Design & Appraisal Stage Quality Assurance Report

Overall Project Rating: **Exemplary**

Decision: Approve: The project is of sufficient quality to continue as planned. Any management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.

Project Number: 00100780

Project Title: Varias propuestas a desarrollarse en el área de conservación de la biodiversidad y desarrollo sostenible en la Amazonia ecuatoriana

Project Date: 01-Jun-2017

Strategic   **Quality Rating: Exemplary**

1. Does the project's Theory of Change specify how it will contribute to higher level change? (Select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

○ *3: The project has a theory of change with explicit assumptions and clear change pathway describing how the project will contribute to outcome level change as specified in the programme/CPD, backed by credible evidence of what works effectively in this context. The project document clearly describes why the project's strategy is the best approach at this point in time.*

○ 2: The project has a theory of change. It has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project intends to contribute to outcome-level change and why the project strategy is the best approach at this point in time, but is backed by limited evidence.

○ 1: The project does not have a theory of change, but the project document may describe in generic terms how the project will contribute to development results, without specifying the key assumptions. It does not make an explicit link to the programme/CPD's theory of change.

Evidence	Management Response
The project has been designed based on technical, social, political and economic analyses of the project target area, the Special Amazonian Territorial Circumscription (CTEA). The Project Document (ProDoc), clearly states a theory of change and highlights the various issues concerning the CTEA, such as the expansion of the agricultural frontier, a change in crop use and high rates of poverty in specific areas.	
In order to promote a positive change, the project proposes a range of interventions, that vary from the strenghtening of institutional capacities for good governance, financial and market frameworks for sustainable production and management of multiple use landscapes (MULs) as well as financial opportunities to stimulate the adoption of sound environmental practices, conservation of biodiversity, and compliance with sustainable landuse plans. All these actions are considered to be the best possible approach considering the current situation of the Ecuadorian Amazon.	
The project will build upon experience and lessons learnt from previous UNDP programmes in the amazon area as well as from ongoing MAGAP and MAE programs (e.g. MAGAP´s Agenda for Productive Transformation of the Amazon –ATPA, Coffee and Cocoa Reactivation Project, Sustainable Livestock Project; GAD and producers´ associations technical assistance programs), delivering direct environmental and social benefits and generating lessons to improve their implementation, shifting from their current sectorial approaches to an inter-sectorial integrated landscape management approach.	
In addition, an analysis of the potential risks has been conducted (see Prodoc, Risk Management section), and the mitigation actions have been described. The risks will be monitored on a quarterly basis; and will be reported as critical when the impact and probablity are high. Management responses to critical risks will also be reported to the GEF in the	

annual PIR.

These actions are very much in line with the current CPD for Ecuador 2015-2018 as well as with the National Development Plan goal.

For instance, outcomes 2 and 3 are primarily related to CPD targets on environmental sustainability, resilience and risk management and sustainable and equitable economic development. The focus of the project lies in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and thus halting deforestation and biodiversity loss, while at the same time allowing for economic development of the vulnerable population in the target areas. By specifically targeting youth, women and the indigenous the project also intends to address the fourth priority identified in the CPD: Reduction of inequality gaps for cohesion, inclusion and quality of life.

Overall, the project has identified a clear theory of change, using all the available information on existing issues and obstacles in the region and sound alternatives to overcome them, all this fully in line with the National Development Plan as well as with UNDP CDP.

2. Is the project aligned with the thematic focus of the UNDP Strategic Plan? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

○ *3: The project responds to one of the three areas of development work as specified in the Strategic Plan; it addresses at least one of the proposed new and emerging areas; an issues-based analysis has been incorporated into the project design; and the project's RRF includes all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: The project responds to one of the three areas of development work as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF includes at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true to select this option)

○ 1: While the project may respond to one of the three areas of development work as specified in the Strategic Plan, it is based on a sectoral approach without addressing the complexity of the development issue. None of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF. This answer is also selected if the project does not respond to any of the three areas of development work in the Strategic Plan.

Evidence

Yes, the Project is aligned with 3 areas of work under UNDP strategic plan; and it integrates sustainable production and natural resource management.

Sustainable development pathways tackle the connected issues of poverty, inequality and exclusion while transforming productive capacities, avoiding the irreversible depletion of social and natural capital and lowering risks arising from shocks. The project does so by stimulating productive activities that are sustainable, halting the current depletion of natural resources and providing alternatives which can generate income as well as transforming current malpractices that are being used. In addition component 1, as explained before, intervenes on the governance level by stimulating inclusion of citizens in the decision making process. The whole of the activities will make the local populations less vulnerable to market changes, more integrated in society through democratic participation and access to resources, less vulnerable to the effects of climate change and hence overall more resilient to adverse changes on the local, national and international level. Hence, we can state that the programme is completely aligned with the UNDP strategic plan.

Relevant   **Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory**

3. Does the project have strategies to effectively identify, engage and ensure the meaningful participation of targeted groups/geographic areas with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ *3: The target groups/geographic areas are appropriately specified, prioritising the excluded and/or marginalised. Beneficiaries will be identified through a rigorous process based on evidence (if applicable.)The project has an explicit strategy to identify, engage and ensure the meaningful participation of specified target groups/geographic areas throughout the project, including through monitoring and decision-making (such as representation on the project board) (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: The target groups/geographic areas are appropriately specified, prioritising the excluded and/or marginalised. The project document states how beneficiaries will be identified, engaged and how meaningful participation will be ensured throughout the project. (both must be true to select this option)

○ 1: The target groups/geographic areas are not specified, or do not prioritize excluded and/or marginalised populations. The project does not have a written strategy to identify or engage or ensure the meaningful participation of the target groups/geographic areas throughout the project.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence	Management Response
Target groups are clearly specified, and the activities of the project are designed to have optimal results and evidence of change throughout and after the duration of the project. The targeted groups are categorized in a variety of ways, first and foremost through their geographical location and proximity to target natural areas and resources. Secondly, through their economic activity, where there is a focus on agricultural activity and economic activity with products derived from the forest. Lastly, the project will have a direct focus on the most vulnerable groups in the targeted areas of intervention, namely youth, indigenous peoples and women. These groups are targeted specifically through a variety of actions defined in the ProDoc and their participation will be ensured. For instance, Territorial Coordination Platform members will receive training on gender and inter-cultural approaches; the project will promote the participation of the Gender Equality Council (in charge of national gender policies) in the Territorial Coordination Platform; an edu-communication strategy will be developed with contents and materials in line with family realities, ethnicity, and respect for local cultural practices and traditional knowledge.	

4. Have knowledge, good practices, and past lessons learned of UNDP and others informed the project design? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: Knowledge and lessons learned (gained e.g. through peer assist sessions) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, and monitoring have been explicitly used, with appropriate referencing, to develop the project's theory of change and justify the approach used by the project over alternatives.

◉ *2: The project design mentions knowledge and lessons learned backed by evidence/sources, which inform the project's theory of change but have not been used/are not sufficient to justify the approach selected over alternatives.*

○ 1: There is only scant or no mention of knowledge and lessons learned informing the project design. Any references that are made are not backed by evidence.

Evidence	Management Response
Yes, the project design has indeed considered lessons learnt from different sources, including -but not limited to- one outcome evaluation and two full size projects Terminal Evaluations. However, these references were only partially mentioned in the ProDoc.	

5. Does the project use gender analysis in the project design and does the project respond to this gender analysis with concrete measures to address gender inequities and empower women? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: A participatory gender analysis on the project has been conducted. This analysis reflects on the different needs, roles and access to/control over resources of women and men, and it is fully integrated into the project document. The project establishes concrete priorities to address gender inequalities in its strategy. The results framework includes outputs and activities that specifically respond to this gender analysis, with indicators that measure and monitor results contributing to gender equality. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: A gender analysis on the project has been conducted. This analysis reflects on the different needs, roles and access to/control over resources of women and men. Gender concerns are integrated in the development challenge and strategy sections of the project document. The results framework includes outputs and activities that specifically respond to this gender analysis, with indicators that measure and monitor results contributing to gender equality. (all must be true to select this option)

○ 1: The project design may or may not mention information and/or data on the differential impact of the project's development situation on gender relations, women and men, but the constraints have not been clearly identified and interventions have not been considered.

Evidence	Management Response
Yes, the project counts on a separate gender strategy document, which was assembled with support from a regional UNDP expert as well as some consultations with UNWOMEN. This has led to gender being mainstreamed throughout its entire cycle, and the identification of a gender gap, especially in the following areas: parity in decision-making spaces; improvement of women´s incomes and livelihoods; use of time; and access to, and control of resources. Gender has gained a very strong prevalence in the projects activities, for instance in its training and capacity building efforts, in best practices guides to be developed, in the communication strategy, data gathering, and so forth. Furthermore, gender and inter-cultural mainstreaming have been assessed in the Social and Environmental Screening, more specifically under Principle 2 Gender Equality and Women´s Empowerment, Standard 4 Cultural Heritage and Standard 6 Indigenous Peoples, identifying associated risks and corresponding measures that have been incorporated in project design. For further information please refer to Section V.iii Social and Environmental Safeguards below and the Social and Environmental Screening Checklist in Annex F.	

6. Does UNDP have a clear advantage to engage in the role envisioned by the project vis-à-vis national partners, other development partners, and other actors? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: An analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area where the project intends to work, and credible evidence supports the proposed engagement of UNDP and partners through the project. It is clear how results achieved by relevant partners will contribute to outcome level change complementing the project's intended results. If relevant, options for south-south and triangular cooperation have been considered, as appropriate. (all must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: Some analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners where the project intends to work, and relatively limited evidence supports the proposed engagement of and division of labour between UNDP and partners through the project. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation may not have not been fully developed during project design, even if relevant opportunities have been identified.

○ 1: No clear analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area that the project intends to work, and relatively limited evidence supports the proposed engagement of UNDP and partners through the project. There is risk that the project overlaps and/or does not coordinate with partners' interventions in this area. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have not been considered, despite its potential relevance.

Evidence	Management Response
Yes it does, as mentioned both in in the CPD and ProDoc, UNDP has a comparative advantage in the support to national efforts aimed at democratic consolidation and productive change involving poverty and inequality reduction and the creation of conditions for sustainable and inclusive human development. This calls for expanded resilience and the mainstreaming of environmental considerations for the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems in the national production matrix strategy; social development; the articulation of national policy planning and implementation with territorial and local priorities and stakeholders; and the promotion of citizen voice and agency in public issues.	

UNDP is considered a strategic partner for developing and implementing policy tools for supporting livelihoods and conservation of natural resources at the territorial level in line with the national production matrix strategy and a long record of successful project implementation within the country. It is thus clearly defined what strengths the UNDP can bring to the table. Additionally, the programme counts on a stakeholders plan, definying the role of all the involved parties, clearly defined through their comparative strengths.

Social & Environmental Standards   Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

7. Does the project seek to further the realization of human rights using a human rights based approach? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ 3: Credible evidence that the project aims to further the realization of human rights, upholding the relevant international and national laws and standards in the area of the project. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were rigorously identified and assessed as relevant, with appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true to select this option)

◉ *2: Some evidence that the project aims to further the realization of human rights. Potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were identified and assessed as relevant, and appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into the project design and budget.*

○ 1: No evidence that the project aims to further the realization of human rights. Limited or no evidence that potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were considered.

Evidence	Management Response
The programme aims - throughout its activities - to fulfill human rights conditions and to improve the living conditions of the especially vulnerable groups in the Amazon; the indigenous, women and youth. In a variety of ways participation of these groups will be stimulated and their contribution in the decision making process will be enhanced. The programme also looks at various ways to provide alternative sustainable economic options while focusing on these target groups which will allow them to improve their livelihoods.	

8. Did the project consider potential environmental opportunities and adverse impacts, applying a precautionary approach? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: Credible evidence that opportunities to enhance environmental sustainability and integrate poverty-environment linkages were fully considered as relevant, and integrated in project strategy and design. Credible evidence that potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified and rigorously assessed with appropriate management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true to select this option).*

○ 2: No evidence that opportunities to strengthen environmental sustainability and poverty-environment linkages were considered. Credible evidence that potential adverse environmental impacts have been identified and assessed, if relevant, and appropriate management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget.

○ 1: No evidence that opportunities to strengthen environmental sustainability and poverty-environment linkages were considered. Limited or no evidence that potential adverse environmental impacts were adequately considered.

Evidence	Management Response
The programme has taken into account potential impacts on the environment. All the activities in the programme aim to improve the environmental conditions of the project target area and are designed in a way to reduce any possible risk of damage to the environment. The SESP and the Risk and Mitigation document provide details on how a variety of environmental elements have been analysed and taken into account. There is no doubt that with a successful	

implementation of the project, the environmental benefits to the selected areas will be considerable, both during and after the course of the project. Any possible adverse effect resulting from a project activity will be closely monitored and mitigated, and action will be taken to prevent it.

9. Has the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) been conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks? [If yes, upload the completed checklist as evidence. If SESP is not required, provide the reason(s) for the exemption in the evidence section. Exemptions include the following:

- Preparation and dissemination of reports, documents and communication materials
- Organization of an event, workshop, training
- Strengthening capacities of partners to participate in international negotiations and conferences
- Partnership coordination (including UN coordination) and management of networks
- Global/regional projects with no country level activities (e.g. knowledge management, inter-governmental processes)
- UNDP acting as Administrative Agent

- ⦿ *Yes*
- ◯ No
- ◯ SESP not required

Evidence

SESP uploaded

List of Uploaded Documents

File Name	Modified By	Modified
PIMS_5606_Annex_F_SESP_HN_MN_19_OCT.docx	carla.chacon@undp.org	1/4/2017 8:19:38 PM

Management & Monitoring	**Quality Rating: Exemplary**

10. Does the project have a strong results framework? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

- ⦿ *3: The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level and relate in a clear way to the project's theory of change. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure all of the key expected changes identified in the theory of change, each with credible data sources, and populated baselines and targets, including gender sensitive, sex-disaggregated indicators where appropriate. (all must be true to select this option)*

- ◯ 2: The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level, but may not cover all aspects of the project's theory of change. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators, but baselines, targets and data sources may not yet be fully specified. Some use of gender sensitive, sex-disaggregated indicators, as appropriate. (all must be true to select this option)

- ◯ 1: The results framework does not meet all of the conditions specified in selection "2" above. This includes: the project's selection of outputs and activities are not at an appropriate level and do not relate in a clear way to the project's theory of change; outputs are not accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the expected change, and have not been populated with baselines and targets; data sources are not specified, and/or no gender sensitive, sex-disaggregation of indicators.

Evidence

The programme results framework establishes specific and measurable SMART indicators which have been well chosen, and through their measurement the theory of change will be properly assessed. When appropriate, a desagregation of gender, age and race aspects have been included.

In relation to the baseline, although most of the indicators have specific information, for some indiators there is a lack reliable of

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data, which will need to be build up through the project implementation and in close coordination with the relevant institutions and actors. See Results Framework in page 73 of ProDoc.

11. Is there a comprehensive and costed M&E plan with specified data collection sources and methods to support evidence-based management, monitoring and evaluation of the project?

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

Yes, the ProDoc has a detailed plan for M&E activities with a specific budget.

12. Is the project's governance mechanism clearly defined in the project document, including planned composition of the project board? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: The project's governance mechanism is fully defined in the project document. Individuals have been specified for each position in the governance mechanism (especially all members of the project board.) Project Board members have agreed on their roles and responsibilities as specified in the terms of reference. The ToR of the project board has been attached to the project document. (all must be true to select this option).*

○ 2: The project's governance mechanism is defined in the project document; specific institutions are noted as holding key governance roles, but individuals may not have been specified yet. The prodoc lists the most important responsibilities of the project board, project director/manager and quality assurance roles. (all must be true to select this option)

○ 1: The project's governance mechanism is loosely defined in the project document, only mentioning key roles that will need to be filled at a later date. No information on the responsibilities of key positions in the governance mechanism is provided.

Evidence

The project´s governance structure (Project Board, Technical Committee, Working Groups) as well as the dialogue platforms will ensure adequate planning and implementation of activities in line with the project objectives, regional and local priorities, as well as complementarity with ongoing and planned programs and projects. Coordination mechanisms will be closely linked, ensuring in this manner that stakeholder concerns are up-streamed into higher project management levels and likewise project management decisions are down-streamed to keep stakeholders duly informed. The dialogue platforms will have a key role in this process. The project will benefit from the experiences and knowledge of CSOs, NGOs and private sector participating in the platforms. Systematization of project experiences and lessons learned will contribute to cost-effective upscaling and replication of project results.

Please see Section VIII. Governance and management arrangements in the PRODOC for details on the governance structure.

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13. Have the project risks been identified with clear plans stated to manage and mitigate each risks? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: Project risks related to the achievement of results are fully described in the project risk log, based on comprehensive analysis drawing on the theory of change, Social and Environmental Standards and screening, situation analysis, capacity assessments and other analysis. Clear and complete plan in place to manage and mitigate each risk. (both must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: Project risks related to the achievement of results identified in the initial project risk log with mitigation measures identified for each risk.

○ 1: Some risks may be identified in the initial project risk log, but no evidence of analysis and no clear risk mitigation measures identified. This option is also selected if risks are not clearly identified and no initial risk log is included with the project document.

Evidence   **Management Response**

Yes, the ProDoc has a detailed Risk Management Plan. It is detailed in Table 10 of the PRODOC starting on page 65.

Efficient   **Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory**

14. Have specific measures for ensuring cost-efficient use of resources been explicitly mentioned as part of the project design? This can include: i) using the theory of change analysis to explore different options of achieving the maximum results with the resources available; ii) using a portfolio management approach to improve cost effectiveness through synergies with other interventions; iii) through joint operations (e.g., monitoring or procurement) with other partners.

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

Yes, through the large amount of co-financing partners of the project we can state that the project is aligned with a variety of partners and projects which will ensure cost efficient use of resources and synergy with other initiatives. With some of these projects, such as Socio Bosque, a direct collaboration will be established to achieve joint results

15. Are explicit plans in place to ensure the project links up with other relevant on-going projects and initiatives, whether led by UNDP, national or other partners, to achieve more efficient results (including, for example, through sharing resources or coordinating delivery?)

◉ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

Please see Table 14 on page 94 of the PRODOC where various co-financing resources are mentioned as well as page 101, Summary of the Funds.

16. Is the budget justified and supported with valid estimates?

◉ *3: The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, and is specified for the duration of the project period in a multi-year budget. Costs are supported with valid estimates using benchmarks from similar projects or activities. Cost implications from inflation and foreign exchange exposure have been estimated and incorporated in the budget.*

○ 2: The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, when possible, and is specified for the duration of the project in a multi-year budget. Costs are supported with valid estimates based on prevailing rates.

○ 1: The project's budget is not specified at the activity level, and/or may not be captured in a multi-year budget.

Evidence

Yes, the budget is justified and has valid estimates detailed in a multi year budget plan, which can be consulted on page 98 of the PRODOC, table 10.

17. Is the Country Office fully recovering the costs involved with project implementation?

○ 3: The budget fully covers all direct project costs that are directly attributable to the project, including programme management and development effectiveness services related to strategic country programme planning, quality assurance, pipeline development, policy advocacy services, finance, procurement, human resources, administration, issuance of contracts, security, travel, assets, general services, information and communications based on full costing in accordance with prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL.)

◉ *2: The budget covers significant direct project costs that are directly attributable to the project based on prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL) as relevant.*

○ 1: The budget does not reimburse UNDP for direct project costs. UNDP is cross-subsidizing the project and the office should advocate for the inclusion of DPC in any project budget revisions.

Evidence	**Management Response**
The Project will implement cost recovery policies as determined by POPP. However, option 2 is selected considering that a) historically, GEF projects cost recovery percentage to the CO are not sufficient to cover all effective costs and that b) this project surpassed the USD 10 MM threshold, thus the cost recovery percentage assigned will be reduced by 0,5%.	

Effective	**Quality Rating: Exemplary**

18. Is the chosen implementation modality most appropriate? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

◉ *3: The required implementing partner assessments (capacity assessment, HACT micro assessment) have been conducted, and there is evidence that options for implementation modalities have been thoroughly considered. There is a strong justification for choosing the selected modality, based on the development context. (both must be true to select this option)*

○ 2: The required implementing partner assessments (capacity assessment, HACT micro assessment) have been conducted and the implementation modality chosen is consistent with the results of the assessments.

○ 1: The required assessments have not been conducted, but there may be evidence that options for implementation modalities have been considered.

Evidence	**Management Response**
Yes, an in-depth analysis has been made of the implementing partners and as a result their responsabilities within the project implementation have been determined. The project will be implemented over a period of 72 months following UNDP's national implementation modality, according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Ecuador, and the Country Programme, with UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. The Implementing Partners for this project are the Ministry of Environment (MAE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries (MAGAP). The Implementing Partners are responsible and accountable for managing this project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP resources. MAE and MAGAP will coordinate with the Coordinating Ministry for Production, Employment and Competitiveness (MCPEC) and the Coordinating Ministry for Strategic Sectors (MICSE) and will be responsible at the highest level for ensuring that project implementation follows the national policies and standards, and representing the project in the annual tripartite reviews. MAE as GEF Focal Point will have, in line with its responsibilities, a key role in achieving Outcome 1 Strengthened multi-level governance framework for sustainable management and production in MUL and HVCF in the CTEA to ensure the unabated supply of ecosystem services (including conservation of biodiversity, soils, water resources and carbon sequestration) within a framework of improved institutional capacities for SFM and SLM in MULs. MAGAP, as the institution responsible for Ecuador´s productive policies will have a key role in achieving	

Outcome 2 Access to markets, credit and incentives for
sustainable production of the main products in multiple use and
high conservation value landscapes of the CTEA and Outcome
3 Landscape level implementation of sustainable practices in
commercial production and livelihoods systems, aligned with the
conservation and restoration of HVCF. Both Ministries will have
key roles in achieving Outcome 4 Dissemination of lessons
learned, monitoring and evaluation.

19. Have targeted groups, prioritizing marginalized and excluded populations that will be affected by the project, been engaged in the design of the project in a way that addresses any underlying causes of exclusion and discrimination?

○ *3: Credible evidence that all targeted groups, prioritising marginalized and excluded populations that will be involved in or affected by the project, have been actively engaged in the design of the project. Their views, rights and any constraints have been analysed and incorporated into the root cause analysis of the theory of change which seeks to address any underlying causes of exclusion and discrimination and the selection of project interventions.*

○ 2: Some evidence that key targeted groups, prioritising marginalized and excluded populations that will be involved in the project, have been engaged in the design of the project. Some evidence that their views, rights and any constraints have been analysed and incorporated into the root cause analysis of the theory of change and the selection of project interventions.

○ 1: No evidence of engagement with marginalized and excluded populations that will be involved in the project during project design. No evidence that the views, rights and constraints of populations have been incorporated into the project.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence

Yes, both through the consultation workshops in territory as well as through direct communication with representatives of targeted vulnerable groups their voice has been heard and further taken into account in the design of the project. As mentioned before, in a large array of activities these groups will be specifically targeted and their participation in the decision making process will be ensured. The expected outcome of the project is that the inequality in the regions of project implementation will dimish and that these groups will have a greater amount of possibilities to improve their livelihoods.

20. Does the project conduct regular monitoring activities, have explicit plans for evaluation, and include other lesson learning (e.g. through After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops), timed to inform course corrections if needed during project implementation?

○ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

Yes, the project has a detailed monitoring plan which can be found in the annexes of the PRODOC on page 115.

21. The gender marker for all project outputs are scored at GEN2 or GEN3, indicating that gender has been fully mainstreamed into all project outputs at a minimum.

○ *Yes*

○ No

Evidence

he project outputs are scored at GEN2.

According to the PRODOC, the project mainstreams gender
and inter-cultural issues throughout its entire cycle, based on
the premise that besides ensuring participation of women (and
their organizations) in the spaces generated by the project, it
will contribute to their effective empowerment as social actors.
The project recognizes the ethno-cultural characteristics of the

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relevant groups (e.g. settlers, Kichwa, Achuar and Shuar indigenous peoples), the role of the family in production and income generation, the socio-economic differences between men and women, and the differences between the environment-related knowledge in each case.

The project has developed a strategy that links the most important gaps identified in relation to its components, the proposed interventions, and the country´s policies and commitments toward gender equality. The gaps identified in the analysis and which are considered in the strategy include: parity in decision-making spaces; improvement of women´s incomes and livelihoods; use of time; and access to, and control of resources.

To this effect and in accordance with the gender mainstreaming strategy:
1) Each activity was analyzed to include the necessary elements to guarantee reducing the identified gaps and establishing affirmative actions when necessary.
2) Specific activities have been included addressing the empowerment of women and youth, especially indigenous peoples (capacities, economic empowerment and access to planning processes).
3) Indicators have been included in each project outcome to contribute to measure progress in this field and which will be monitored as part of the M&E process.
4) A budget has been included to guarantee the measures and actions to be undertaken.
5) Improving the capacities of the project team to manage gender mainstreaming has been considered.

Gender and inter-cultural mainstreaming have been assessed in the Social and Environmental Screening, more specifically under Principle 2 Gender Equality and Women´s Empowerment, Standard 4 Cultural Heritage and Standard 6 Indigenous Peoples, identifying associated risks and corresponding measures that have been incorporated in project design. For further information please refer to Section V.iii Social and Environmental Safeguards below and the Social and Environmental Screening Checklist in Annex F.

22. Is there a realistic multi-year work plan and budget to ensure outputs are delivered on time and within allotted resources? (select from options 1-3 that best reflects this project)

○ *3: The project has a realistic work plan & budget covering the duration of the project at the activity level to ensure outputs are delivered on time and within the allotted resources.*

○ 2: The project has a work plan & budget covering the duration of the project at the output level.

○ 1: The project does not yet have a work plan & budget covering the duration of the project.

Evidence

The expected outcomes seem feasible with the available resources based on previous project experiences and the experience of the project´s partners. The country office has previously shown the adaptive capacity to adjust projects budgets when necessary and is confident that it will be able to show the capacity to make sound adjustments throughout the lifecycle of this project as well.

See the reply to question 16 for further information.

Sustainability & National Ownership   Quality Rating: Exemplary

23. Have national partners led, or proactively engaged in, the design of the project?

○ *3: National partners have full ownership of the project and led the process of the development of the project jointly with UNDP.*

○ 2: The project has been developed by UNDP in close consultation with national partners.

○ 1: The project has been developed by UNDP with limited or no engagement with national partners.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence

he consultation process has been very extensive. Over 500 people were consulted, both in direct interviews as well as through consultation and validation workshops. Furthermore, the project maintained very close interaction with the government agencies, especially MAE and MAGAP, which were continuously involved in the design of the project, and have made several contributions, as well as requested changes throughout the whole project preparation phase. Besides government, consultations were made with the academic sector, civil society and private sector. Evidence of this thorough inclusive process is the amount of cofinancing the project receives from a wide range of actors. Further detail can be provided through the stakeholder plan and the consultation sheets.

24. Are key institutions and systems identified, and is there a strategy for strengthening specific/ comprehensive capacities based on capacity assessments conducted? (select from options 0-4 that best reflects this project):

○ *3: The project has a comprehensive strategy for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions based on a systematic and detailed capacity assessment that has been completed. This strategy includes an approach to regularly monitor national capacities using clear indicators and rigorous methods of data collection, and adjust the strategy to strengthen national capacities accordingly.*

○ 2.5: A capacity assessment has been completed. The project document has identified activities that will be undertaken to strengthen capacity of national institutions, but these activities are not part of a comprehensive strategy to monitor and strengthen national capacities.

○ 2: A capacity assessment is planned after the start of the project. There are plans to develop a strategy to strengthen specific capacities of national institutions based on the results of the capacity assessment.

○ 1.5: There is mention in the project document of capacities of national institutions to be strengthened through the project, but no capacity assessments or specific strategy development are planned.

○ 1: Capacity assessments have not been carried out and are not foreseen. There is no strategy for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions.

○ Not Applicable

Evidence

As it is mentioned in the ProDoc, the project has been designed to create an enabling framework to protect the biodiversity and ecosystem functions of the CTEA from existing and emerging threats from multi-sectorial production practices. In this sense, Outcome 1 of the project is specifically designed to promote project sustainability since it is focused on the medium and long term. It will ensure that the benefits derived from an integrated approach to land use planning are mainstreamed into planning and decision-making processes at all government levels (central, provincial, municipal, parish).
The optimization of joint planning exercises, strengthened dialogue, improved policy and regulatory instruments, and better coordination in the implementation of the different development initiatives will help the project partners and especially the participating government institutions to overcome the predominant culture of short term planning, sector-based solutions and develop a discipline of coordinating and collaborating under a common long term vision for the CTEA, thus ensuring sustainability of project results.
Capacity development will strengthen the managerial and technical skills of project partners to improve their capacities for integrated planning, implementation and monitoring of land use, and to facilitate multi-stakeholder coordination. By strengthening and updating the existing policy and regulatory framework and building the capacities of the institutions, the project will generate a much more cohesive and well-funded governance framework that will be better prepared to efficiently and effectively conserve globally significant biodiversity.
Dialogue and development of partnerships will be essential tools for building consensus, enabling coordinated planning and regulatory oversight and encouraging sustainable forms of investment. The establishment of the dialogue platforms (Territorial Coordination Platform and Regional Platforms for Sustainable Supply Chains) will contribute to sustainability of project results. The project will work to engage the public and private stakeholders so that the platforms will constitute a long-term space where the public and private sectors can align, take ownership and develop joint concrete actions to strengthen the country's enabling environment for sustainable commodity production. Several factors will contribute to sustainability of the platforms, namely: they will be established on the basis of existing initiatives; UNDP´s international experience and lessons learned; the principles on which platforms are based (neutral, empowerment and social inclusion, multi-stakeholder, strong facilitation, and conflict resolution) and financial sustainability studies to be carried out by the project.

The project will generate an enabling environment so that markets and financial sectors prize sustainable production practices. The project will work with the market players to connect them to sustainable products produced in the CTEA and to establish preferential buying agreements from producers that comply with environmental regulations, implement best practices and/or certify production, thus helping to promote uptake by increasing numbers of producers. This will in turn increase the supply of sustainable and/or certified products thereby increasing the demand by national and international buyers. Financial institutions will mainstream environmental standards into their lending procedures thereby ensuring that lenders comply with the environmental regulations and that credit funds are used for sustainable production.

The project will improve producers´ (men and women) knowhow for sustainable land and forest management. Through training and outreach, producers will be aware of the value of forests and their ecosystem services, and the risks that unsustainable production represent to the production potential of the natural resources in the landscape that provide the basis for a long term sustained growth of the agricultural and livestock sectors, thereby increasing uptake of sound environmental practices. At the same time, local level monitoring and surveillance of land use will contribute to enforce regulations, discourage further illegal deforestation and promote sustainable production. By doing this the project will contribute to ensure future expansion of production does not compromise biodiversity and ecosystem function.

25. Is there is a clear strategy embedded in the project specifying how the project will use national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluations, etc.,) to the extent possible?

- ◉ *Yes*
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Applicable

Evidence

The Implementing Partner will ensure project-level M&E by national systems such as Unique System of Environmental Information and the government's own "Results Based Government" platform, the data used by and generated by the project supports these national systems.
As the Government of Ecuador chose UNDP support to NIM as implementing modality, the project does not foresee the use of national procurement systems.

26. Is there a clear transition arrangement/ phase-out plan developed with key stakeholders in order to sustain or scale up results (including resource mobilisation strategy)?

- ◉ *Yes*
- ◯ No

Evidence

es, the ProDoc mentions that the potential for scaling up is high given the complementarity with national and local policies and plans. The project will intervene in three landscapes (Northern, Central and Southern Amazon), which have their own characteristics but at the same time reflect the problems of the CTEA as a whole; therefore the experiences and lessons learned in each area will be replicable to the entire region. Mainstreaming of the landscape approach and guidelines for sustainable production in national policies, regulations and LUDPs of will contribute to upscaling at CTEA level. Capacity building of the relevant institutions will enable upscaling the landscape approach within the CTEA and other regions of the country.
The multi-stakeholder platforms will be replicable in other regions of the country, for the same commodities to advance toward national level action plans and also for other commodities. They will constitute a space where the project results will be internalized by the different stakeholders, thereby contributing to promote the replication of project actions. Mainstreaming of environmental standards in the lending procedures of financial institutions and the development of credit instruments for sustainable production will have a regional scope and may serve as example for replication to other regions of the country. Improvement of PSB investment plans will be replicable at regional (CTEA) and national level. The local early warning systems to be piloted will be replicable at regional level.
The project's potential for replication is also based upon identification of best practices, appropriate technologies and lessons learned. Mainstreaming of the landscape approach, best practices and lessons learned into the technical assistance and work programs of the key public and private stakeholders that work in the landscape will ensure up-scaling and replication throughout the CTEA reaching a greater number of producers, communities and their organizations. The training and outreach strategy to be implemented by the project will facilitate replication. Actions such as field days, exchange of experiences, technical visits and workshops will maximize the exposure of producers to the most successful and innovative aspects of the project and will also facilitate the extension of project benefits.
The project will closely work with the GCF Project "Priming Financial and Land-Use Planning Instruments to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation" to ensure the latter project uptakes the lessons learned, methodologies, programs and training materials thus facilitating upscaling of project results and generating impact at CTEA level and even nationally, given its national scope. Collaboration and sharing of experiences with government, private sector and NGOs through knowledge management networks will facilitate widespread dissemination of project efforts. Systematization of experiences and lessons learned will serve to

promote the replication of project results to the rest of the CTEA. Lessons will be of use not only for Ecuador but also for other Amazonian countries. The UNDP CO will share information on project lessons learned through online communities of practice such as the SDSN Amazon, the UNDP-Yammer and UNDP-Exposure platforms, UNDP corporate webpages at national, regional and global levels as well as government platforms, especially the MAE webpage and newsletters. This will help ensure access to this information by the wider stakeholder community, including other countries with similar ecosystems and problems.

Quality Assurance Summary/PAC Comments