750,000.

### The EQUIPATE

65. The four regional Technical Assistance Teams (EQUIPATE) played a critical role in OP5 as the territories, biocorridors, and new associations were being defined and developed, and as a new monitoring system was being developed and put in place. The role of these four NGOs was to monitor and support the projects in the four territories. Without their involvement there is no doubt that many of the projects could not have been approved and that there would have been far less input into SIMONAA. Their technical assistance role has been less important. Their involvement was made possible through four “strategic projects”. Given the large number of projects involved in this SGPP, and the inability of any NCU to effectively provide the technical and other types of support as well as the monitoring necessary for this large number of projects, engaging regionally-based NGOs was an appropriate and cost-effective means of providing necessary project monitoring and other support. This may serve as a good model for other country SGPs with large project portfolios.

### Project Coordinators

66. Each individual project has a Project Coordinator who is usually a local person from one of the

communities involved in the project. In addition, each project has a local person who acts as the project accountant. Both the Project Coordinator and the accountant are paid through each grant project's resources. Although this has been for many of these individuals a difficult and trying task, it has also been for many the first responsibility of its kind they have had in their life. For many women who are Project Coordinators, this has been a real source of empowerment. The Project Coordinator for the women's group which is focused on the production and sale of "chicha" (a local drink) and of a Guinea Pig plate which is becoming known as a PIT for the region, affirms that her involvement in the project has changed the decision-making roles in her household so that instead of having to ask her husband permission to be involved in activities or having to depend on him for money needed, she now has total economic and decision-making independence. Her story is highlighted here for illustrative purposes but is by no means unique. Ensuring that women not only participate in projects but that they also assume project management roles is making a real difference to women and to communities and is thereby also helping the SGP to achieve its goals.

## **3.2 Project Implementation**

### **3.2.1 Adaptive Project Management (changes to project design/outputs during implementation)**

67. In keeping with guidance for TE reports, this section refers exclusively to changes made to project design/outputs during implementation. There have not been significant changes to the SGPP design or outputs during the implementation of OP5. Nevertheless, some design changes have taken place within individual projects. As an illustrative example, in the case of a project in the Amazon, the ecological connectivity activities were, according to project design, to have been directed to the buffer zone of a national park (Llanganates), but once the project started it was determined that the park was too far away so the project focused its "ecological connectivity" activities on a closer mountain that still has relatively intact forests and which represents the source of water for that community. This adaptive management is logical and good but it is also indicative of insufficient planning at design stage.

### **3.2.2 Partnership Arrangements**

68. As mentioned in a previous section, OP5 put great emphasis on creating alliances between different stakeholders. For many communities, their involvement in OP5 represented the first opportunity for them to work jointly with other communities and with GAD on efforts of common interest (working toward the conservation of an ecosystem of interest to all, joint marketing of products, etc.). Further definition of strategic partnerships will be important in OP6 especially as GEF funds will be reduced and maximizing cost-effectiveness will be critical.

#### **MAGAP**

69. MAGAP has been correctly identified by the SGP as a critical partner and the *Redes Comerciales* Unit within MAGAP has been especially important to the success of SGP activities related to diverse agriculture and marketing of agricultural products. Upon the invitation of the SGP, MAGAP sent representatives to the MTBs on the coast and in the Amazon to share information about various mechanisms for marketing of agricultural produce and products including "*canastas campesinas*". Although these baskets, which contain a variety of local produce and sometimes products such as honey, and are sold for a fixed price, cannot officially be marketed due to regulatory restrictions, they can be sold directly to MAGAP for sale to MAGAP personnel. This is not an arrangement specifically with the SGP (MAGAP has this arrangement with others as well) but the SGP is facilitating it and is also helping to "broker" these arrangements in ways to ensure the greatest benefit is derived by farmers involved in

SGPP. Some farmers on the coast had made inquiries six months before the workshop but had not yet had any reply from MAGAP regarding their inquiries. Efforts were made by the NCU to follow up with MAGAP on these inquiries but as of the end of OP5, even though there are other communities participating in the “*canastas campesinas*” which are *not* part of SGPP, most of the projects have yet to solidify this form of collaboration with MAGAP and what may be an important marketing outlet for them.

70. More sharing of SGP experiences with other departments within MAGAP who may not be very aware of the SGP activities may be helpful. The NCU may wish to consider organizing an event for the SGP to present its initiatives and results at MAGAP as, according to the General Coordinator for Commercial Networks within MAGAP, many at the Ministry are unaware of SGP experiences and approaches outside of their own units/departments.

71. MAGAP also believes that as FAO supports various projects dealing with diversified agriculture, greater sharing of information between the SGP and FAO may have some fruitful results.

#### Partnership with MAE

72. There has been a good partnership with MAE during OP5. An even stronger partnership with MAE during OP6 could be fruitful especially as related to the further development of biocorridors, and to ensure strategic location of SGP-supported projects in coordination with Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar whenever appropriate (assuming the programme continues), as well as with other larger-scale conservation efforts.

73. MAE itself is developing a system of biocorridors. The proposal to develop such biocorridors is included in Ecuador’s National Development Plan and also in MAE’s strategic plan. As the SGP “Biocorridors for Living Well” are further developed and as MAE proceeds with its own efforts to define biocorridors, it will be important for the two efforts to be complementary.

74. MAE is also the administrator of the Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar programme. Although the TEE recognizes that not all parties in Ecuador believe in the philosophical approach adopted by this programme, the evaluation believes it is an important mechanism for conservation which is widely in use and which could provide an important complement to individual grant projects. As two illustrative examples, the TEE met with a woman farmer who lived on the very edge of the páramo and immediately adjacent to a protected area (Chimborazo) whose family used to have 600 sheep who grazed inside the páramo but now as a result of their involvement in the Socio-Paramo programme, they have sold all their sheep and now graze far fewer livestock and of a kind with much less negative impact on the ecosystem. They now own 125 alpacas. The páramo to be conserved is very clearly delineated (with small white concrete markers) and the community is compensated for the changes it has made and derives benefit from this. Women from her community and others nearby are selling alpaca products they make at the gift shop in the park. Another example is in the case of the community of Santa Rita in the Amazon where 3,000 ha of rainforest are being conserved through the Socio-Bosque programme in conjunction with the SGP/COMDEKS project compared to 6 ha which were revegetated and are being conserved through the SGPP through a community conservation agreement.

#### Partnership with the Network of Private Forest Reserves

75. The Network of Private Forest Reserves (*La Corporación Nacional de Bosques y Reservas Privadas del Ecuador*, CNBRPE) is a network of highly dedicated private forest landowners who have forest reserves totaling approximately 70,000 ha (and growing) which they conserve and which officially belong to Ecuador’s system of protected areas (SNAP). CNBRPE collaborates with several universities

on forest conservation research. They have a strong motivation to work in a collaborative way with communities bordering their forest reserves to ensure the sustainability of their forests. Although CNBRPE was involved in one of the 63 projects in the SGP portfolio, there may well be scope to include them in more projects in future. This would help enhance sustainability of SGP benefits to local community members as well as enhancing sustainability of the forest reserves.

#### Partnerships/collaborations with larger-scale conservation and agroecology projects & programmes

76. Ecuador's SGP-supported projects work in areas where previous SGP and other projects have existed. This is a good strategy, but it would also be helpful to identify larger-scale conservation and agroecology projects in the country and collaborate with those projects. The SGP has already done this successfully with several projects in OP5 including the "Sustainable Financing of Ecuador's National System of Protected Areas and Associated Private and Community-managed PA Subsystems". There are also other relevant projects where collaborations might be investigated in OP6. Some of these are: the FAO/GEF "Management of Chimborazo's Natural Resources", the FAO/GEF "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, Forest, Soil and Water to Achieve the Good Living in the Napo Province", the FAO/GEF "Promotion of Climate-smart Livestock Management Integrating Reversion of Land Degradation and Reduction of Desertification Risks in Vulnerable Provinces", the IADB/GEF "Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation", the UNDP/GEF "Advancing Landscape Approaches in Ecuador's National Protected Area System to improve Conservation of Globally Endangered Wildlife", the "Conservation of Ecuadorian Amphibian Diversity and Sustainable Use of its Genetic Resources".

77. OP6 provides an opportunity for the SGP to further investigate possibilities of collaboration with these projects, especially as several of them are still in their initial phases and real possibilities may exist for collaboration. For example, it may be helpful to pursue some form of collaboration with FAO projects related to "producción diversificada". According to MAGAP, FAO may not be familiar with the work of the SGP but there could be interesting links. If there is a strong reason to do so, if one of the above-cited projects exists outside of one of the territories or biocorridors currently defined by the SGP, it may be worth considering expansion into that area in OP6.

#### Partnerships with Youth Organizations

78. The SGPPs which have purposefully promoted participation of youth have been very successful. The *Grupo de Jóvenes La Casita* who are involved in the mangrove conservation project at Isla Corazon (the "*Conservando el ecosistema manglar con acciones de restauración y desarrollo de emprendimientos productivos sostenibles en el Estuario del Rio Chone*" project), for example, have demonstrated a dynamic and super enthusiastic approach and now have their own restaurant serving local dishes, trained and certified tour guides which offer tours of the nearby mangroves, kayaks which they rent to tourists, and informational materials. They have joined with another group supported by the SGP (a women's group) in their Biocorridor which makes T-shirts and mugs (with local landscapes and wildlife printed on them) and sell them at their restaurant. The focus on involving youth should continue and expand in OP6 as it is very promising.

#### Partnerships with universities

79. One of many innovations in OP5 was the establishment of a small scholarship fund for university students to support their research for their thesis studies related to a theme of interest to the SGP. Nine academic institutions including the Universidad Técnica del Norte (Departamento de Agroindustrias), the Escuela Politécnica Nacional (Mercadeo), the Universidad Católica Sede Azoguez (Carrera de Ingeniería Empresarial), the Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo ESPOCH (Departamento de Marketing), the Universidad Católica de Cuenca (Carrera Emprendimiento), the Universidad Técnica de Ambato

(Carrera de Economía), the Universidad Estatal del Sur de Manabí (Escuela de Comercio Exterior), the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (Carrera de Organización y Desarrollo Comunitario), and the Universidad Católica Sede Regional Manabí (Carrera de Turismo) have been involved in the programme. Most of the theses have been related to marketing of PIT products. The TEE recommends expanding further upon this program, reaching out to even more universities (including in particular the new Ikiam Regional Amazonian University in Napo), and involving students from departments which focus on geography, ecology, wildlife and ecosystem conservation as well as those departments already involved which focus mostly on product development, marketing and community development.

80. Consider a strategic project in OP6 with Ikiam to involve community members from the local area who have extensive traditional knowledge as “visiting lecturers” offering short courses at the university on topics such as medicinal plants, agroecology, and other subject matter in which they are true experts. The TEE saw a garden of medicinal plants in the community of Pashimbi (developed with the help of a different project) and met with many individuals who had extensive knowledge in this area. Involving these local experts as visiting lecturers at Ikiam would both promote official recognition of traditional knowledge and help promote replication of SGP efforts.

### **3.2.3 Feedback from M&E used for adaptive management**

81. SGP Country Programmes have tremendous opportunities for adaptive management as they usually continue over long time periods and have great opportunity for learning lessons and incorporating them. The landscape approach adopted in OP5 was a result of both feedback from M&E as well as lessons learned from other relevant initiatives (UNDP ART programme, COMDEKS).

#### Adaptive Management Resulting from the MTE

82. The MTE made six recommendations. Two of these recommendations related to the NSC. The TEE did not see evidence that either of the recommendations related to the NSC were implemented. The NSC has basically maintained the same functions it had before the MTE and has not, as recommended, assumed new strategic management functions. One of the reasons for this, as expressed by several members of the NSC, is lack of time. As volunteers, they are already committing significant time to reviewing project proposals and do not feel that (even if they were paid) they have enough time to assume such responsibilities. They would rather depend on the NC to play that strategic role.

83. The TEE proposes a middle-ground approach recommending that the NCU develop and submit an annual workplan and budget to the NSC for their review and approval, and that the NSC review and approve the draft PIF and draft project document before these are submitted at the beginning of each Operational Phase, and that furthermore any TE recommendations related to strategic issues be monitored in terms of their implementation by the NSC.

### **3.2.4 Project Finance**

84. Financial management of the project was generally good with only minor challenges. There was a time lag at project outset in releasing funds which caused a delay of several months, but other than that the SGP experienced no significant financial delays or other problems.

#### External Audit

85. No external audit was conducted during OP5. Instead, the NCU did an internal audit of several

individual projects taking a sample of two projects per each of the four regions included in the SGPP. Several minor adjustments to projects were recommended as a result of the audit. One significant financial management problem was identified in one project which caused the NCU to (appropriately) change the executing entity for that project.

86. Although internal audits are useful, external audits should be conducted of UNDP projects. During OP5, the GEF Secretariat indicated that (at least for upgrading Country Programme projects) audits would no longer be financed with GEF funds and that the cost of these should be incurred by the GEF Implementing Agency for each project. The audit was budgeted for in the PIF (\$5,000) but not in the PRODOC. According to the GTA for Upgraded SGPs, UNDP could not provide the funding for it.

### Co-Financing

87. Reported co-financing will increase somewhat by the actual end date of the project since the final financial reports from all individual projects have not yet been received by the SGP at the time of the TE when this report was prepared.

88. Regarding *in-cash* co-financing, despite the shortfall in actual versus planned co-financing related primarily to lesser in-cash contributions received from both national government (MAGAP – 99.5% less than amount committed at project design stage) and from UNDP (64% less than amount committed at design), the additional cash co-financing secured from beneficiary organizations over and above what had originally been committed (138% more than the amount committed at project design) resulted in helping to close the gap between committed and actual co-financing with a negative difference of slightly more than half a million dollars at project end.

89. **LESSON:** The specific collaborative mechanism chosen may affect co-financing commitments. It may be helpful to pursue more agile mechanisms for collaborating with MAGAP in future. Instead of “*convenios*” with the Ministry, OP6 should consider working through “*acuerdos de trabajo*” with specific units within the Ministry, such as, for example with Redes Comerciales Unit. If *convenios* are pursued, these should be with the Ministry itself rather than with the Vice-Minister. Some important committed co-financing from MAGAP was not realized in OP5 because, with a change of Vice-Minister, 2 projects and 1 program which were to provide co-financing were ended.

90. Regarding in-kind co-financing, both the UNDP CO and the NCU indicated that actual in-kind co-financing by national government entities (both MAGAP and MAE) and by the UNDP CO itself is under-represented as all contributed significantly in terms of personnel participation in workshops, meetings, and in terms of provision of goods and services but none kept careful track of these in-kind contributions despite repeated requests from the NCU to do so. Therefore, unfortunately, their contribution cannot be accounted for.

91. **LESSON:** Under-reporting of in-kind contributions may give the impression of lesser national government buy-in to project objectives than is actually the case and effort should be made to keep track of these important contributions.

**TABLE 3: CO-FINANCING COMMITMENTS AT PROJECT SIGNING AND ACTUAL DISBURSEMENTS BY TIME OF EVALUATION**

#	Sources of Co-Financing	Name of Co-Financier (source)	Type of Co-financing	Amount at design (USD)	Disbursed as of time of TE (USD)	Difference (USD)*
1	National Government	MAGAP	Cash	1,000,000	5,000	(-) 995,000
2	"	"	In-kind	1,000,000	0	(-) 1,000,000
3	"	MAE	Cash	0	616,043	(+) 616,043
4	"	"	In-kind	150,000	0	(-) 150,000
5	GEF Agency	UNDP	Cash	1,000,000	357,750	(-) 642,250
6	"	"	In-kind	0	150,000	(+) 150,000
7	CSO	C-CONDEM, FOTAENA, grantees including from the Satoyama Fund	Cash	960,000	1,320,129	(+) 360,129
8	"	"	In-kind	690,000	1,806,375	(+) 1,116,375
	Total			4,800,000	4,255,297	(-) 544,703

\*Positive Difference: actual more than committed

Negative Difference: actual less than committed

Planned and secured co-financing amounts are presented by type and source in Table 5 (below).

**TABLE 4: PLANNED AND ACTUAL CO-FINANCING SECURED BY THE PROJECT BY TYPE AND SOURCE**

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (US\$)		Government (US\$)		Partner Agencies (US\$)		Total (US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants	1,000,000	357,750	1,000,000	621,043	960,000	1,320,129	2,960,000	2,298,922
Loans/ Concessions								
• In-kind support		150,000	1,150,000		690,000	1,806,375	1,840,000	1,956,375
• Other								
Totals	1,000,000	507,750	2,150,000	621,043	960,000	3,126,504	4,800,000	4,255,297

### 3.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation: design at entry and implementation (\*)

92. This section is an assessment of the *design* of the M&E plan as well as the *implementation* of the M&E plan.

#### The Baseline

93. To be able to measure impact, a meaningful and measurable baseline must be established. Although the baseline regarding production landscapes and associativity was well established, the baseline related to ecological connectivity was relatively weak and usually not verified through ground-truthing. For example, reference was made in the logframe to planned activities to improve the ecological baseline during project implementation (“habitat coverage\*\* will be determined for each project area and in the case of information exists, fragmentation rates will also be established”), but there was little follow-up in this regard. Thus, there is no adequate ecological connectivity baseline reference with which to compare pre- and post-project ecological connectivity situations.

94. In many cases the ecological baseline refers to number of ha of ecosystem “conserved”. But, in actuality, the precise number of hectares is rarely known and being “conserved” means that the area is

\*\* Although “habitat” was not defined (and is not an appropriate technical term to use in this sense), one assumes it refers to the various ecosystems of focus (i.e., mangroves, dry coastal forests, rainforests, páramo)

under some form of conservation agreement – the actual conservation status has rarely been investigated and, in most cases, no actual measurements or mapping of the target ecosystem patches to be conserved has been done (with the exception of those included in the Socio-Bosque/Paramo/Manglar program -- those were taken by Socio-Bosque). The type of conservation agreement varies from legal agreements to, more commonly, written or verbal community agreements. The community agreements typically have very short (5 years or less) time periods. According to community leaders with whom the TEE met, these short time frames are stipulated in recognition that some of the area may be needed for agricultural or other purposes in the immediate future and thus the community does not want to commit to longer-term conservation of those areas. In essence what is being conserved is what is not needed at present, what is most valued by the community, and what must be conserved by law (for example, Ecuadorian Law stipulates that there is to be no livestock or agricultural use of lands above a certain elevation, the elevation where páramo is found; Ecuadorian Law also stipulates that water sources such as springs are to be kept vegetated and no livestock or agricultural use can be made of land within a certain radius of a water source). Agreements to conserve under the Socio-Bosque/Paramo/Manglar program are the longest-term conservation agreements outside of legally established and declared protected areas including private forest reserves. Socio-Bosque agreements are usually for twenty years.

95. In OP6, ecological baselines need to be established based on actual data regarding the size, conservation status, and distribution (distance between) of patches of target ecosystem over the landscape. The typical response to this suggestion of the TEE by both EQUIPATEs and others was that it would be too expensive. **Lesson:** Technologies now exist that are easily affordable and ecological monitoring systems can be put in place that are very cost-effective, allowing for scientifically established baselines and for monitoring ecological impact in GEF projects.

96. The main costs to consider in OP6 would be for:

- hardware (\$400 for an Android Tablet),
- software (most of which would be free --the software needed would be a couple of aps and the GIS software can be obtained for free through Open Source GIS tools. Google Earth is also a wonderful resource).
- To pay local people to walk the transects periodically (at the beginning of the project, the mid-term, and the end),
- training of trainers to teach people how to use the technology (this approach has worked well in health, resource and other community-based mapping efforts),
- a data manager who could set up the parameters, and manage and interpret data
- small budget for map making/printing

97. This relatively small investment by a “strategic SGP project” of \$150,000 could really help communities, project managers and financiers to understand the conservation impact their effort is having. With these tools one could know much more precisely the size of the mangrove or páramo or forest patches one is trying to conserve, how far and how big the closest patches of like ecosystem are to that patch (to help with strategically designing ecological connectivity efforts), and the conservation status (by using the tools to do transects during which certain types of information are collected, e.g. *potreros* invading the páramo, # of livestock in the area, mining points, etc.). Photos are taken at tracking points and provide helpful additional information.

98. This is a highly participatory, community-based ecological baseline and tracking system approach which in addition to providing critical information regarding ecosystem conservation status within a landscape, also enhances awareness of the importance of conservation, the ecology of conservation, and the role each individual as well as a community plays in conservation.

## Indicators and Targets

99. Indicators and targets are critical elements of an M&E plan, both in terms of how they are defined, and how and when they are measured. The indicators specified in the logframe are not especially S.M.A.R.T., and several of the targets appear to be randomly established and not based on meaningful criteria. This has a significant effect on both the ability to monitor a project and the ability to assess project impact.

Substantiation of the above statement is found in the section which assesses the project logframe.

## **RATING OF M&E SYSTEM DESIGN AT ENTRY: SATISFACTORY (5)**

### M&E Implementation

100. The SGPP placed great importance on implementation of the monitoring plan. A major part of the time dedicated by the EQUIPATE to the project was devoted to SIMONAA. SIMONAA is a comprehensive monitoring system which is the result of experience accumulated over almost 20 years of SGP experience in Ecuador and based on the inputs of the communities, the EQUIPATE, the EQUIPATEN, and the NCU. The system has continuously evolved to meet new challenges in each new operational phase. SIMONAA is seen to be responsive to the current conceptual challenges and programmatic policies in Ecuador. A consultant who assisted in aspects of the design of SIMONAA, continues today as the operational manager for the system ensuring it is kept up-to-date and all pertinent information is uploaded into the system. He is paid through the COMDEKS project and is based in the NCU in Quito.

101. The NCU undertook project monitoring visits during OP5 but did not visit all projects supported during OP5. The NCU depends on the EQUIPATE and EQUIPATEN to assume part of the project monitoring role. It is important for the NCU to have first-hand experience of all projects in the portfolio even if the day-to-day management of these projects is left to others.

### MTE

102. Any project's mid-term evaluation is an important part of its M&E. A mid-term evaluation of the SGPP was conducted two and ½ years after project start. This is a bit after the actual mid-term of the project but adheres to UNDP Guidelines for Mid-Term Reviews.

### TE

103. The terminal evaluation of a project is also an important part of its M&E. Although with many other types of GEF projects the TE is mostly used by stakeholders for other initiatives, in the case of ongoing country SGPs, the TE can provide important information that can be used for the design of the next phase of the SGP.

104. The TE was conducted within the allowable time frame for GEF projects (within 6 months prior to project end or after project end). The TE did not have the benefit of some important input that should normally be available to a TEE given that there were still four months left in project implementation and many of the projects had not yet turned in their final reports. The NCU had not yet prepared the Project Terminal Report which is a comprehensive summary of results achieved, lessons learned, problems met and areas where results may not have been achieved. It can serve as an important input for a TE. The

TEE was informed by the NC that no such report was anticipated from her even though reference was made to one in the PIF for OP5. Moreover, even had such a report been anticipated, due to the deadline for submission of PIFs for OP6, the evaluation mission was to take place before such a report was prepared, in order to meet that deadline. **Lesson:** Although not always feasible, planning a TE after the draft of the PTR is available is always helpful.

105. As was the case with the MTE, the TE was correctly budgeted for in the PIF (\$30,000) but the actual budget made available for these evaluations was only slightly more than what the PIF budgeted for the “translation, layout and printing” of the report (\$8,000). A total of \$ 10,263 was spent on the MTE and \$11,022 was spent on the TE. According to the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (2012), “typical costs for the terminal evaluation of a full-size single-country project are between \$30,000 and \$60,000. According to the GTA for SGP Upgraded Programs, the general guideline for MTE and TEs is to budget approximately \$40,000 for each evaluation.

106. The restricted budget for the TE resulted in fewer days given for the evaluation (21 days) than normal for an evaluation of this kind. **Lesson:** Appropriate budgeting for TEs, within UNDP/GEF norms, should be adhered to. On average, 24 work days should be planned for a SGP terminal evaluation.

107. Although not a requirement, it is good practice to include a national consultant as a team member in terminal evaluations whenever possible. The national consultant can provide critical country-based information, inputs and insights which complement those of an international consultant. This practice is now fairly common in GEF project evaluations.

108. “Upgraded” SGP country programmes are now considered operationally as “full-size” GEF projects but they are significantly different from “traditional” full-size project in many ways, most especially because they are really a portfolio of many smaller projects. Although many evaluation parameters used to assess traditional projects certainly apply to these SGPPs, it may be helpful for the UNDP or GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to consider modifying some of the evaluation criteria used in MTEs and TEs to make them even more meaningful to upgraded SGPPs.

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

Based on both M&E design and implementation, the rating for the overall quality of the M&E system is shown below.

#### **RATING OF OVERALL QUALITY OF M&E: SATISFACTORY (5)**

### **3.2.6 UNDP and Implementing Partner Implementation /Execution, Coordination\* (S)**

#### **UNDP as GEF Implementing Agency\* (HS)**

109. UNDP provided helpful and important support to the Project. The UNDP CO convenes helpful periodic meetings of all UNDP/GEF projects to provide updates and share information with other UNDP/GEF projects. The SGP has actively and regularly participated in these meetings. With the help of the UNDP CO, all UNDP/GEF projects contribute to the development of an informational sharing platform, called “Teamworks”, to better enable sharing of information, methodologies and documentation that could be useful to others.

110. It would also be helpful to have periodic meetings of all GEF projects in the country (whichever the IA might be) to share information and experiences. As this is beyond UNDP’s mandate and also

beyond its convening power, if the GOE believes this to be a useful recommendation, perhaps the GEF Focal Point in Ecuador could consider convening such periodic meetings.

111. Although UNDP did provide support on the development of the project logframe, even greater direction in ensuring that S.M.A.R.T. indicators were identified and that targets based on meaningful criteria were chosen would have been useful. Providing NCUs with one or two excellent examples from other projects is a good practice which usually leads to greater efficiencies. UNDP, through its participation in the NSC and through its review of the project annual PIRs, helped ensure a focus on results and provided adequate supervision of inputs and processes. There were no significant risks which required UNDP intervention in order to manage.

#### UNOPS as Executing Agency\* (HS)

112. In its role as Executing Agency for the project, UNOPS managed the SGP finances, procured equipment, issued contracts and grant payments, and reported according to standard procedures on finances and administration. Despite not having a presence in the country, UNOPS was able to execute the duties assigned to them in a timely manner (according to the NCU usually responding to queries from the NCU within the same day).

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

### **3.3 Project Results**

113. A summary of the attainment of the project objective is followed by a summary of the achievement of Expected Outcomes. This is followed by a Review of Outcomes to Impacts in Table 7. Evaluation of the achievement of the project Outputs is next. Section 3 also includes an assessment of the relevancy of the project, the degree of country ownership, how well the project was mainstreamed with UNDP priorities, and the impact and sustainability of project results. Finally, although not in the report outline provided in the TOR, the TEE has included a section on communications and information sharing.

#### The challenge of attribution

114. Attributing results to a particular phase (OP5) of an ongoing program that has had four previous phases and has been operating for 20 twenty years is difficult. All OP5 projects exist where SGP projects existed in previous phases. Compounding the difficulty of attributing results to a particular project is the number of projects other than those supported by the SGP which are either ongoing or have operated in the same area as SGP-supported projects in the past, many with similar or complementary objectives. In almost all cases, SGP-supported projects work closely together with other projects, each providing inputs which complement and help ensure the success of the other's inputs.

#### **3.3.1 Overall Results (\*)**

##### **Attainment of project objective**

115. The objective of the project as stated in the logframe was "Community initiatives reduce habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity across production landscapes in four priority regions of Ecuador". Five indicators (as described by the project), and targets to be achieved by the end of the project associated with each of the indicators, were described for use in evaluating whether or not the objective was achieved. The targets for each objective indicator are presented below followed by the actual achievement of each:

Indicator	Targets End of Project	Achieved at Time of TE According to logframe completed by NCU††	Status
Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in the following ecosystems: - Paramo - Mangroves - Coastal dry forests - Amazon tropical rainforest	At least 100 additional communities implementing strategies and carrying out activities that increase sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes: - 14,000 ha in the Paramo ecosystem - 600 ha in mangrove ecosystems - 10,000 ha in the coastal dry forest ecosystem - 20,000 ha in the Amazon tropical rainforest	The SGP has been able to work with 324 communities who increase the landscapes/seascapes managed in a sustainable way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23,165 ha of paramo</li> <li>• 1,282 ha of mangrove</li> <li>• 1,767 ha of dry coastal forest</li> <li>• 26,483 ha of tropical rain forest</li> </ul> In addition, the following has been achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17,850 ha of Andean forest</li> <li>• 355 ha of coastal rainforest</li> </ul>	Partially Achieved (3 of 4 targets achieved)  # ha paramo superceded # ha mangrove superceded # ha rainforest superceded # ha coastal dry forest not achieved
Habitat coverage in hectares  And/or  Reduced habitat fragmentation rates in targeted areas	Habitat coverage remains the same or higher in at least 70% of land in grant receiving communities	The habitat coverage which was considered as the baseline for OP5 has been conserved by community agreements and by political agreements in process: declaration as protected area for the La Segua wetland; declaration as protected area of Sucre County the Balsamo mountain range; Cedros Reserve – forest in transition; community agreements for the management of the Sancan Cantagallo forest; community agreement for the conservation of 18,000 ha of tropical rainforest in RETHUS-amazon; community agreements in Amanecer Campesino for the management of 10,000 ha of forest remnant on farms; conservation of the communal paramo of Mojanda.	Achieved
Number of biological corridors with community strategies to prevent habitat fragmentation	At least 12 bio-corridors with community implementation strategies to reduce habitat fragmentation among the following 15 potential areas identified: North Andean region (Paramo and Andean forest): 3 bio-corridors Central Andean region (Paramo and Andean forest): 5 bio-corridors Coastal region (mangrove and dry forests): 5 bio-corridors Amazon region (tropical rainforest): 2 bio-corridors	The MTB from the 16 Biocorridors have continued with the process of articulating the territories. The MTB are a multi-stakeholder forum where work is done in a coordinated way to construct the Biocorridors for Living Well. In these fora, community organizations coordinate their activities with other stakeholders in the territories such as municipal and state-level government entities (GAD), international donors, and universities. Each Biocorridor has a Plan of Action (ACBIO) which is being partially implemented through project activities which began in June 2013.	Achieved
Increased number of communities that obtain certification against national or international standards	At least 60% of communities obtain certification by relevant entities for their sustainable livelihood activities: - Agro-ecological practices	Regarding the increase in the number of communities which have obtained certification for their livelihood activities, the following can be determined at the national level:	Not Achieved

†† Translated from Spanish by the TEE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable tourism</li> <li>- Sustainable use of species</li> <li>- Non-timber forest products</li> </ul>	<p><u>Sustainable Tourism</u></p> <p>The community of San Roque on the coast has its certification for community-based tourism; 4 communities of RETHUS in the amazon are working toward certification in community-based tourism.</p> <p><u>Participatory Guarantee System (SPG) related to Agroecological Practices</u></p> <p>20 communities of the UNOCIGS use this self-regulating and control system in which farmers agree amongst themselves what products they will bring to market for their weekly agroecological fair/market in the Imbaya market in Otavalo; 50 communities of RESSAK began the process of SPG for their market in Cayambe and for their family baskets in coordination with the State government of Pichincha and the county government of Cayambe.</p> <p><u>Central/Southern Andes</u></p> <p>5 communities of Qapac use the SPG for their agroecological fairs/markets in Tambo and in the Cuenca Biofair; 6 communities of Apay use the SPG in 4 agroecological fairs/markets in Cuenca; 12 communities in UNOCISI use the SPG for the market in Santa Isabel; 5 communities in Flor Andina and 11 in Kamach have begun with the process of using the SPG for agroecological production; 3 communities in Ucholoma are in the process of obtaining certification in community-based tourism.</p>	
Increased number of communities aware of importance of maintaining ecological connectivity and of existence of sustainable livelihood options	At least 40% of adult community members in target areas are aware of the importance to maintain ecological connectivity and are able to quote environmentally friendly production practices	Although specific information regarding the percentage of adult community members aware of the importance of maintaining ecological connectivity and able to quote environmentally friendly production practices is not available, it is known that 2,766 people participated in capacity development events sponsored by the SGPP which varied from the rights of nature to agroecological and agroforestry systems, commercialization, organizational strengthening, and environmental management, amongst other topics.	Achieved

116. Reviewing the achievements made by the SGPP during OP5, according to the indicators and targets established and the information provided by the monitoring system regarding actual achievements, two of the project objective targets were achieved, one was partially achieved (and in some aspects

exceeded expectations), one was not achieved, and information is not available to assess whether the last one was achieved. It can thus be said that the project objective was partially achieved.

### **Achievement of expected outcomes**

117. During OP5, the Ecuador SGPP worked with 324 communities in four territories representative of much of the cultural and biological diversity of the country (the coast, the Northern Andes, the Central/Southern Andes and the Amazon). The SGP worked in diverse ecosystems including coastal dry forest, mangrove, wetland, paramo, tropical rainforest, all of them globally significant and all of them endangered nationally and most endangered globally as well.

118. SGP-supported efforts resulted in the identification of 16 biocorridors in 4 regions of the country using participatory processes to identify these biocorridors which cover an area of 1,887,108 ha. Groups of diverse stakeholders included four GTT and 16 MTB have been established and maintained through regular, well-attended meetings.

119. Within these biocorridors, the SGPP contributed to the conservation of:

- 23,165 ha of páramo in the Andes
- 1,282 ha of mangrove in the coast
- 1,767 ha of dry coastal forest in the coast
- 26,483 ha of tropical rain forest in the Amazon

120. SGPP efforts supported ongoing efforts by others related to protected areas, including:

- declaration of the La Segua wetland (a Ramsar site) as a protected area;
- declaration of the Balsamo mountain range as a protected area;
- declaration of the Cedros Reserve;
- establishment of community agreements for the management of the San can Cantagallo forest;
- establishment of community agreements for the conservation of 18,000 ha of tropical rainforest in the Amazon;
- establishment of community agreements in Amanecer Campesino for the management of 10,000 ha of forest remnant on farms; and,
- conservation of the communal páramo of Mojanda

121. The SGPP funded and/or managed 58 projects, not counting the 5 strategic projects which funded the EQUIPATE and EQUIPATEN. The SGP worked with 155 communities, including 1,613 families, in generating income through sustainable production practices in the 16 biocorridors which fell within the four territories. These community-based projects fell primarily into the following thematic groups:

- Coffee production within agroforestry systems (23 communities, 215 families, 224 ha)
- Cacao production within agroforestry systems (39 communities, 480 families, 565 ha)
- Agroecological production using sustainable agricultural practices and systems aimed at maintaining soil productivity and conserving plant genetic resources while producing food and generating income
- Management of mangroves and wetlands for sustainable artisanal fisheries and aquaculture (8 communities, 28 families).

- Community-based tourism (mostly nature-related tourism) (45 communities involved, 295 families)
- Non-timber forest products (46 communities involved, 533 families, 511 ha)
- Alpaca breeding and wool production (7 communities involved, 120 families)
- On-farm pisciculture using native species of fish (20 communities, 354 families)

122. The SGP estimates that the agroecological production efforts supported by the SGP have resulted in a five-fold increase in income for 4,216 families in the 4 territories.

123. One community on the coast has obtained certification related to community-based tourism. Four communities in the Amazon and 3 communities in the Andes are working toward this certification.

124. All projects funded and/or supported by the SGP during OP5 were biodiversity conservation projects although many would also have benefits in other GEF focal areas, in particular land degradation.

125. Less than half (41%) of the projects are managed by women but this is still considered to be an important result as without the project's advocacy for gender equity, this figure would likely have been much lower.

126. These community-based projects were complemented by work with networks of NGOs through a modality established by Ecuador's SGP with the support of UNDP/Ecuador referred to as "Proyectos RED". This modality also existed in OP4. The objective of these projects was to "consolidate and reinforce local capacities of organizations that have implemented SGP projects and include them in the work of the networks, associations and thematic platforms". RED projects relate to three areas: 1) environment, 2) organization and participation and 3) equality of opportunity. In OP5, the objective of the RED projects was to "strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations regarding decision-making related to the management of the biocorridors, land use and sustainable production resources and activities".

127. The SGP was also able to enhance capacities which will in turn contribute to conserving biodiversity and enhancing the well-being of people through sustainable practices. 2,766 people participated in capacity development events sponsored by the SGP which varied from the rights of nature to agroecological and agroforestry systems, commercialization, organizational strengthening, environmental management, and other topics. 57.2% (1581) of the participants in these capacity development events were women. 756 people received specific training in leadership, 40% (304) of whom were women.

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

### **3.3.2 Relevancy (\*)**

128. The project was highly relevant within the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity, GEF priorities, Ecuador's constitution, the Government of Ecuador's Plan de Buen Vivir, Ecuador's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

129. The project addresses GEF Biodiversity Strategic Objective 2, Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, particularly Outcome 2.1, Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation.

130. Ecuador was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and is one of the world's "megadiverse" countries. There are only 16 others in this scientific category.

131. The relevancy of this initiative did not deviate from that described in the PIF for this OP which, as quoted from the PIF, indicated that, "Ecuador's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan views conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as a source of opportunity for national development and improvement of people's quality of life. Strategy No.2 (pages 18-19) states that it is a national priority to "ensure the continued existence, integrity and functioning of biodiversity at the ecosystems, species and genetic levels, by implementing strategies aimed at forest conservation and management, reduction of deforestation rates, establishment of ecological corridors, and the restoration of ecosystems that provide important environmental services to communities, with particular attention to Páramo and wetland ecosystems. This document also determines that the Amazon, the Gulf of Guayaquil and the Austro zone, all areas prioritized by SGP, are of national importance. The SGP strategy for GEF-5 squarely falls within the four strategic priorities of the National Strategy for Biodiversity of Ecuador. The GEF-funded National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) also identified páramos, wetlands, mangroves, coastal and marine ecosystems, and dry forests as important ecosystems to conserve Ecuador's biological richness. The Constitution that Ecuador enacted in 2008 introduced a new approach to national development, Sumak Kausay (Living Well), that posits a new kind of relationship between human beings and Nature. Some innovations in environmental law include the granting of rights to Nature, seeking to ensure conservation and respect for Nature's functions and life cycles. The Constitution promotes the protection of fragile, endangered ecosystems (Article 406), a priority of this project, and states that the soil is a resource of national interest (Article 409). Further, the National Plan to Live Well (Objective N° 4) seeks to guarantee Nature's rights and promote a healthy environment, policy goals consistent with this project's approach. Chapter Four of the Constitution addresses the rights of indigenous peoples, including their right to their ancestral lands; the right to participate in the management, conservation, use and benefits from natural resources in their territories; the right to prior informed consent before exploration and exploitation of natural resources in their territories that could have potential negative environmental or cultural impacts; the right to receive compensation if such negative impacts materialize; and the right to maintain and protect their ancestral knowledge and practices, among others. Indigenous peoples from the Quichua (highlands) and Kichwa (Amazon) nationalities will participate in this project, therefore, the relevance of this chapter of the Constitution. At the end of 2010, the "Organic Code for Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization" (COOTAD for its Spanish acronym) was enacted. This legal framework makes political and administrative decentralization compulsory and progressive for Ecuador and specifies the roles of its four levels of government: the central government, provincial governments, municipal governments, and the rural parish governments. The decentralization process devolves land use planning and natural resources management responsibilities to the provincial, municipal and parish governments, which SGP has fully taken into consideration in the design of this project. The National Environmental Plan's policies and strategies (N° 2, 3, 5 and 6) speak to management of ecosystems by building citizen's capacities and those of relevant institutions."

132. Finally, the project was relevant to the 2010-2014 UNDAF (in particular to UNDAF Outcome 5 of strategic component (3) regarding environmental sustainability.

**RATING OF RELEVANCY: R**

### 3.3.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency (\*)

133. This section provides an assessment of how well project Outcomes were achieved using the GEF rating scale of HS = Highly Satisfactory (6); S = Satisfactory (5); MS = Marginally Satisfactory (4); MU= Marginally Unsatisfactory (3); U = Unsatisfactory (2); HU = Highly Unsatisfactory (1). The rating is based not merely on whether the target numbers set in the logframe were achieved, but also an assessment of the quality of those achievements.

**TABLE 5: EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF EXPECTED PROJECT OUTCOMES AT PROJECT END**

<b>Outcome 1:</b> Effective community land use governance and planning is in place for increasing ecological connectivity in 4 ecosystems			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved at Time of TE According to Information Provided by NCU</b>	<b>Status</b>
Number of biological corridor management plans developed by communities in partnership with CBOs, local government, private sector and NGOs	At least 12 additional biological corridors (among the 15 identified) with management plans covering an area of some 1'900,000 ha	16 biocorridors were identified in the 4 territories of the country by participatory processes which took place during the planning phase. These biocorridors cover an area of 1,887,108 ha.	Achieved (The biocorridors covered slightly less than the original area anticipated, but more corridors than originally anticipated were established.)
Number of functioning coordinating territorial bodies	At least 9 additional community biological corridor management bodies representing a total of 300 communities operating effectively and in cooperation with local and regional government, community organizations and other stakeholders	The 4 GTT and the 16 MTB have been maintained through regular planned meetings. These fora are convened in some cases by State, municipal or parochial GAD, and community organizations, universities, international donors and other stakeholders in the territories participate in them. Agreements are reached during each meeting, updates regarding projects are presented, themes of common interest are discussed, and sometimes there are capacity building exercises in specific areas. The fora for the GTT and MTB are of interest to these stakeholders, especially the GAD, who see in them an opportunity to get close to the community and an opportunity to implement their environmental plans. There are GTT which are strongly led by GAD (Chimborazo and Manabí) and a proposal to institutionalize the MTB by the Santa Isabel (Azua) GAD.	Achieved and exceeded
Increased number of watershed management plans in project focus areas	15 micro-watersheds within biological corridor areas with management plans	The 16 ACBIOs include management of micro-watersheds as an indicator. These plans are not elaborated by the projects. But the projects have contributed with reforestation or protection activities of 161 micro-watersheds nationwide, 1 micro-watershed management plan in the Amazon and 2 management plans which include micro-watersheds.	Partially Achieved

<b>Outcome 2:</b> Rural communities have increased sustainable livelihood options appropriate for fragile and globally significant ecosystems			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved at Time of TE according to information provided by NCU</b>	<b>Status</b>
Improved food security of local communities through crop diversification using local cultivars, agro-ecological practices, and other sustainable food production practices	<p>10 Andean crop species recovered (an additional 240 hectares) and incorporated in the family diet, contributing to the food security of 60 communities and 1.000 families.</p> <p>Mollusks and crustaceans available in a sustainable manner in 4 communities involving 35 families</p>	<p>The results obtained during the implementation of the individual grant projects indicate important achievements in the 4 territories: 14 projects are working on the recovery of agrobiodiversity species in the Central/Southern and Northern Andes and contribute to the recovery of 41 Andean species including the potato, corn, mashua, oca, quinoa, achira, hierba Luisa, cabuya (agave), melloco, amranto, escarcelaria, tipo, chuquiragua met. Oregano toronjil, col chaucha, aurin, sigallon, chamburo, nogal, cebolla de hoja, jicama, zanahoria blanca, haba, frijol, tomate de arbol mora, uvilla, granadilla, gullan, joyaa, ganal, arrayan, capuli, canaro, ataco, chocho, pallar, chio, chigualcan mortino (the propagation of mortino is being done through applied research with the communities), all of these elements of management or conservation take place in 380 hectares. The participants in these activities total 179 communities and 2,164 families.</p> <p>2 projects involving 8 communities and 28 families work on the recovery of mollusks and crustaceans, recovering the mangrove crab (<i>Ucides occidentales</i>) and the Black Ark (<i>Anadara tuberculosa</i>). There are 10 projects in the Amazon which produce cachama (<i>Piaractus brachipomun</i>) and 2 species of cichlids (<i>Aequidens</i> spp.) in which 354 families and 20 communities participate through the “Lianas” project which directs the process of the production of the fish.</p>	<p>Partially Achieved (Even though numerous projects are working toward recovery of varieties of numerous species of Andean crops, these cannot be said to have “recovered”. This is an ongoing process which will take time. Of the “ferias” or farmers markets visited by the TEE, for example, the greatest number of varieties of potatoes offered was five. There are more than 4,000 varieties of potatoes.)</p> <p>Regarding the mollusk and crustacean activities, the targets were in great part achieved although the number of families involved was slightly (but not significantly) less than anticipated.</p>
Increased number of communities generating income from sustainable production practices such as non-timber forest products, eco-tourism, and alpaca wool	<p>142 additional communities generate income from sustainable production practices involving some 1,500 families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-timber forest products (50 communities)</li> <li>• Alpaca wool (6 communities)</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism (21 communities)</li> <li>• Cocoa and coffee production in agro-forestry systems (65)</li> </ul>	<p>A total of 155 communities including 1613 families are involved in generating income through sustainable production practices in the 4 territories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 projects with non-timber forest products (46 communities, 533 families and 511 ha)</li> <li>• 1 project working with alpaca wool (7 communities, 120 families)</li> <li>• 12 projects nationwide working with sustainable tourism (45 communities, 295 families)</li> <li>• 7 projects working on cacao production within agroforestry systems (39 communities, 480 families, 565 ha)</li> <li>• 3 projects working on coffee production within agroforestry systems (23 communities, 215 families, 224 ha)</li> </ul>	Achieved and exceeded

Improved distribution of household income throughout the year as a result of sustainable production activities	At least 1,500 families obtain income at least 4 times a year from sustainable use of biodiversity	Improvement in household income distribution as a result of sustainable production practices is taking place in 31 conservation projects and agrobiodiversity management practices using an agroecological approach and commercialization of surplus in 665 ha. The products are sold through agroecological fairs/markets and some of them are transformed and value added to them for sale as marmalades, cakes, organic platano and oca chips, tostado, herbal infusions, oils and wood shavings. In addition there is a project that makes handicrafts with alpaca wool. In the coast, farms with a total area of 751 ha applying agroforestry and agroecological techniques are marketing through farmers markets, direct sale of "baskets", honey, essential oils. In the Amazon, P grant projects work with farms totaling 431 ha on farm-raised native fish which is marketed in farmers markets and local markets. Processed chocolate is also sold. At the level of the four territories this implies a significant increase in income from sustainable commercialization maintaining food security. It is estimated that at the local level this production brings with it a fivefold increase in income which involves 4,216 families in the four regions of the country.	Achieved and exceeded
Improved gender equity as a result of increased income generation opportunities for women	40% of SGP-funded initiatives will be controlled by women and benefits will accrue to them	The target for Outcome 2 related to gender equity in the PRODOC establishes that 40% of projects supported by the SGP will be managed by women and the benefits from these projects will be derived by women. At present, 20 of the 49 projects are managed by women. Nevertheless, it is not possible to establish whether women are deriving the benefits from these projects.	Achieved (The target related to control was achieved. As the NCU correctly points out, it was not possible for them to determine if the benefits were derived by them given that there was nothing put in place to assess this. <b>Lesson:</b> Ensure that for every indicator included, there is a means of monitoring it included in the project M&E system.
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Knowledge systematized and disseminated, and communities trained in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning			
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved at Time of TE according to information provided by NCU</b>	
Percentage of successful community projects	The current 90% rate of successful projects will be maintained or increased during this SGP phase.	The results obtained related to this target indicate that during the first year of project implementation 90% of the success of the projects is guaranteed by way of: 1) the ongoing work of the EQUIPATE, the ongoing support of the EQUIPATEN and the use of SIMONAA which guarantees the achievement of the project objectives 2) the network modality OP5 lends	Achieved

		knowledge management and local capacity building, building of strategic alliances, implementation of initiatives within regional and national context, participation in public policy making related to the development of the national environmental agenda (A.N.A.)	
Increased number of community leaders active and with demonstrated socio-economic and environmental capacity to represent communities in bio-corridor governance bodies and other relevant policy and sustainable development activities	At least 10 individuals per project with enhanced knowledge and leadership capacities to work with communities in sustainable ecosystem and resources management and to represent them effectively in various bodies and fora. Of these 60% male and 40% female.	According to SIMONAA, 2,766 people have participated in capacity development events, of which 57.2% (1,581) are women. 756 people received specific training in leadership, 40% (304) of whom were women. Capacity building events varied from the rights of nature to agroecological and agroforestry systems, commercialization, organizational strengthening, environmental management, etc.	Achieved
Number of community projects that apply adaptive management as a result of timely input from SIMONA	At least 80% of projects show evidence of timely course change or improvements in project delivery based on SIMONA inputs	As mentioned previously, the ongoing work of the EQUIPATE, the ongoing support of the EQUIPATEN and the ongoing application of SIMONAA guarantees the achievement of the project objectives. Moreover, it can be seen (both in the MTB and the GTT) that the projects have used SIMONAA to show the advances they have made and the constraints which they have experienced related to the undertaking of project activities and the achievement of project goals.	Achieved

## Efficiency

134. Project support provided by UNOPS as Executing Agency and that provided by UNDP as GEF Implementing Agency were both efficient. There was an initial delay in disbursement of funds which has been addressed in another section. The planning phase was a long one (9 months) but was an efficient use of time. Without this participatory planning there would be less buy-in. Long-term success of these endeavours depends on people being part of their planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating.

135. Efficiency as it relates to partnership arrangements was addressed in other sections of this report. There was excellent use of local capacity in implementing the SGPP, utilizing regional and national NGOs to provide project monitoring, technical support and capacity building.

**RATING OF EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY: SATISFACTORY (5)**

### 3.3.4 Country Ownership

136. The STAR. allocation for OP5 was significant (\$4.3 million) and serves as an indicator of country ownership of the SGP.

137. The financial contribution made by the beneficiary organizations is another important indicator to assess the country's ownership of a project. Despite the shortfall in actual versus planned co-financing related primarily to lesser in-cash contributions received from MAGAP (99.5% less than amount committed at project design stage), additional cash co-financing was secured from beneficiary

organizations over and above what had originally been committed (138% more than the amount committed at project design) indicating very strong ownership on their part.

### 3.3.5 Mainstreaming with UNDP Priorities

138. The SGPP was successful in mainstreaming its efforts with UNDP priorities related to:

- Poverty eradication
- Environmental sustainability
- Gender equity and reduction of inequalities and exclusion
- Leadership skills development
- Strengthening partnering abilities

### 3.3.6 Impact (\*)

#### Attribution

139. As described in a previous section of this report, attributing results to a particular phase (OP5) of an ongoing program that has had four previous phases and has been operating for 20 twenty years is difficult. Almost all OP5 projects exist where SGP projects existed in previous phases. Compounding the difficulty of attributing results to the SGPP is the number of projects and programmes other than those supported by the SGP which are either ongoing or have operated in the same area as SGP-supported projects in the past, many with similar or complementary objectives. In almost all cases, SGP-supported projects work closely together with other initiatives, each providing inputs which complement and help ensure the success of the other's inputs.

#### Regulatory frameworks help ensure impact

140. Regulatory frameworks also significantly contribute to overall impact and sustainability of SGP-supported activities. Two Ecuadorian laws in particular have had such an effect. The law which requires protection of water sources by keeping areas immediately around these vegetated with native plants, helps to ensure strong buy-in and implementation of SGP revegetation activities. Likewise, legislation which precludes agricultural use of lands above a certain elevation greatly helps to protect the páramo, as there appears to be good awareness of, and adherence to, these laws.

#### Impact of project activities

141. The ultimate goal of GEF projects must be kept in mind. Unlike “regular” sustainable development assistance projects whose sole objective may be to enhance the wellbeing of people (e.g., health, education, their immediate environment, etc.), GEF biodiversity projects, although almost always having a focus on enhancing the wellbeing of people, include this focus *because* this is an effective strategy for ensuring conservation of globally significant biodiversity. The goal of GEF biodiversity projects is not merely “sustainable environmental management”. This sustainable environmental management must result in conserving biodiversity (genes and genetic diversity, species and species-level diversity, ecosystems and ecosystem-level diversity, landscapes and even landscape-level diversity) which qualifies as being globally significant according to scientific and GEF definitions.

142. The various activities supported by the SGP had, as can be expected, various levels of impact. It is more difficult to perceive the impact of ecological connectivity activities within a short time period compared with the impact that may be perceived associated with increasing sustainable livelihood

opportunities. Nevertheless, it is not merely because of longer time frames that the impact of some SGP-supported projects in terms of ecological connectivity is not as readily perceived compared with the impact of eco-friendly production-oriented activities. This is due to several factors: 1) a lesser relative focus on ecological connectivity (even though all SGP OP5 projects include ecological connectivity components) compared to the focus on eco-friendly production-oriented activities, 2) the lack of direct connection between production-oriented activities and conservation in some projects, and 3) the approach adopted to achieve “ecological connectivity” which sometimes lacked scientific rigour.

143. The following observations were made by the TEE during project visits which may serve to highlight the main types of strengths and weaknesses observed. The projects were chosen for the TE visit because they were considered representative of other projects in the portfolio. Therefore, generalizations can be drawn from both the strengths and the weaknesses (in terms of impact) that these projects demonstrated and applied as observations regarding the portfolio of projects. To keep within page limits as much as possible, observations and lessons from 3 of the 14 projects visited are highlighted below.

#### The CEPROCAFE project in the coast & the Tsatsayaku project in the Amazon

144. The CEPROCAFE project supports a community-based organization to grow coffee within an agroforestry system in a coastal dry forest zone. The project is located strategically in the immediate vicinity of and directly bordering remnant patches of this globally significant ecosystem. The specific individuals with the greatest potential for conserving the ecosystem were identified and are the key stakeholders in the project. There is a direct link between the production-oriented activities (coffee production) and the re-establishment of ecological connectivity. The project is having an obvious positive impact on both enhancing sustainable production activities and on the conservation of the coastal dry forests. Species such as the howler monkey (*Alouatta sp*) which had once been commonly seen in the area but which had not been seen for many years have begun to return due to enhanced connectivity between the remnant coastal dry forest patches with the coffee growing areas which have continuous canopy coverage and which purposefully maintain certain tree species important to wildlife. There is appropriate focus on acquiring the necessary sanitary and other registrations to enable broader marketing of the product and a focus on ensuring this becomes a product with strong territorial identity (PIT). The SGPP continues to support this project to ensure replication and scaling-up. Similar comments to these apply to the very successful Cacao production within agroforestry systems project in the Amazon. Like the CEPROCAFE project, the Tsatsayaku project is having a visible impact in enhancing ecological connectivity, promoting sustainable livelihood options and in creating permanent associativity between entities which help in sharing of lessons, replication and scaling-up. The approach adopted by the SGP project to work with the same organizations which also benefit from a much larger European Union project on cacao production, was strategic.

#### The Isla Corazon & La Segua projects on the coast

145. This is an excellent example of strategic location of several projects within a biocorridor as the La Segua wetland (a Ramsar site) and the Isla Corazon, an important remnant of mangrove located in the estuary of the Chone River, are ecologically interdependent.

146. The main threats to mangroves and wetlands in this area are: 1) dams that prevent sufficient water flow for healthy wetlands and mangroves, 2) extensive shrimp farms which totally destroy mangroves and replace them with shrimp ponds devoid of mangrove and full of chemicals, and 3) aquaculture focused on the exotic and predatory fish, Tilapia. Tilapia “farms”, like shrimp farms, are mostly owned by non-community members.

147. The projects support several activities including: 1) supporting a women’s sewing group which

makes T-Shirts and mugs with artistic designs related primarily to the mangroves, 2) supporting a local youth group to establish a restaurant and an ecotourism business, 3) supporting local community organization to repopulate the mangrove with native species of crab whose population had been severely decreased due to over-harvesting and destruction of habitat, 4) supporting small-scale local farmers to adopt agroforestry practices on their farms (reduce chemical inputs, compost, increase productivity and diversity).

148. In the case of the project to help the women's sewing group, the project is providing a new and meaningful source of income for these women. They appreciate the project very much and it has brought them benefits not only in terms of income but also in terms of empowering them as women in a male-dominated society, helping to achieve gender equity. The products the women produce are mostly sold to tourists and help to create awareness of the importance of the mangroves. Notwithstanding the many positive aspects of this activity to promote a sustainable livelihood option, there does not appear to be much of a link between those benefits and the conservation of the target ecosystem, i.e., the mangrove, other than the awareness raising aspect. The families of the women who participate in the sewing project do not and did not engage in the type of activities which represent the greatest (or even a significant) threat to the mangroves, and moreover those families do not appear to have the potential to engage in activities that would present a significant threat to the ecosystem in future with or without the project. A valid argument can be made that the global environmental benefit is not always grant project specific but rather attributable to the aggregate of the projects in an area. This project does play a role in raising awareness of the importance of the mangroves. The impact on conserving the mangrove of this project may be small but working in conjunction with other projects within the biocorridor it does contribute to the overall positive impact on the mangroves.

149. Most local community members do not engage in shrimp farming, as these "*piscinas*" or pools are mostly owned by non-locals. A project beneficiary group is one exception to this rule as they have their own shrimp farm in the mangrove ecosystem. The "awareness raising" message that group sends may be seen by locals as contradictory as the group is outspoken about the negative impact shrimp farms have on mangroves, yet they have one of their own. The project does not directly link the crab production or other production-oriented activities it supports with abandoning shrimp farming. Yet the point is that the production-oriented activities supported by the project are supposed to provide the necessary means for people who currently engage in unsustainable livelihoods to switch from those activities to ones that are sustainable/eco-friendly. This is an indication that the project-supported "alternative" livelihood activities are not yet having a significant-enough effect for these individuals to change from non-sustainable production practices (shrimp farming) to sustainable ones conducive to mangrove conservation.. Even though project activities are resulting in increased income, this increased income comes not from replacing non-sustainable production activities (shrimp farm) with sustainable production (crab and mollusk production and ecotourism) but rather adding on new sustainable production activities to the continued non-sustainable ones. Given that the project has only been operating for a few years, those involved in the project may need more time to be convinced that the risks associated with the sustainable production system are manageable and that the economic gains are sufficient to allow them to drop the non-sustainable production activities. As with other activities meant to provide livelihood "alternatives", it will be important to continue to monitor whether these are truly serving as "alternatives" or simply as "additional" activities.

#### The UNOCIGS project in the páramo

150. The "Conservación de los páramos y vertientes de la cordillera occidental del Cantón Otavalo a través del fomento de medios de vida sostenibles con las comunidades involucradas" (UNOCIGS) project supports several activities including promotion of diverse, organic gardens applying agroecology techniques, and marketing of products at organic farmers markets (ferias). The home gardens visited by

the TEE were exemplary, with a good diversity of produce and enhanced vegetative cover compared to other farms in the area. The families involved in these activities are clearly benefiting from them. Nevertheless, there appeared to be very little connection between this activity and conservation of the páramo. None of the farms which the project had chosen to focus on were on the immediate boundary with the páramo and none of the farm owners had cows they grazed in potreros in those zones (although other community members did have these).

151. The UNOCIGS project also supported activities to plant saplings of native shrubs and trees along a former livestock trail which led through the páramo and was used to bring livestock into the higher páramo to leave them to graze there for extended periods. Livestock are no longer grazed in that area and the trail has now been converted to a hiking trail for tourists. The trail is approximately three to four feet wide. It does not make sense to target planting in this area as: 1) the intent is to keep the trail open as a hiking trail for tourists, 2) there would be little benefit in terms of ecological connectivity even if the trail ceased to be used altogether as the width of three to four feet is not a meaningful barrier to connectivity between the two sides of the trail and natural revegetation would occur anyway.

152. Some lessons can be drawn from the above observations:

**LESSON:** An activity should be considered as providing an effective livelihood *alternative* only if: 1) that activity has potential for resulting in decreased pressure on the target ecosystem, and if 2) those involved in the activity are persons/groups whose actions represent a threat to the ecosystem, and if 3) that threat is a significant one, and 4) the sustainable *alternative* actually replaces, at least in part, the unsustainable practice instead of simply being additional to it.

**LESSON:** To have an impact on ecological connectivity, it is important to ensure production-oriented activities supported by a project are *directly* linked to ecosystem conservation whenever possible. Ecotourism, for example, is a sustainable livelihood option that directly depends on conservation – without nature there would be no ecotourism. Supporting a local group to produce for sale a typical dish (fried guinea pig) is a production-oriented activity that can *indirectly* contribute to ecosystem conservation *if* it reduces the pressure on that ecosystem by providing income and/or food which would otherwise be obtained from exploiting that ecosystem.

**LESSON:** If a direct link is not feasible, ensure that the production-oriented activities are strategically targeted to those specific stakeholders who either present the greatest and/or most direct threat to the target ecosystem or who have the greatest potential to conserve it.

**LESSON:** Ecosystem conservation is a science. It is important to include appropriate scientific expertise in biodiversity conservation projects. Simply because someone has an advanced degree in environmental science does not make them an expert in conservation, and even those scientists who focus on *ecosystem* conservation<sup>‡‡</sup> (as differentiated from other fields of conservation such as wildlife management, wildlife ecology, agrobiodiversity conservation, botany, fisheries management, species-level conservation, etc.) usually have expertise in a specific ecosystem and should not be considered expert in all ecosystems.

**LESSON:** The argument can be made that providing the means for a better life for anyone in the project area will lead to reduce threats on the ecosystem, and this may well be true, but it is not strategic. Given limited resources and time, to enhance impact, a project must strategically opt to work with those who pose the *greatest* and *most direct* threat to the ecosystem of interest and/or with those who have the greatest and most direct ability to conserve the ecosystem. This means, for example, not only correctly defining the target *communities* within a Biocorridor, but also identifying the *individual families* to focus

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<sup>‡‡</sup> Either ecosystem rehabilitation or ecosystem restoration.

on-the-ground project efforts on. This does not mean that a project should not strive for full community participation in some activities. It is essential for a community, as such, to be involved in planning activities, capacity building activities, *mingas*, and to derive benefits as a community whenever possible. But in regards to on-the-ground project activities, such as for example, an activity to promote adoption of on-farm agroecology techniques, if such activities are to have an impact on reducing pressures on a target ecosystem by, for example, providing an alternative to livestock grazing so as to reduce grazing pressure on the páramo, it must identify those individuals who have livestock in the paramo as well as those individuals within the community who have land directly bordering the paramo, and ensure their participation in the on-farm agroforestry activity instead of working with someone in a village who has no livestock, no land bordering the páramo and a much lesser potential for having either a positive or a negative effect on the paramo.

### Associativity enhances impact

153. Associativity, a third element included in each project, should be viewed as both a means to achieve ecological connectivity and sustainable livelihood options as well as an end in and of itself. The associativity established between stakeholders, which was a direct result of strategic project design, leads to greater impact of projects as it facilitates and encourages sharing and learning from experiences and lessons, cooperative efforts (including cooperative marketing and cooperative agreements) which would not otherwise exist, and replication and scaling-up. The SGPP focus on associativity and the strategy it used to ensure that this approach was adopted in all projects (i.e., by requiring that all project proposals outline not only theoretical plans for collaborating with others but also documentation showing this was actually already discussed and negotiated by the various project participants).

## **RATING OF IMPACT: SATISFACTORY (5)**

### **3.3.7 Sustainability (\*)**

154. The overall likelihood of sustainability is “Moderately Likely” (ML), i.e., there are moderate risks to sustainability.

155. According to GEF guidelines, sustainability is based on several dimensions including financial resources, socio-political considerations, institutional framework and governance factors, and environmental factors. Each risk dimension of sustainability is deemed to be critical and therefore, according to GEF guidelines, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the rating of the dimension with the lowest rating. As there is sometimes confusion in understanding the ratings, a rating of “Likely” means there are negligible risks to sustainability, “Moderately Likely” means there are moderate risks, “Moderately unlikely” means there are significant risks to sustainability, and a rating of “Unlikely” means there are severe risks to sustainability.

**TABLE 6: ANALYSIS OF RISKS THAT MAY AFFECT PERSISTENCE OF PROJECT OUTCOMES**

<b>Financial Resources Risks (Moderately Likely – ML)</b>
The likelihood that financial resources will be available to continue activities which result in continued benefits derived from SGPP activities is ML. In March 2014, the Minister of MAE sent a letter to the CEO of the GEF committing at least the same amount of funds for OP6 as were made available for OP5. Recent information indicates that the GEF funding for OP6 will actually be less than half of funding for OP5 (approximately \$2 million). This reduced funding puts the SGP in a very difficult situation in terms of its ability to scale-up and replicate the very positive experience gained to date with the “Biocorridors for Living Well” and threatens the sustainability of some initiatives which show great promise but which are not yet sustainable without continued support. International donor assistance related to the

environmental conservation has also significantly decreased since the beginning of OP5 with the exception of GEF funds. As mentioned, most activities have already yielded benefits but they are not yet self-sustaining. Continued financial support will be required. Given the high level of financial contribution made by the organizations (CSOs) involved in the projects in OP5, their continued financial support in OP6 can reasonably be expected. Nevertheless, the SGP will need to reach out to the GOE, the GAD, and the private sector for additional financial support, and will need to strategically link with other relevant biodiversity conservation and agroecology initiatives in the country whenever possible if the risk presented by financial constraints is to be successfully addressed.

#### **Socio-political Risks (Moderately Likely – ML)**

The risk that insufficient public stakeholder awareness and support is present for the continuation of activities providing benefit is ML. The buy-in of the project beneficiaries is very strong. Their strong ownership of project objectives greatly contributes to sustainability. On the other hand, the overall policy framework which has been adopted by the Government during OP5 which promotes increased production from extractive industries and which promotes monoculture and intensive agricultural production may pose risks to the continuation of certain project activities depending on government program related incentives to change from agroecological practices to monoculture especially during a critical time in which markets related to agroecological products may still not be fully developed.

#### **Institutional Framework and Governance Risks (Likely – L)**

Because of SGPP's strong effort related to promoting associativity and building organizational capacity over the past OP and previous ones, required systems for accountability and transparency exist at the community level on which further efforts can be built. Institutional technical know-how also exists related to sustainable production-oriented activities, establishment of associativity to enhance sustainability. It will be important to enhance technical know-how/application related to ecological connectivity of organizations involved in OP6 to maximize impact regarding ecosystem conservation and connectivity. As this is within the control of the SGP to decide to act on this, there is little perceived risk that this will not happen.

#### **Environmental Risks ( Moderately Likely – ML)**

Environmental risks are present that can undermine the future flow of project benefits. Although climate change and volcanic eruptions may certainly affect project areas, the more likely immediate environmental risks are related to human activity directly related to policy frameworks which may result in changing water flows into mangrove and wetlands systems, large-scale chemical use affecting mangroves and wetlands (related to shrimp farms), exotic species of flora and fauna replacing native species (e.g., African Palm on the coast and in the Amazon, predatory exotic fish introduction such as Tilapia in wetlands, etc.), deforestation and land degradation related to mining and oil extraction (especially in the Amazon).

Overall Rating of Sustainability: Moderately Likely (ML)

## **4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

156. The main conclusions are derived from the meeting held during the terminal evaluation mission and documents reviewed by the TEE, and are substantiated in the relevant sections of the text of this report. The main conclusions are:

157. This highly relevant project contributed significantly to enhancing awareness of local communities and others of the importance of conserving Ecuador's páramo, coastal dry forests, rain

forests, and mangroves, and the viability of achieving this conservation through a community and landscape-based approach.

158. There is a high degree of project ownership amongst the communities involved in the SGP-supported projects. There is a great awareness of rural communities participating in the SGP of the importance of conserving ecosystems, in part this can be attributed to the SGP efforts and in part this is attributable to GOE programmes. Most people consider water the most important reason for protecting ecosystems.

159. The innovative and highly participatory landscape approach within which territories and “biocorridors” were defined by local stakeholders serves as a framework not only for future SGP OPs but may also serve as an important input into the GOE’s own efforts to work toward ecological connectivity. The SGP has a lot to offer and should continue to ensure that a close collaboration with MAE allows for this important experience to be considered and applied on a larger scale through MAE’s own initiatives, assisting to implement guidelines published by MAE in 2013 regarding management for connectivity with conservation ends (“Lineamientos de gestión para la conectividad con fines de conservación”).

160. Although the participatory approach adopted is time consuming and caused some delays in project implementation due in part to a highly participatory planning phase, it was well worth the time spent and indicative of the amount of time participatory approaches truly take.

161. The SGPP was very cognizant of the need to ensure the full participation of women in all activities and to strive for gender equity in every aspect of the SGPP. It did this very successfully within a challenging environment where gender inequity is still a strong reality especially in the rural environment in which the SGP projects work.

162. At this stage, even though territorial agreements and Biocorridor management plans exist, these plans remain mostly theoretical. This is as expected at this stage since it will take much longer than a couple of years to build the relationships, scientific approach, and regulatory framework required to fully implement the territorial/biocorridor approach. The Project is on the right track, however, in pursuing these.

163. The approach adopted by the project in working together with local Government entities at the provincial, municipal and parish levels (GAD) was well aligned with the country’s legal framework which makes political and administrative decentralization compulsory. It was also strategic in that the decentralization process devolves land use planning to the GAD and by working together with the GAD efforts to conserve biodiversity conservation (which depend on land use planning within production-oriented landscapes) have a higher probability of success. This approach was well thought out and should continue in OP6 even if few of the projects, most of which devoted significant effort to presenting their initiatives to the GAD, actually received any financial support from them and the high turnover of *tecnicos* and other GAD staff presented significant difficulties to project implementation.

164. The involvement of universities through the establishment of a scholarship fund with SGP funds was a cost-effective way of assisting communities with product development and marketing as well as in helping to build a critical mass of organizations for advocacy of SGP efforts. This was also an effective mechanism for reaching out to urban-based youth and involving them in conservation and community-development efforts.

165. Government conservation programs such as Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar appear to be having a significant positive impact on the conservation of ecosystems. Although there are a few SGP projects involving communities who are also involved in Socio-Bosque, there does not appear to be a strong

collaboration between these. A closer collaboration both at the individual project level and between the programmes may be helpful in enhancing impact and sustainability of both efforts.

166. SGPP collaborated closely and successfully with a couple of larger-scale conservation projects in the country. To maximize impact and sustainability of SGP efforts in OP6, collaboration with additional larger-scale relevant conservation and agroecology projects may be helpful.

167. The Biocorridor Working Groups (MTBs) established by the SGP provide helpful fora for each project to share information and experiences with others in the same and other biocorridors and to begin to work toward a common strategic vision for these areas. The MTBs also serve to promote a sense of being part of a larger scheme.

168. There is some evidence that projects within the same Biocorridor are coordinating efforts with each other. At present, however, most projects still operate as isolated projects, even though they participate in broader-scale (Biocorridor and territorial) planning exercises and have benefited from understanding the bigger picture. It will be important to build further on coordinated efforts between projects in OP6 if ecological connectivity is to be achieved.

169. Some projects have interpreted ecological connectivity to simply mean enhancing vegetative cover on farm (though agro-forestry), or planting native plants around water sources. Even though these activities could in principle contribute to ecological connectivity, many have not served to do so in large part for lack of conservation science-based input/direction.

170. The Territorial Working Groups (GTTs) provide a forum for MTBs to present their projects to the GAD and other key stakeholders in the territories including universities, MAE, MAGAP, the Juntas Parroquiales, NGOs, and communities, and for the GAD to share information with these stakeholders regarding their plans for future investment in thematic areas of relevance to efforts supported by the SGP. These fora represent a rare opportunity for community organizations to have direct interaction with government authorities. Binding agreements have been subscribed to at GTT meetings and government authorities have used these occasions to publicly commit their support to territorial processes.

171. The four regional Technical Assistance Teams (EQUIPATE) played a critical role in OP5 as the territories, biocorridors, and new associations were being defined and developed, and as a new monitoring system was being developed and put in place. The role of these four NGOs was to monitor and support the projects in the four territories. Their involvement was made possible through four “strategic projects”. In some ways these fit the definition of an SGP “strategic project”, and in other ways they don’t. Either way, given the large number of projects involved in this SGPP and the geographic distribution of these across the country, and the inability of any NCU to effectively provide the technical and other types of support as well as the monitoring necessary for this large number of projects, engaging regionally-based NGOs was an appropriate and cost-effective means of providing necessary project monitoring and other support. This may serve as a good model for other country SGPs with large project portfolios.

172. The future existence of the National Technical Assistance Team (EQUIPATEN) should be carefully considered to determine whether this is an appropriate and cost-effective investment for the SGP and how the TOR for the EQUIPATEN and the NCU relate to each other.

173. The NSC has yet to take on the more strategic planning and oversight role recommended in the MTE. The main function of the NSC is still to give final approval to projects. The “rudder” for Ecuador’s SGP is still the NC, who happens to be a very capable individual. Nevertheless, it is important for the SGP to be forward-looking, as it is not advisable for a programme of this kind to be overly

dependent on one or two individuals for strategic direction and oversight.

174. The NSC is comprised of 10 capable individuals only one of whom has technical expertise in one of the four ecosystems which are the conservation focus of the SGPP (i.e., coastal dry forest). It is in part because of this lack of conservation scientists on the NSC, and the lack of adequate science-based criteria for evaluating project proposals, that scientific rigour is lacking in some projects approved by the NSC.

175. The model of the pisciculture project which was a “strategic project” which provided specific technical expertise and technical monitoring to numerous communities involved in other SGP-supported projects was a very effective approach and the only one of its kind in the portfolio.

176. The monitoring system developed during OP5, called SIMONAA, was a significant positive innovation in OP5 which can be built further upon in OP6. The ecological indicators are not all S.M.A.R.T., and not all targets are based on meaningful criteria. The definition of the ecological baseline is based mostly on data that has not been ground-truthed.

177. Some production-oriented activities supported by projects were not strategic in that they cannot truly be expected to either directly or indirectly result in decreased pressure on target ecosystems even if they undoubtedly enhance the well-being of people who live within the landscape. Both the type of activity and the specific people engaged in the activity are critical considerations. It would be helpful at the outset of projects to identify the specific stakeholders who present the greatest threat to the target ecosystem as well as those who have the greatest potential for conserving it and ensuring that these individuals are involved in projects.

178. With some exceptions, marketing strategies and strategies to achieve economies of scale regarding PITs are still relatively weak. Involving universities and university students was strategic. There is little involvement of private sector groups in these activities. The EQUIPATE, although experienced to a degree in this area, may not have the necessary expertise to take marketing to the next level beyond “ferias” and limited other marketing strategies.

179. The SGPP has done a great job in documenting its experiences, including a comprehensive documentation of the planning phase. This detailed documentation facilitates learning lessons from other experiences and is a cost-effective investment. Although the documentation of experiences has been extensive, and the SGP communications strategy has produced some excellent materials as well as an excellent website, there is still lack of information regarding the SGPP in some key stakeholders including some conservation NGOs and even within some partner national government entities such as MAGAP.

180. The SGP has enjoyed a good partnership with the UNDP CO during OP5 and has been considered as part of the UNDP CO team, even contributing to the development of the country’s UNDAF and Country Programme Action Plan which is a form of scaling-up.

181. OP5 was an ambitious undertaking given the resources and time available but good progress was made toward achieving the objective set forth thanks to the strategy adopted of building on an already existing foundation, partnering with others, a capable and dedicated NCU, strong buy-in by local stakeholders, and a shared vision of something worth pursuing.

## 4.2 Recommendations & Lessons

Lessons are highlighted in yellow and have been included in the relevant sections of the text of this report. The recommendations outlined below are substantiated in the text of this report. These recommendations are intended to be helpful in the design and implementation of Ecuador's SGP OP6.

1. A sixth operational phase of the SGP in Ecuador should wholeheartedly be pursued, adopting the same basic approach developed during OP5 with modifications as described below.
2. It is important that the SGP continue its work in all four territories in OP6. The programme has already advanced significantly in the four regions and many communities count on continued support from the SGP. Some of the benefits to both communities and to ecosystems may be lost if the SGP does not continue to operate in these four territories as many of the initiatives are not yet self-sustaining. Yet, it will not be possible to continue operating in the four territories with the current GEF budget allocated for OP6. It will be important to find additional funding to complement the GEF funds allocated for OP6.
3. Apply greater scientific rigour in pursuing the conservation objective. This includes a) developing a stronger ecological monitoring system (with improved ecological baseline, improved ecological indicators, and improved on-the-ground ecological monitoring), b) providing more scientific input and direction regarding ecological connectivity activities to be undertaken both at the individual project level and between projects within the same biocorridors, and 3) developing a refined strategy for achieving ecological connectivity. Consider establishing a "Scientific Ecosystem Conservation and Ecological Connectivity" working group to advise the NSC on strategic matters related to these subjects, to provide a scientific review of the ecological connectivity activities proposed in individual projects, and to help ensure strategic linkages with relevant conservation programmes and projects. A strategic project modality may be considered to enable implementation of this recommendation. If it is decided not to establish the afore-mentioned group, another (less favorable) option would be to strengthen the NSC with conservation expertise related to the ecosystems included in the SGPP and provide the NSC with science-based project screening and assessment tools related to ecological connectivity.
4. Ensure all production-oriented activities supported by projects are strategic in that they can truly be expected to result in decreased pressure on target ecosystems (not just in enhancing the well-being of people who live within the landscape) and that the production-oriented activities are aimed strategically at the stakeholders who present the greatest threat to the target ecosystem and/or who have the greatest potential for conserving it.
5. Seek collaboration with other relevant larger-scale conservation and agroecology projects (many of which are GEF projects) & programmes in country to enhance impact and sustainability. Do not expand into new territories except when linkages to other larger-scale conservation or agroecology efforts compel such an expansion. Do not pursue urban-based projects in OP6.
6. Replicate the psiculture project modality to include a variety of other technical assistance "strategic projects" in areas such as community-based ecotourism, target ecosystem restoration, shade coffee, and other areas and contract experts from within existing successful projects (e.g., CEPROCAFE or the cacao project) to provide this technical assistance whenever possible.
7. Strengthen the relationship between SGP OP6 and MAE to ensure a continued coordinated

approach to the further development of biocorridors and to permit greater collaboration with Socio-Bosque/Páramo/Manglar (assuming this important programme continues).

8. Pursue more agile mechanisms for collaborating with MAGAP & more sharing of SGP experiences with that Ministry.
9. Streamline the NCU. Consider whether all members of the NCU are essential and if they are, whether it is most cost-effective for all members to be based in Quito or whether it would make sense for some to be field-based.
10. Consider whether or not the EQUIPATEN is really an appropriate, cost-effective, and strategic investment for the SGP in OP6. Ultimately the decision lies with the NSC but the opinion of the TEE is that the SGP should not continue to fund the EQUIPATEN.
11. To help ensure the NSC assumes a more strategic oversight role, the NCU should submit to the NSC for review and approval a written annual workplan and budget. The NSC should review and approve the draft PIF and draft project document for each operational phase before these are submitted. Any TE recommendations related to strategic issues should be monitored in terms of their implementation by the NSC.
12. Further enhance the project decision-making role of women building on successful OP5 experiences.
13. Expand upon efforts to involve youth in projects, building on successful OP5 experiences.
14. Expand upon university involvement in SGPPs, building on successful OP5 experiences and involving more universities and a greater variety of university departments. In particular, pursue involvement of the new Ikiam Regional Amazonian University in the scholarship programme and in a visiting lecturer program described in the relevant section of this report. Also, involve departments which focus on geography, ecology, wildlife and ecosystem conservation in both the scholarship program and in project activities (in addition to those departments already involved which focus primarily on product development, marketing and community development).
15. Conduct a more in-depth threat analysis for each individual project and develop a tool and format which projects can use to ensure a proper threats analysis is done. The threats analysis should help determine: 1) if a SGP project should exist at all, 2) what activities are most relevant, and 3) which specific stakeholders should be involved.
16. Involve private sector for-profit groups, perhaps using the mechanism of a strategic project, in developing marketing strategies and strategies to achieve economies of scale regarding PITs.
17. In OP6, ecological baselines need to be established based on actual data regarding the size and distribution (distance between) of patches of target ecosystem over the landscape of interest and the conservation status of those patches. Technologies now exist that are easily affordable and ecological monitoring systems can be put in place which are very cost-effective. There is no longer justification for not having a strong ecological connectivity baseline or for not monitoring impact in this regard.
18. Regarding development of markets for eco-friendly products, consider providing a safety net so that until a new livelihood alternative/product is proven viable, the SGP, rather than the farmer

(*campesino*) assumes the risk. This safety net may be a fund set aside to pay the *campesino* during the time the product is being tested and until it is mature enough to be economically viable, may be a type of revolving fund that gets repaid once viable. Consider using some of this fund to pay the costs of obtaining the necessary sanitary registration for new products and whatever else may be necessary to pass the MBA application process.

## ANNEXES

### Annex I: GEF Rating Scales

<b><i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&amp;E, I&amp;E Execution</i></b> 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2: Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	<b><i>Sustainability ratings:</i></b> 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	<b><i>Relevance ratings</i></b> 2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR)  <b><i>Impact Ratings:</i></b> 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
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#### RATING SCALE FOR OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS TOWARDS “INTERMEDIATE STATES” USING THE ROTI METHOD

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
<b>D:</b> The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	<b>D:</b> No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
<b>C:</b> The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	<b>C:</b> The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
<b>B:</b> The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	<b>B:</b> The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
<b>A:</b> The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	<b>A:</b> The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

**NOTE:** If outcomes scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.

#### RATING SCALE FOR THE “OVERALL LIKELIHOOD OF IMPACT ACHIEVEMENT” USING THE ROTI METHOD

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA BB+	BB AC+ BC+	AC BC	AD+ BD+	AD BD C	D

## Annex II: Terms of Reference for the Terminal Evaluation

### TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the *Fifth operational phase of the Small Grants Program in Ecuador* (PIMS 4518)

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

#### PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:	Fifth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Program in Ecuador			
GEF Project ID:	4375		<u>at endorsement</u> <u>(Million US\$)</u>	<u>at completion</u> <u>(Million US\$)</u>
UNDP Project ID:	00081120	GEF financing:	4'398.145	4'398.145
Country:	Ecuador	IA/EA own:		
Region:	LATAM	Government:	2'000.000	626.043,00
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	2'800.000	3'138.931,47
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):		Total co-financing:	4'800.000	3'764.974,47
Executing Agency:	UNOPS	Total Project Cost:	9'198.145	8'163.119,47§§
Other Partners involved:	Ministry of Environment of Ecuador COMDEKS-Satoyama Initiative	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		10/02/2012
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 30/06/2015	Actual: 30/06/2015

#### OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to: Conserve biodiversity by reducing habitat fragmentation and strengthening ecological connectivity across production landscapes through community initiatives and actions in globally significant ecosystems in Ecuador.

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

§§ Co-financing amount as per July 2014. The information will be updated for the TE.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

## EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

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

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Ecuador, including the following project sites:

Territory	Biocorridor	Project	CBO	Amount
Amazonia	Biocorredor Yaku Samai	Bosques, agua y comunidades: acciones productivas y ecológicas para conservar el Bosque Protector Colonso en el Bio Corredor Yacu Samay	Asociación Pashimbi de Alto Tena	\$ 50.000,00
	Biocorredor Akllak Sacha	Asociatividad para la conservación de nuestros bosques y ríos, y para la producción de cacao fino de aroma de manera orgánica, en "Tsatsayaku"	Asociación de Productores de Cacao Fino de Aroma "Tsatsayaku".	\$ 50.000,00
Costa	Estuario del Río Chone: Islas Corazón y Fragatas, La Segua	Conservando el ecosistema manglar con acciones de restauración y desarrollo de emprendimientos productivos sostenibles en el Estuario del Rio Chone.	Cooperativa San Francisco de Salinas	\$ 40.020,00

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

		Conservación y manejo del Humedal La Segua y su área de influencia, mediante la implementación de emprendimientos agroecológicos.	Comité Pro-Mejora La Segua	\$ 39.960,00
	Agroforestal Café - Cacao	Sostenibilidad agroecológica con aroma de café en las tabladas de la parroquia san Plácido	CEPROCAFE	\$ 47.140,00
Sierra Norte	Biocorredor Cayambe-Coca	Apoyo a la implementación del plan de manejo de Páramos de las micro-cuencas de la Chimba, de Gualimburo-Pisambilla y González-San Pablo de la Confederación Pueblo Kayambi	Confederación del Pueblo Kayambi	\$ 50.000,00
		Fortalecimiento a la conservación de páramos mediante los procesos de producción y comercialización agroecológico de la RESSAK.	RESSAK	\$ 50.000,00
	Biocorredor Pisque Mojanda San Pablo	Conservación y manejo comunitario de páramos en las parroquias de Tupigachi y Tabacundo	Corporación TURUJTA	\$ 50.000,00
		Conservación de los páramos y vertientes de la cordillera occidental del Cantón Otavalo, a través del fomento de medios de vida sostenibles con las comunidades involucradas	UNOCIGS - Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de González Suarez	\$ 50.000,00

Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- National Steering Committee (at least 3 representatives)
- Mr. Diego Zorrilla, Resident Representative of UNDP or his delegate
- Mr. Gabriel Jaramillo, UNDP Energy, Climate Change and Risk Management Area Specialist
- Ministry of Environment (Programa de Apoyo al Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas)
- National Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation Team (EQUIPATEN)

- Regional Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation Teams (EQUIPATES) – at least 3
- National Coordinator and SGP team
- Delegates from the associative projects - at least 10
- Delegates from the local governments

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

## EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

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

## PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

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

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

## MAINSTREAMING

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

## IMPACT

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

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

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

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in *Ecuador*. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

## EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 23 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	2 days	2015/02/23
Evaluation Mission	15 days	2015/03/09
Draft Evaluation Report	5 days	2015/03/20
Final Report	1 day	2015/04/10

Evaluation deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
<b>Inception Report</b>	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
<b>Presentation</b>	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO
<b>Draft Final Report</b>	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs
<b>Final Report*</b>	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.

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

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

## EVALUATOR ETHICS

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

## PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

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

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

## ANNEX A: PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Project Component	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs
1. Effective community land use governance and planning for ecological connectivity	At least 12 biological corridors established and managed by designing and implementing community strategies to prevent habitat degradation. This includes management plans and community governance structures covering 1,900,000 ha and 15 micro-watersheds, that guide the uptake of community sustainable- use practices, reducing threats to habitat blocks and increasing connectivity across the production landscape.	<p>1.1.1 Biological corridors designed and their management plans prepared with community participation through strategic alliances between CBOs, local governments, private enterprise and NGOs, including organizational capacity development (12)</p> <p>1.1.2 Management plans for micro-watersheds within biological corridor areas prepared with due consideration for biodiversity (&gt;15)</p> <p>1.1.3 Community territorial coordinating bodies for biological corridors established and operating (&gt;9)</p>
2. Sustainable livelihood options for rural communities in fragile and globally important ecosystems	<p>A mosaic of conservation and sustainable livelihood initiatives leading to ecological connectivity and increased biodiversity conservation in at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-14,000 hectares of paramo ecosystem in the Northern and Central-Southern Highlands</li> <li>-600 hectares of mangroves</li> <li>-10,000 hectares of dry forest on the Ecuadorian coast</li> <li>-20,000 hectares of tropical rainforest in the Amazon eco-region</li> </ul> <p>In addition this will provide improved food security through crop diversification using local cultivars; increased income from sustainable productions (eg NTFFP); improved generation of household incomes throughout the year and improved gender equity in communities, thus increasing sustainability over the long term and uptake over larger areas.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Agrobiodiversity management and conservation practices using an agroecological approach and marketing of underutilized crops (&gt;15 initiatives involving &gt;60 communities)</p> <p>2.1.2 Eco-friendly economic activities such as alpaca breeding and production of alpaca wool (&gt;3 initiatives involving &gt;6 communities)</p> <p>2.1.3 Community-managed sustainable tourism (&gt;10 initiatives involving &gt;21 communities)</p> <p>2.1.4 Forest management and restoration through agroforestry, natural regeneration, enrichment and reforestation with native species (&gt;10 initiatives in 40 communities)</p> <p>2.1.5 Sustainable artisanal fisheries, and mollusc and crustacean gathering (e.g. mangrove crab and black conch) in accordance with regulations for mangrove conservation</p>

		2.1.6 Community business skills and production capacity program for sustainable harvesting and marketing of non-timber forest products (>50 initiatives)
3. Knowledge systematized and disseminated, and communities trained in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning	<p>Capacity development, knowledge management, improved communications and community participation enabling implementation, replication and upscaling of successful community practices. This provides the enabling environment for upscaling thus leading to an indirect coverage of the project to:</p> <p>Paramo 133,800 ha</p> <p>Dry forest: 93,000ha</p> <p>Amazon tropical rainforest:180,000 ha</p> <p>Mangroves: 2,102 hectares</p>	<p>.1.1 Training programme designed and delivered through partner networks at the local, regional and national level to remove community capacity barriers (environmental management and planning, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, environmental law, collective rights, socio-environmental conflict resolution, gender, and business planning and marketing)</p> <p>3.1.2 Information and communications plan designed and implemented</p> <p>3.1.3 Knowledge products developed and disseminated (&gt;4)</p> <p>3.1.4 Experience exchange events among communities to promote strategic alliances among them (&gt;18)</p> <p>3.1.5 Participatory process to analyse and codify social and environmental knowledge for each ecosystem</p> <p>3.1.6 Community exchanges, technical assistance and proposals developed by community ecotourism networks in the Páramos, mangrove areas and Amazon</p> <p>3.1.7 "SIMONA" Monitoring and Mentoring system strengthened and continually applied for project adaptive management</p>

### Annex III: Terminal Evaluation Mission Itinerary

Date	Activity	PLACE	INDIVIDUALS/PROJECTS VISITED
Feb 21 (Sat)	Travel New Mexico to Quito (Depart 12:44 pm; Arrive Quito after midnight) Hostal de la Ràbida,	Quito	
Feb 22 (Sunday)	Review documents (this was not considered a work day)	Quito	
Feb 23 (Monday)	Meetings	Quito	NCU NSC MAGAP MAE PNUD
Feb 24 (Tue)	Early morning flight to Manta Meet Jairo Diaz and Eduardo (EQUIPATE) at airport in Manta and visit projects together with them. Stay in Portoviejo	Costa  La Segua Isla Corazón	<b>Proyecto:</b> Conservación y manejo del Humedal La Segua y su área de influencia, mediante la implementación de emprendimientos agroecológicos. (Comité Pro-Mejora La Segua) La Segua <b>Proyecto:</b> Conservando el ecosistema manglar con acciones de restauración y desarrollo de emprendimientos productivos sostenibles en el Estuario del Río Chone.(Cooperativa San Francisco de Salinas) Isla Corazon
Feb 25 (Wed)	MTB Costa taller Stay in Manta (noisy hotel)	Costa Portoviejo	Listen to presentations of 15 projects in the Coast
Feb 26 (Th)	GTT (hasta las 12:30) Traslado al sitio del proyecto CEPROCAFÉ Traslado a Portoviejo Movilización al hotel en Manta (quiet hotel)	Costa Portoviejo	Representatives from local governments (GAD Manabí) <b>Proyecto:</b> Sostenibilidad agroecológica con aroma de café en las tabladas de la parroquia san Plácido (CEPROCAFÉ)
Feb 27 (Friday)	Take early morning flight from Manta to Quito. José Defas (Driver) meets me at airport and we drive directly to Cayambe in Sierra Norte. Hotel Casa Sol en Peguche (hotel with stream running through it)	Sierra Norte Cayambe	<b>Proyecto:</b> Conservación de páramos en la zona alta de las comunidades de Santa Anita de Ancholag, San Luis de Chaguarpungo, Asociación Río Blanquito y Ancholag Alto y Tototrauco (Consejo de Ancholag) <b>Proyecto:</b> Apoyo a la implementación del plan de manejo de Páramos de las micro-cuencas de la Chimba, de Gualimburo-Pisambilla y González-San Pablo de la Confederación Pueblo Kayambi <b>Proyecto:</b> Fortalecimiento a la conservación de páramos mediante los procesos de producción y comercialización agroecológico de la RESSAK.
Feb 28 (Sat)	Encuentro en Mercado de Productos Orgánicos para visitar stand del proyecto de la UNOCIGS) Visitas a los proyectos de TURUJTA/FBU Retorno a Quito Hotel Holiday Inn	Sierra Norte	<b>Proyecto:</b> Conservación de los páramos y vertientes de la cordillera occidental del Cantón Otavalo, a través del fomento de medios de vida sostenibles con las comunidades involucradas (UNOCIGS) <b>Proyecto:</b> Conservación y manejo comunitario de páramos en las parroquias de Tupigachi y Tabacundo (TURUJTA) <b>Proyecto:</b> Capacitación intercultural de producción agroecológica en el corredor Pisque Mojanda San Pablo (FBU)

March 1 (Sun)	Road travel Quito to Riobamba Visita feria de productores de UCASAJ y artesanías de Pachamama en el Mercado de productores orgánicos de la Parroquia San Juan Visita Comunidad de Shobol: Tienda Artesanal de Pachamama, visita la Protección de Fuentes de Agua y resolución de conflictos, protección de riveras de ríos y fincas. Visita Comunidad de Chimigua: Establecimiento de sistema Silvopasturas Visita Producto con Identidad Territorial (PIT) Mushuk Kawsay Reunión con delegados de UCASAJ, SEDE SAN JUAN. Fin de la visita en UCASAJ y Traslado a Bayuczhi - KAMACHW Visita experiencia de Kamachw; actividades productivas vs. microcrédito organizativo, Productos con Identidad Territorial (PIT) . Hostal Rincón Alemán (en route to Quito )	Sierra Sur Riobamba Where else?	Proyecto: Uso y Conservación del Ecosistema Paramo en las Parroquias San Juan y Calpi (UCASAJ) Proyecto: Producción Agroecológica para la construcción de Biocorredores del Buen Vivir en la Provincia de Chimborazo.
March 2 (Mon)	Retorno a Quito Review Documents, write up notes Hotel Holiday Inn	Sierra Sur Quito	
March 3 (Tues)	Skype call with Gabriel Jaramillo, PNUD Meetings Hotel Holiday Inn	Quito	Meetings with REDES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Líder Góngora –proyecto C-CONDEM</li> <li>• José Rivadeneira – Coordinador proyecto Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de Agroecología – CEA</li> <li>• Natalia Greene – Coordinadora proyecto CEDENMA</li> <li>• Gabriela Ruales – Coordinadora proyecto Amazonía por la Vida</li> <li>• Cecilia Chérrez- Coordinadora proyecto Instituto de Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo</li> <li>• Luis Suárez Director Ejecutivo, Conservacion</li> </ul>

			<p>Internacional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anamaria Varea</li> </ul>
March 4 (Wed)	<p>Travel from Quito to Amazonia by car (4 hrs)</p> <p>Visita a Pashimbi: piscicultura, huertos, viveros, plantas medicinales, cocina mejorada</p> <p>Almuerzo en Pashimbi</p> <p>viaje a Arosemena Tola with Susana and 2 graduate students</p> <p>Visita a Tsatsayaku: fincas agroecológicas producción de cacao, centro de acopio, elaboración pasta de cacao.</p> <p>Retorno al Tena. Hotel Casa del Abuelo (construction by river)</p>	<p>Amazonia</p> <p>Pashimbi</p> <p>Arosema</p> <p>Tola</p> <p>Tsatsayaku</p> <p>Tena</p>	<p>Bosques, agua y comunidades: acciones productivas y ecológicas para conservar el Bosque Protector Colonso en el Bio Corredor Yacu Samay</p> <p>Asociatividad para la conservación de nuestros bosques y ríos, y para la producción de cacao fino de aroma de manera orgánica, en “Tsatsayaku</p>
March 5 (Th)	<p>MTB Amazonía taller (until 2 pm)</p> <p>Drive from Amazonia to Quito (bridge out so took 9 hours)</p> <p>Depart Quito 1 a.m.</p>	<p>Amazonia</p> <p>(Outside Tena)</p>	

## **Annex IV: Documents Reviewed by the TEE**

### **Project Documents**

- Final Signed Project Document
- Any modified versions of the Project Logframe (in this case none)
- Logframes, budgets, workplans of individual projects visited by the TE
- Completed Project Tracking Tool
- Latest Annual Performance Reports (APR)/Project Implementation Reviews (PIR)
- Field Monitoring Reports, (Monitoring by UNDP CO) (in this case none)
- Sistematización de la fase de planificación participativa y sistematizaciones parciales de los territorios
- Sistematization of various individual projects
- Project Completion Report (Final report prepared by Project Management close to project end) (in this case none)
- Mid-term Evaluation Report
- Project Identification Framework (PIF) for OP5
- Draft Project Identification Framework (PIF) for OP6
- National Steering Committee decisions and meeting's minutes
- Co-financing Agreements (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, German Cooperation Office- GIZ, National Institute for Popular and Solidary Economy)
- Methodological and conceptual tools for the Participatory Territorial Planning Phase
- Terms of Reference for the National Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation Team (EQUIPATEN) and the four Regional Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation Teams (EQUIPATE)
- Working Strategy with Networks
- Socio-Environmental Land Use Agreements (ASOCIATE) and Biocorridor Action Plans (ACBIO)
- Monitoring and Technical Support System (SIMONAA)
- Financial Guidelines for Associative Projects

- Communication Strategy and materials (newsletter, publications, SGP Ecuador Website <http://www.ppd-ecuador.org/>, Facebook Page).
- Criterios Seleccin de Territorios (FSP)
- Criterios para el diseño y el análisis de viabilidad de los biocorredores
- National Strategy 2011- 2014

## **UNDP Documents**

- Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP)
- United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)
- UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (2012)
- Joint GEF/UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation: Preparing for GEF-6 (Phase 1) 2014
- Reflections Emerging from the Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluation of Five SGP Country Programs in Latin America and Africa, A. Imbach, 2014

## **Government Documents**

- National Biodiversity Action Plan
- Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir

## **Other**

- UNOPS SGP SOP Manual
- UNDP ART (Articulation of Territorial Networks for Sustainable Human Development) project documentation

## **Annex V: Stakeholders Interviewed**

### NCU

- Anamaría Varea – Coordinadora Nacional
- María Alicia Eguiguren – Asistente de Programa
- Johana Jácome – Asistente de Proyectos
- Alejandro Ibarra – Consultor en apoyo al SIMONAA y proyectos COMDEKS
- Nadya Ochoa - Comunicadora

### NSC

- Miriam Paredes – Delegada Universidades (FLACSO)
- Ángel Orellana (CEDENMA)
- María Andrade (Org mujeres e indígenas)

### MAGAP

- Cecilia Ponce (Contraparte MAGAP y delegada al CDN) Coordinadora General de Redes Comerciales del Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca.

### MAE

- Pablo Drouet (Gerente Programa de Apoyo al SNAP KFW/MAE)
- Verónica Quintiguiña, Coordinadora Componente 2 Proyecto de Apoyo al SNAP

### UNDP Country Office

- Nuno Queiros (Representante Residente Adjunto del PNUD)
- Gabriel Jaramillo (Especialista de Programa Área de Energía, Ambiente, gestión de Riesgos y Desastres)
- Enriqueta Baquero (Oficial de Planificación Estratégica y Gerente del Área de Operaciones – encargada)

### EQUIPATE

- Jairo Diaz, EQUIPATE Costa
- Luis Ordóñez, EQUIPATE Sierra Norte
- Diana Domínguez, EQUIPATE Sierra Norte
- Felix Morocho, EQUIPATE Sierra Sur/Centro
- Susana Albán Bedón, EQUIPATE Amazonia
- Pool Segarra EQUIPATE Amazonia

### EQUIPATEN (OFIS)

- Mencha Barrera
- Patricio Carpio

## MTB

Note: I attended the MTB workshop in the Coast and part of the MTB workshop in the Amazon. I had a chance to hear all the groups' presentations and a chance to meet very briefly with a few of the individuals in attendance.

- Representatives from the 15 projects in the Coast (Portoviejo workshop)
- Representatives from 13 projects in the Amazon

## GTT

Note: I attended the GTT in the Coast and had a chance to hear group presentations and presentations of the GAD but did not have a chance to meet with any representatives of the GAD as I had to leave immediately after the presentations to visit a project. I did meet with Wagner Zambrano, GAD San Antonio, in San Antonio.

## Others

- Luis Suárez Director Ejecutivo, Conservacion Internacional

## **Projects Visited (14)**

**Proyecto 1:** Conservando el ecosistema manglar con acciones de restauración y desarrollo de emprendimientos productivos sostenibles en el Estuario del Rio Chone.(Cooperativa San Francisco de Salinas)

- Luis Andrade (coordinador)
- Tobías Gallardo (Gerente de la Cooperativa)
- Gina Napa (promotora)
- Jonathan Zambrano y Grupo de Jóvenes La Casita (at their restaurant)
- Laura María Alcívar (Dirigente del Grupo de Jóvenes)

**Proyecto 2:** Conservación y manejo del Humedal La Segua y su área de influencia, mediante la implementación de emprendimientos agroecológicos. (Comité Pro-Mejora La Segua)

- Luis Andrade, Coordinador del proyecto
- Marjorie Delgado (Presidenta Comité Promejoras)
- María Auxiliadora Corral Hidalgo(Guardiana Humedal La Segua)
- Wagner Zambrano, GAD San Antonio
- Don José Basurto Zambrano (Agricultor, miembro Comité de Gestión La Segua)

**Proyecto 3:** Sostenibilidad agroecológica con aroma de café en las tabladas de la parroquia san Plácido (CEPROCAFÉ)

- Alfredo Cedeño y Washington Cedeño
- man who is now providing technical advice to others on shade coffee

**Proyecto 4:** Conservación de páramos en la zona alta de las comunidades de Santa Anita de Ancholag, San Luis de Chaguarpungo, Asociación Río Blanquito y Ancholag Alto y Tototrauco (Consejo de Ancholag)

- María Pulamarían (Coordinadora) y todo el equipo
- Miembros de la comunidad

**Proyecto 5:** Apoyo a la implementación del plan de manejo de Páramos de las micro-cuencas de la Chimba, de Gualimburo-Pisambilla y González-San Pablo de la Confederación Pueblo Kayambi

- Agustín Cachipuendo (Presidente Pueblo Kayambi)
- Amilkar Morales (Promotor)
- Nataly Cusco (Contadora)
- otros miembros del equipo

**Proyecto 6:** Fortalecimiento a la conservación de páramos mediante los procesos de producción y comercialización agroecológico de la RESSAK.

- Soledad Inlago (Coordinadora Ressak)
- Virginia Timpaluisa (Promotora)
- otros miembros del equipo

**Proyecto 7:** Conservación de los páramos y vertientes de la cordillera occidental del Cantón Otavalo, a través del fomento de medios de vida sostenibles con las comunidades involucradas (UNOCIGS)

- Roberto Tocagón, Coordinador UNOCIGS
- Elsa Bautista, Contadora
- Sebastián Caiza (Ejecutor proyecto turismo)

**Proyecto 8:** Conservación y manejo comunitario de páramos en las parroquias de Tupigachi y Tabacundo (TURUJTA)

- Blanca Ulcuango (Coordinadora proyecto)
- Jorge Sánchez (Promotor)
- Esthela Castillo (Contadora)

- Daniel Guasgua (Presidente Turujta)

**Proyecto 9:** Capacitación intercultural de producción agroecológica en el corredor Pisque Mojanda San Pablo (FBU)

- Alfredo Merino (FBU)
- Hilario Morocho (Promotor)

**Proyecto 10:** Uso y Conservación del Ecosistema Paramo en las Parroquias San Juan y Calpi (UCASAJ)

- Elsa Yangoma (Coordinadora)
- Aida Borja (Contadora)
- Rafael Saltos, Presidente UCASAJ

**Proyecto 11:** Producción Agroecológica para la construcción de Biocorredores del Buen Vivir en la Provincia de Chimborazo KAMACH

- Sandra Pagalo, (Coordinadora del Proyecto)
- Manuela Taquilema (Presidenta KAMACH)

**Proyecto 12:** Manejo y conservación de los recursos naturales en las zonas de Achupallas y Nizag del Cantón Alausí

- Jorge Ayol (Coordinador del Proyecto)
- Woman in the photo with the sheep, now alpaca
- Gisselle Zambrano, Communications Officer, Reserva Faunística Chimborazo

**Proyecto 13:** Bosques, agua y comunidades: acciones productivas y ecológicas para conservar el Bosque Protector Colonso en el Bio Corredor Yacu Samay

**Proyecto 14:** Asociatividad para la conservación de nuestros bosques y ríos, y para la producción de cacao fino de aroma de manera orgánica, en “Tsatsayaku”

- David Moreno, Coordinador
- Coordinador de equipo técnico del proyecto, gerente de la empresa, Maquita Cusunchi, voluntario plan de negocios, presidente de la OCB).
- Henry, Voluntario, Cuerpo de Paz

#### **REDES (Strategic) Projects (group meeting in Quito)**

- Líder Góngora –proyecto C-CONDEM
- José Rivadeneira – Coordinador proyecto Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de Agroecología – CEA
- Natalia Greene – Coordinadora proyecto CEDENMA
- Gabriela Ruales – Coordinadora proyecto Amazonía por la Vida
- Cecilia Chérrez- Coordinadora proyecto Instituto de Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo

## Annex VI: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct

### ANNEX E: EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT FORM

#### Evaluators:

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

#### Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form<sup>3</sup>

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

Name of Consultant:

*Virginia Ravndal*

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant):

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

Signed at place on date

Signature:

*Alfonso R. M. @ Santa Fe, NM on November 20, 2012*

<sup>3</sup> [www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct](http://www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct)

## Annex VII: Project Log Frame

Project Goal: To conserve fragile and globally significant biodiversity & to contribute to achieve the conservation objectives of Ecuador and improve communities well-being			
	Indicator	Baseline	Targets End of Project
<b>Project Objective</b> <b>Community initiatives</b> <b>reduce habitat</b> <b>fragmentation and</b> <b>improve ecological</b> <b>connectivity across</b> <b>production landscapes</b> <b>in four priority regions</b> <b>of Ecuador</b>	Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation in the following ecosystems: - Paramo - Mangroves - Coastal dry forests - Amazon tropical rainforest	Some 200 communities sustainably manage: - 35,000 ha of Paramo††† - 1,300 ha of mangroves§§§ - 8,500 ha of coastal dry forest**** - 72,300 ha of tropical rainforest in the Amazon††††	At least 100 additional communities implementing strategies and carrying out activities that increase sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes: - 14,000 ha in the Paramo ecosystem - 600 ha in mangrove ecosystems - 10,000 ha in the coastal dry forest ecosystem - 20,000 ha in the Amazon tropical rainforest
	Habitat coverage in hectares  And/or  Reduced habitat fragmentation rates in targeted areas	Target areas have various rates of ecosystem fragmentation (e.g. annual deforestation rate in Northeast Amazon is 3% and in the Coastal region varies between 2 and 4%) Habitat coverage will be determined for each area targeted by individual grants and, if information available, specific fragmentation rates will also be established	Habitat coverage remains the same or higher in at least 70% of land in grant receiving communities
	Number of biological corridors with community strategies to prevent habitat fragmentation	Connectivity areas identified for all bio-corridors but without governance or implementation mechanisms  Yanuncay Biological corridor with management plan and implementation mechanism	At least 12 bio-corridors with community implementation strategies to reduce habitat fragmentation among the following 15 potential areas identified: North Andean region (Paramo and Andean forest): 3 bio-corridors Central Andean region (Paramo and Andean forest): 5 bio-corridors Coastal region (mangrove and dry forests): 5 bio-corridors Amazon region (tropical rainforest): 2 bio-corridors
	Increased number of communities that obtain certification against national or international standards	20% of communities have obtained certification.	At least 60% of communities obtain certification by relevant entities for their sustainable livelihood activities: - Agro-ecological practices - Sustainable tourism - Sustainable use of species

††† Paramos ecosystems in the buffer zones of: Lakes Mojanda and San Pablo; Cayambe-Coca Reserve; Chimborazo Fauna Reserve; Sangay National Park; Cajas National Park; and Forest Reserve of Jeco.

§§§ Buffer zones of: Río Chone estuary (Isla Corazón and Fraguas); Portoviejo river estuary; and El Palmar mangrove.

\*\*\*\* Buffer zones of the Forest Reserve of Montecristi-Sancan-Cantagallo; Wildlife Refuge of Pacoche, Forest Reserve of Chongon –Colonche. Agroforestry in San Placido and Honorato Vasquez.

†††† Buffer zones of the Llanganates National Park; Sumaco National Park; and Antisana and Yasuní Biosphere Reserves.

			- Non-timber forest products
	Increased number of communities aware of importance of maintaining ecological connectivity and of existence of sustainable livelihood options	TBD. A survey will be conducted at project inception in a representative sample of communities in the target areas	At least 40% of adult community members in target areas are aware of the importance to maintain ecological connectivity and are able to quote environmentally friendly production practices
<b>Outcome 1</b> <b>Effective community land use governance and planning is in place for increasing ecological connectivity in 4 ecosystems</b>	Number of biological corridor management plans developed by communities in partnership with CBOs, local government, private sector and NGOs	Yanuncay biological corridor covering 41,000 ha designed by 10 local communities and with a management plan (Andean region)	At least 12 additional biological corridors (among the 15 identified) with management plans covering an area of some 1'900,000 ha
	Number of functioning coordinating territorial bodies	- One coordinating entity for the Yanuncay biological corridor functioning (Andean region) - Two coordination bodies for environmental management with working groups established for Paramo and mangrove ecosystems	At least 9 additional community biological corridor management bodies representing a total of 300 communities operating effectively and in cooperation with local and regional government, community organizations and other stakeholders
	Increased number of watershed management plans in project focus areas	6 environmental management plans for the following watersheds: Tabacay in the Canar Province Yanuncay and Jubones in the Azuay Province Chimborazo and Ajuela in the Chimborazo Province Bigal River in the Amazon	15 micro-watersheds within biological corridor areas with management plans
<b>Outcome 2</b> <b>Rural communities have increased sustainable livelihood options appropriate for fragile and globally significant ecosystems</b>	Improved food security of local communities through crop diversification using local cultivars, agro-ecological practices, and other sustainable food production practices	10 Andean crop species being recovered in the Paramo in 400 hectares involving 130 communities and 3,900 families  2 marine species sustainably managed by local communities in 2 sites	10 Andean crop species recovered (an additional 240 hectares) and incorporated in the family diet, contributing to food security of 60 communities and 1.000 families. Mollusks and crustaceans available in a sustainable manner in 4 communities involving 35 families
	Increased number of communities generating income from sustainable production practices such as non-timber forest products, eco-tourism, and alpaca wool	280 communities currently obtain income from sustainable production initiatives	142 additional communities generate income from sustainable production practices involving some 1,500 families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-timber forest products (50 communities)</li> <li>• Alpaca wool (6 communities)</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism (21 communities)</li> <li>• Cocoa and coffee production in agro-forestry systems (65)</li> </ul>
	Improved distribution of household	- Income from 80% of local communities	At least 1,500 families obtain income at least 4 times a year

	income throughout the year as a result of sustainable production activities	depends on the harvest of one cash crop - 5,000 families supported by SGP obtain additional income from sustainable production activities at least once a year in the last 5 years in project area	from sustainable use of biodiversity
	Improved gender equity as a result of increased income generation opportunities for women	20% of SGP-funded initiatives in the project areas managed by women with benefits accruing to them.	40% of SGP-funded initiatives will be controlled by women and benefits will accrue to them
<b>Outcome 3</b> <b>Knowledge systematized and disseminated, and communities trained in project design, monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and learning</b>	Percentage of successful community projects	90% of SGP-funded projects rated as successful by evaluations (outcomes, outputs and targets met and likelihood of sustainability).	The current 90% rate of successful projects will be maintained or increased during this SGP phase.
	Increased number of community leaders active and with demonstrated socio-economic and environmental capacity to represent communities in bio-corridor governance bodies and other relevant policy and sustainable development activities	30 leaders (80% male and 20% female) with improved capacities in each selected area	At least 10 individuals per project with enhanced knowledge and leadership capacities to work with communities in sustainable ecosystem and resources management and to represent them effectively in various bodies and fora. Of these 60% male and 40% female.
	Number of community projects that apply adaptive management as a result of timely input from SIMONA	80% of previous projects use SIMONA inputs for adaptive management	At least 80% of projects show evidence of timely course change or improvements in project delivery based on SIMONA inputs

## Annex VIII. Evaluation Criteria Matrix

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<b>Relevance:</b> How does the project relate to the main objectives of the UNCBD and to the GEF Biodiversity focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels for indigenous crop and livestock diversity conservation in Ecuador?				
Is the project relevant to the UNCBD objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project support the objectives of the UNCBD?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNCBD priorities and areas of work incorporated in project design</li> <li>Extent to which the project is implemented in line with incremental cost argument</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>National policies and strategies to implement the UNCBD, other international conventions, or related to environment more generally</li> <li>UNCBD and other international convention web sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with project team, UNDP and other partners</li> </ul>
Is the project relevant the GEF biodiversity focal area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project support the GEF biodiversity focal area and strategic priorities related to agro-biodiversity conservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF biodiversity focal area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>GEF focal areas strategies and documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>GEF website</li> <li>Interviews with UNDP and project team</li> </ul>
Is the project relevant to Ecuador's environment and sustainable development objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project support the environment and sustainable development objectives of Ecuador?</li> <li>Is the project country-driven?</li> <li>What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design?</li> <li>What was the level of stakeholder ownership in implementation?</li> <li>Does the project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional and policy framework in its design and its implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which the project supports national environmental objectives</li> <li>Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies</li> <li>Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities</li> <li>Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design process</li> <li>Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP-GEF criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>National policies and strategies</li> <li>Key project partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with UNDP and project partners</li> </ul>
Is the project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries at the local and regional levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project support the needs of relevant stakeholders?</li> <li>Has the implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant stakeholders?</li> <li>Were local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project design and implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strength of the link between expected results from the project and the needs of relevant stakeholders</li> <li>Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in project design and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project partners and stakeholders</li> <li>Needs assessment studies</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews with relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>
Is the project internally coherent in its design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there logical linkages between expected results of the project (log frame) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of coherence between project expected results and project design internal logic</li> <li>Level of coherence between project design and project implementation approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program and project documents</li> <li>Key project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Key interviews</li> </ul>

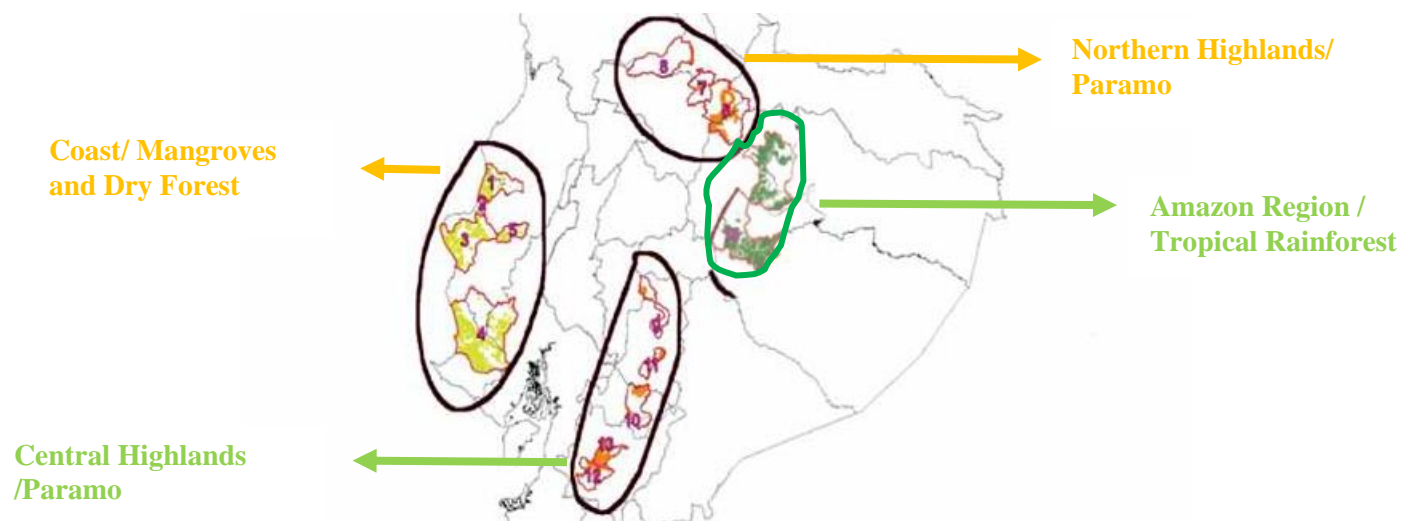
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the length of the project sufficient to achieve project outcomes?</li> </ul>			
How is the project relevant with respect to other donor-supported activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the GEF funding support activities and objectives not addressed by other donors?</li> <li>How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are necessary but are not covered by other donors?</li> <li>Is there coordination and complementarity between donors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which program was coherent and complementary to other donor programming nationally and regionally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents from other donor supported activities</li> <li>Other donor representatives</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with project partners and relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>
Does the project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the experience of the project provided relevant lessons for other future projects targeted at similar objectives?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness:</b> To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been/be achieved?				
Has the project been effective in achieving the expected outcomes and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the project been effective in achieving its expected outcomes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See indicators in project document results framework and logframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project team and relevant stakeholders</li> <li>Data reported in project annual and quarterly reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analysis</li> <li>Interviews with project team</li> <li>Interviews with relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>
How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well are risks, assumptions and impact drivers being managed?</li> <li>What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient?</li> <li>Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning and design</li> <li>Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues</li> <li>Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>UNDP, project team, and relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
What lessons can be drawn regarding effectiveness for other similar projects in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What lessons have been learned from the project regarding achievement of outcomes?</li> <li>What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the project in order to improve the achievement of the project's expected results?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency:</b> Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?				
Was project support provided in an efficient way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?</li> <li>Did the project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation?</li> <li>Were the accounting and financial systems in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability and quality of financial and progress reports</li> <li>Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided</li> <li>Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures</li> <li>Planned vs. actual funds leveraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP</li> <li>Project team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Key interviews</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?</li> <li>Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?</li> <li>Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)</li> <li>Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned?</li> <li>Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?</li> <li>Was procurement carried out in a manner making efficient use of project resources?</li> <li>How was results-based management used during project implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations</li> <li>Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost</li> <li>Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation)</li> <li>Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency</li> <li>Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives</li> </ul>		
How efficient are partnership arrangements for the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/ organizations were encouraged and supported?</li> <li>Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated?</li> <li>What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements?</li> <li>Which methods were successful or not and why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners,</li> <li>Examples of supported partnerships</li> <li>Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained</li> <li>Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>Project partners and relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
Did the project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity?</li> <li>Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project?</li> <li>Was there an effective collaboration between institutions responsible for implementing the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of expertise utilized from international experts compared to national experts</li> <li>Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
What lessons can be drawn regarding efficiency for other similar projects in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What lessons can be learnt from the project regarding efficiency?</li> <li>How could the project have more efficiently carried out implementation (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc...)?</li> <li>What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Results:</b> What are the current actual, and potential long-term, results of activities supported by the project?				
How is the project effective in achieving its long-term objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will the project achieve its overall objective ?</li> <li>Is the globally significant biodiversity of the target area likely to be conserved?</li> <li>What barriers remain to achieving long-term objectives, or what necessary steps remain to be taken by stakeholders to achieve sustained impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?</li> <li>Are there unanticipated results achieved or contributed to by the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To pool/mobilize resources</li> <li>For related policy making and strategic planning</li> <li>For implementation of related laws and strategies through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance</li> </ul> </li> <li>Change in use and implementation of sustainable livelihoods</li> <li>Change in the number and strength of barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Key stakeholders</li> <li>Monitoring data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analysis</li> <li>Meetings with UNDP, project team and project partners</li> <li>Interviews with project beneficiaries</li> </ul>

		such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Knowledge about biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, and economic incentives in these areas</li> <li>o Cross-institutional coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue</li> <li>o Knowledge of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use practices by end users</li> <li>o Coordination of policy and legal instruments incorporating biodiversity conservation and agro-environmental strategies</li> <li>o Agro-environmental economic incentives for stakeholders</li> </ul>		and other stakeholders
How is the project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o On the local environment;</li> <li>o On economic well-being;</li> <li>o On other socio-economic issues.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide specific examples of impacts at species, ecosystem or genetic levels, as relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documents</li> <li>• UNCDB documents</li> <li>• Key Stakeholders</li> <li>• Monitoring data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data analysis</li> <li>• Interviews with key stakeholders</li> </ul>
Future directions for results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability:</b> Are the conditions in place for project-related benefits and results to be sustained?				
Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in project design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were sustainability issues integrated into the design and implementation of the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence / quality of sustainability strategy</li> <li>• Evidence / quality of steps taken to ensure sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>• UNDP and project personnel and project partners</li> <li>• Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?</li> <li>• Are the recurrent costs after project completion sustainable?</li> <li>• What are the main institutions/organizations in country that will take the project efforts forward after project end and what is the budget they have assigned to this?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities after project ends</li> <li>• Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end</li> <li>• Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>• UNDP and project personnel and project partners</li> <li>• Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>
Institutional and governance sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the results of efforts made during the project implementation period well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures?</li> <li>• Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support?</li> <li>• What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results?</li> <li>• Were laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations</li> <li>• Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after project end</li> <li>• Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>• UNDP and project personnel and project partners</li> <li>• Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>

Social-economic sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?</li> <li>What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project?</li> <li>Are there policies or practices in place that create perverse incentives that would negatively affect long-term benefits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of enforcement and law making capacity</li> <li>Evidences of commitment by government enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there adequate incentives to ensure sustained benefits achieved through the project?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, project personnel and project partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Documentation review</li> </ul>
Environmental sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there risks to the environmental benefits that were created or that are expected to occur?</li> <li>Are there long-term environmental threats that have not been addressed by the project?</li> <li>Have any new environmental threats emerged in the project's lifetime?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of potential threats such as infrastructure development</li> <li>Assessment of unaddressed or emerging threats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>Threat assessments</li> <li>Government documents or other external published information</li> <li>UNDP, project personnel and project partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Documentation review</li> </ul>
Individual, institutional and systemic capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the capacity in place at the regional, national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (regional, national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>UNDP, project personnel and project partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> <li>Capacity assessments available, if any</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Documentation review</li> </ul>
Replication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there potential to scale up or replicate project activities?</li> <li>Did the project's Exit Strategy actively promote replication?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number/quality of replicated initiatives</li> <li>Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives</li> <li>Scale of additional investment leveraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Exit Strategy</li> <li>UNDP, project personnel and project partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
Challenges to sustainability of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts?</li> <li>Have any of these been addressed through project management?</li> <li>What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above</li> <li>Recent changes which may present new challenges to the project</li> <li>Education strategy and partnership with school, education institutions etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> <li>UNDP, project personnel and project partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
Future directions for sustainability and catalytic role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?</li> <li>What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>

## Annex IX: Map of Ecuador Showing the Four SGP Territories



### Biocorridors

Coast	Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Amazon Region
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chone River Estuary: Isla Corazón and Fragata – La Segua</li> <li>2. Portoviejo River Estuary and Bálsamo Mountain Range</li> <li>3. Montecristi, Sancán, Cantagallo Protective Forests</li> <li>4. Chongón Colonche Mountain Range Protective Forests</li> <li>5. Agroforestry Area - Coffee/Cocoa</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Andean Section of Cayambe – Coca National Park Buffer Zone</li> <li>7. Pisque – Mojanda – San Pablo</li> <li>8. Cotacachi Subtropical Zone Biocorridor</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Chimborazo Reserve Buffer Zone</li> <li>10. Sangay – Cañar National Park Buffer Zone</li> <li>11. Chimborazo – Sangay Agrobiodiversity Zone</li> <li>12. Santa Isabel</li> <li>13. Yanuncay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Buffer Zones between Antisana Biological Reserve and Sumaco – Napo Galeras National Park</li> <li>15. Jatún Yaku River Sub-Basin</li> <li>16. Napo River</li> </ol>

## Annex X: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

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

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by  
UNDP Country Office

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_