

Project Evaluation Series

**Final evaluation of the project
"Promotion of sustainable
land management" (PROTIERRAS)**

**Project code: GCP/MEX/303/GFF
GEF ID: 5785**

Management response

General response

1. The evaluation generally reflects the progress and achievements that the project had from the documented information; the analysis is therefore considered to be consistent.
2. The evaluation clearly identifies lessons to be considered by the FAO Representation in Mexico for its future participation and operation of projects financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). PROTIERRAS has been a positive experience as the first GEF project implemented by FAO in the country.
3. Although doubts remained about the articulation of the components that make up the Land Management Model (LMM), it is evident that there are some elements that have achieved good results and deserve more visibility, while others must be incorporated – such as the gender approach – which would bring the desired comprehensiveness and articulation to the model.
4. It is important to preserve the flexibility of the model so that the variables under which the LMM is conceived: i) respond to the development needs of the population living in the territory and ii) facilitate the implementation of public policies.
5. While co-financing is an important part of the development of actions, especially for the sustainability of the initiative, the lack of contributions from some dependencies have limited the results and sustainability. Learning from the evaluation, future actions in this area would be the design of strategies at the different levels of government (planning, regulatory and operational), to make effective the commitments assumed at the senior (planning) levels with those closest to the territory (operational). Besides this, the visibility of the project should be enhanced, especially its progress, results and impacts with decision-makers, including the authorities that define the programmatic and budgetary structures. The level of interaction with federal authorities was very positive and was reflected in the establishment of policies and plans. Unfortunately, these did not have a proportional resonance with the local and operational authorities.
6. The inclusion and reporting of indicators for soil degradation was a subject that was present from the beginning of the project; however, the "apparent" technical difficulties of its measurement and evaluation in such a short term (3 years) were the justifications for not considering them in the reports. In this sense, although the evaluation is not very detailed with respect to these indicators, we consider the findings consistent since the project itself did not include them.

Management response to the Final evaluation of the project "Promotion of sustainable land management" (PROTIERRAS)					March 2020
Evaluation Recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Time frame (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
<p>Recommendation 1 to the GEF - FAO's initiative in Mexico to request an extension of the project by five months, without additional cost, in order to strengthen the conceptualisation of the Land Management Model and strengthen its weak elements such as the Land Management Committees, the technical aspects of the land management plans and the selection of the SLM practices, as well as address the new challenges that the change in federal government created for the model, is endorsed. In addition, an exit strategy must be defined that will make it possible to ensure the operation of the model without the presence of the LTAs and FAO, and that establishes the bases (for example, the signing of agreements with state or federal governments) for the replicability of the model in other regions of the country.</p>	Accepted	<p>1. Conclude the project extension request.</p>	FAO and GEF	2 months	No, only GEF is required to authorize the extension and use of funds.
		<p>2. Finalize the land management model, consider the hiring of two specialists, one in land management and the other in hillside management.</p>	FAO-Mexico in collaboration with the FAO-HQ LTO	4 months	No, the remnants of the project would be used with prior authorization of the extension of the completion date and use of funds for the hiring of specialists.
		<p>3. Work-related meetings with the federal authorities to promote the appropriation of the model according to the policies they intend to establish.</p>	FAO-Mexico	5 months with program sessions	No.

		<p>4. Development of the exit strategy that includes an analysis of the service plan in the territories (whether or not through ATL) through the hiring of a consultant.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico in collaboration with the FAO-HQ LTO</p>	<p>5 months</p>	<p>No, the remnants of the project would be used with prior authorization of the extension of the completion date and use of funds to hire a specialist.</p>
		<p>5. The recommendation to establish agreements with state governments is unlikely, since the process of negotiation and signing is generally long, especially if resources are being allocated from either party. An alternative mechanism that can be efficient is for the Steering Committee to instruct the agencies to propose agile schemes and to generate a roadmap that allows the model to be replicated.</p>	<p>Steering Committee</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 to FAO - In particular, it is suggested that FAO strengthen the technical sturdiness of the model, by incorporating a guide or technical guidelines that make it possible to ensure the technical foundation of the land management plan, with primary emphasis on soil regulation and the selection of reference sites and SLM practices; as well as the inclusion of a soil specialist in the profile of the LTAs, and the official participation of research centres so that researchers and students also strengthen the capacities of the LTAs.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>1. This will be solved through the hiring of the consultants who will complete the Model, in this sense it will be better to design targeting criteria (not only geographic) that allow to easily identify intervention sites, rather than specifically defining intervention sites, to establish clear criteria. Intervention of states and municipalities in the selection will contribute to their appropriation of the model. In the design of criteria, it is possible to work with Universities and Research Centres.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico in collaboration with the FAO LTO - HQ</p>	<p>5 months</p>	<p>No, the remnants of the project would be used after authorization of the extension of the completion date and use of funds for the hiring of a specialist, it is linked to the second action of recommendation 1.</p>

<p>Recommendation 3 to FAO - With regard to the sustainability of the project benefits, and in the understanding that the effects of the SLM practices implemented in the three micro-regions will be evident in three or five years, if the practices continue to be implemented, it is recommended that FAO in Mexico review the environmental wholeness indicators proposed by the PCU and enter into collaboration agreements with the federation, states, municipalities and/or participating research centres, with the support and participation of the Land Management Committees, to ensure that the SLM practices continue to be implemented, and to continue monitoring the project reference sites and fully document the effect of the practices, and of the model, in general. In this regard, the most can be made of the individual actions that the research centres such as the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the National Institute of Forestry, Agriculture and Livestock Research (INIFAP) perform in the micro-regions, as well as the actions of the state governments like that of Zacatecas, in relation to the topic. In addition, the conceptualisation of the model has to be reinforced to ensure it is sustainable.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>1. Operational (financially) it is complex for FAO-Mexico to calculate funds to provide timely monitoring as proposed in the recommendation. However, mechanisms will be sought with government agencies, the Regional Committees themselves and other organizations for monitoring the sustainability of the project. PROTIERRAS was a project in which there was co-financing from federal agencies, therefore, when finishing an appropriate model we will seek to document that commitment, as there are universities and research centres such as UCh, COLPOS, INIFAP, CONAZA, CONAFOR, CONA BIO and others, who can carry out this work with their own funds. A proposal will be made to the Steering Committee in order to identify and nominate an entity responsible for tracking and presenting a roadmap for monitoring of results.</p>	<p>CD</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>Monitoring mechanisms that facilitate the participation of FAO Mexico will be sought.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4 to FAO - It is suggested that FAO in Mexico design and implement a campaign to disseminate the model and outcomes of PROTIERRAS, to give greater visibility to FAO's contribution to conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources and adaptation to climate change. And to highlight its role as a neutral and strategic facilitator in order to increase the harmonisation of multi-sector and inter-institutional climate policies.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>1. A dissemination campaign was carried out with the means and limited financial resources that the Representation had. Launching a larger campaign requires human resources and funds which are not available at the Representation. Consultations will be held with Headquarters for additional funding.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico</p>	<p>12 months</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

<p>Recommendation 5 to FAO - Taking into consideration that the objective of the project was classified as ambitious due to the way in which it was formulated and the repercussions that this had on the implementation of the project, it is recommended that FAO ensure that the objectives of new projects are correctly understood by the key stakeholders and make the adjustments necessary in its formulation to achieve said understanding. It is important that there is clarity between what the project can manage in the established implementation period, and other global environmental benefits or impacts that are generated in the medium or long term. In addition, it is essential that the Lead Technical Officer (LTO) is involved in the design phase and participates in a satisfactory manner to ensure close alignment in how the activities set forth in a project will be implemented.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>1. To be applied to new proposals for GEF projects.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico and FAO-HQ</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6 to the GEF and to FAO - It is suggested that the effect that major political events (for example, presidential elections), which arise during the implementation of the project, can have on the government leadership and the project co-financing, should not be underestimated. To this end, an explicit risk must be included in the PRODOC that specifically covers this potential problem and strategic mitigation measures that are aligned with the level of the impact that the risk may have, should it materialise.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>1. To be included in new GEF project proposals.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7 to the GEF and to FAO - In order to ensure the proper inclusion of the gender and equality perspective, it is suggested that when designing these kinds of projects, the role of young people and women in the project implementation areas should be analysed and any barriers that could stop them from participating in the project should be identified. The context is extremely important to primarily promote the participation of women, due to the fact that, in some rural areas of Mexico, the customs</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>1. Gender perspectives will be included in new proposals for GEF projects.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>No.</p>

<p>and traditions are highly ingrained and impede the work or involvement of women in activities other than taking care of their home and children. Based on this analysis, during the implementation of the project, a campaign could be developed to raise awareness about gender and equality that addresses the barriers identified. Subsequently, it would be necessary to develop training and projects regarding SLM practices that reduce women's workload in the field (for example, improved crop management practices), as the women interviewed had exhausting working days because they had to attend to their homes as well as work on the crops, and this meant that some of them stopped participating. It is important for women and young people to have a financial remuneration that encourages their participation even more, and as such linking SLM practices with value chains, which make it possible to achieve environmental and economic benefits more effectively, is also recommended. The foregoing requires resources to be earmarked specifically for the design and implementation of the gender strategy. Highlighting the importance of the participation of women and young people, and other vulnerable groups, in the PRODOC without providing the necessary support and tools is not considered sufficient.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 8 to FAO - In order to ensure and increase the competitiveness of FAO in Mexico, it is suggested that it review its own administrative processes and identify areas of opportunity to make them more efficient, without breaching the rules and guidelines issued by the central offices of the Organization.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>1. FAO is generating new and optimizing administrative, operational processes and programs to make them more efficient and transparent.</p>	<p>FAO-Mexico</p>	<p>8 months</p>	<p>No.</p>