Payments for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods

EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

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BACKGROUND

The Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods project, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), sought to promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in the Miombo forest ecosystem. It aimed to strengthen the existing revenue sharing mechanism (RSM) that supports the sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife and improves local livelihoods.

The terminal evaluation covered almost the entire original implementation period and had a dual purpose of accountability and learning, making it summative. The evaluation covered the Zambezia Province districts where project activities were implemented.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Were the project's model and its specificities tied to the country and Mozambican law?

EVALUATION METHODS
The evaluation employed a theory-based, mixed methods approach, gathering data from various sources to assess FAO-GEF guidelines' criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues. It maintained a participatory and transparent process, involving the project team, government departments, FAO Mozambique, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT CODE
GCP/MOZ/117/GFF

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE
Alto Molocue, Mulevala, Maganja da Costa, Gile (Mozambique)

START/END DATE
2017 / 2022

FUNDED BY
FAO, GEF

WHAT DID THE PROJECT ACHIEVE?

Overall, the results achieved can lead to progress in enabling the environment, changing legal and regulatory frameworks, having communities adopt more sustainable practices and contributing to the preservation of biodiversity – especially in reducing deforestation.

The project contributed to the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and the integration of payments for ecosystem services in the new Forestry Law. However, results in terms of capacity building were modest. Natural resources management practices were introduced to local communities so that beneficiaries could access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods in terms of income generation, credit access and food consumption.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

External factors, including Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, general elections and the COVID-19 pandemic, along with budget constraints and a delayed start in Component 3, hampered the project's efficiency.

This, coupled with the need for extra time for activity implementation and community work consolidation, resulted in overall low cost-effectiveness.

Environmental sustainability risks stem from deforestation, soil erosion and wildfires in Zambezia.

Despite challenges, initiatives like beekeeping raise biodiversity awareness, and fire management techniques are being shared.

The primary financial sustainability risk is the incipient 20 percent revenue allocation to communities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Communities are prepared for operational PES, promising positive community-level impact. Key lessons highlight the importance of presence on the ground when working with communities, the value of private sector partnerships for effectiveness and sustainability, and the significance of letters of agreement with government for increased engagement. Institutional strengthening is crucial for effective capacity building in government institutions, and community intervention components should not depend on project component results for legal framework improvements.

Click **here** to find out more in the full report.

NEXT STEPS

Flagging the most promising communities for national authorities as potential grant applicants under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) programmes.

Preparing an exit plan for the four districts that benefit from the project to ensure minimum technical follow-up in the supported communities.

Systematizing the approach, experience and good results achieved with the practices of the beekeeping and savings and credit groups to reinforce the project's learning dimension.

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