Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Terminal evaluation of the project "Mainstreaming conservation and valuation of critically endangered species and ecosystems in development-frontier production landscapes in the regions of Arica y Parinacota and Biobío"

Project Evaluation Series
17/2023

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Terminal evaluation of the project "Mainstreaming conservation and valuation of critically endangered species and ecosystems in development-frontier production landscapes in the regions of Arica y Parinacota and Bibío"

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Abstract

This report presents the results of the terminal evaluation of the project "Mainstreaming conservation and valuation of critically endangered species and ecosystems in development-frontier production landscapes in the regions of Arica y Parinacota and Bibío" The evaluation was carried out during the last phase of the intervention with the purpose of reporting back to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and national and regional governments. This exercise also had a learning purpose. Lessons learned were identified to sustain and expand the results of the project and ensure their continuity. This occurred while assessing the achievement of outcomes in areas of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation examined factors that either contributed to or limited the achievement of results. This involved understanding the reasons and circumstances for the results being achieved or not achieved, as well as good practices of the project.

The methodology integrated different approaches, such as a logical framework and a theory of change. This was combined with an evaluation based on case studies, contribution analysis and outcome harvesting. At the level of the applied tools, qualitative techniques were used mainly through both virtual and in-person interviews and direct verification activities on pilot farms in the Arica y Parinacota Region, as well as in the Biobío, Ñuble and Araucanía Regions. This resulted in the participation of more than 80 stakeholders in the evaluation.

The results of the evaluation highlight the importance of the project for the Chilean Government since it aligns with national environmental priorities. In addition to promoting the development of public policy instruments to increase the knowledge and protection of the Arica hummingbird, the Darwin's fox, the south Andean huemul (*Hippocamelus bisulcus*) and the queule (strategies, plans, local laws, monitoring procedures, educational materials), the project made a significant effort to provide training and raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity among public officials, farmers and students. It is also important to note the efforts made in terms of the implementation of good forestry and agricultural practices on the properties involved in the intervention.

During its execution, the project faced limitations related to its design. This involved a delay in the formulation and implementation of an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that would have allowed for the early identification and correction of possible failures.

The main recommendations for future projects include the need to incorporate a communications strategy from the beginning of the project. This includes annual plans to maximize the effectiveness of knowledge products, as well as a strategy for the institutionalization and sustainability of the processes supported by the intervention. In addition, the integration of sectoral and thematic specialists (socioanthropological, biodiversity conservation, gender, Indigenous Peoples, geographic information technologies) is recommended – not only in the identification phase but also during execution – to ensure a more inclusive view of disciplines and knowledge. This can enhance the intervention strategy, including the scope and variety of activities so that the project's impacts are expanded. Finally, for future projects, it is recommended that specific plans to reduce the gender gap be incorporated. In contexts with a significant presence of Indigenous communities, intercultural plans to ensure an ethnic-differential approach that also harnesses the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in the conservation of biodiversity should also be incorporated.

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Acknowledgements

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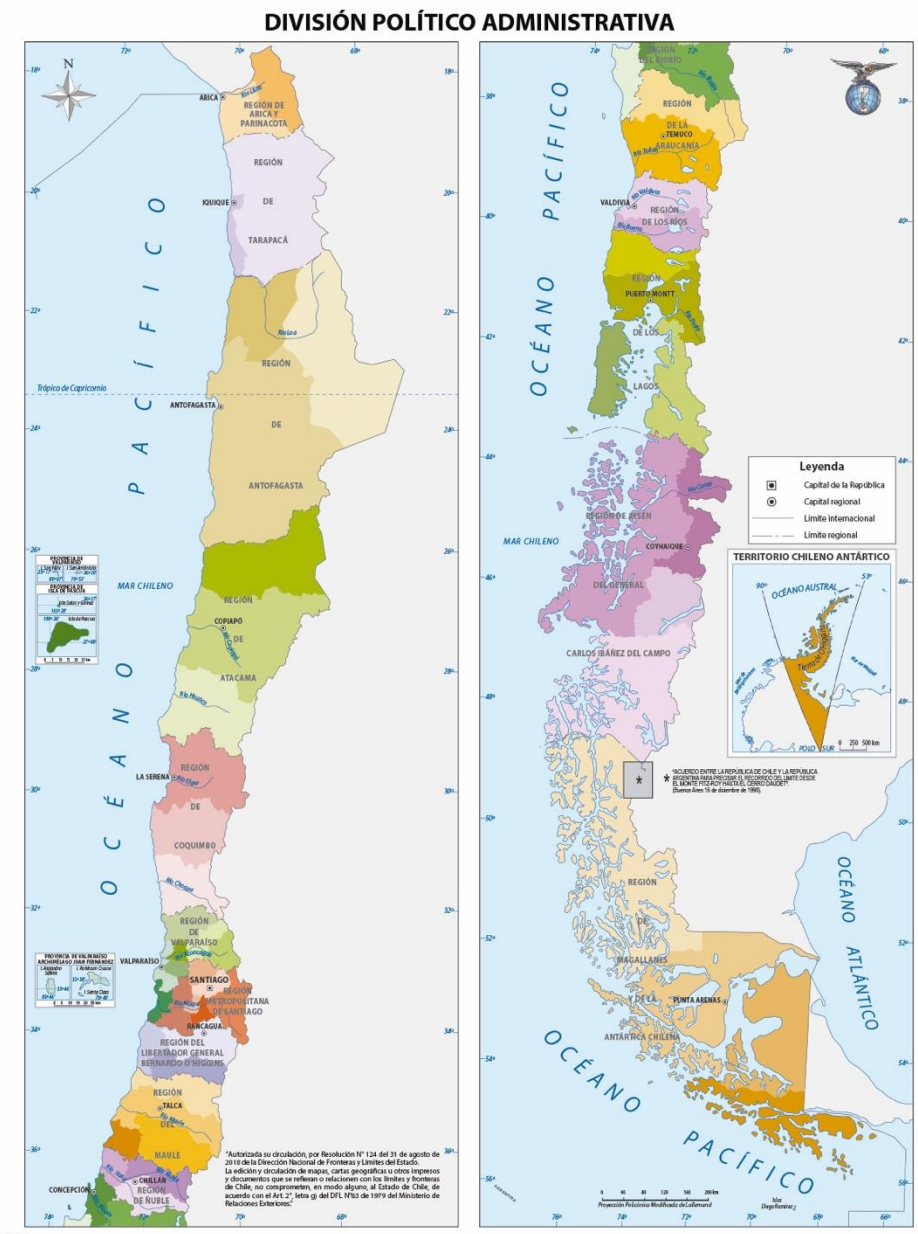
The evaluation also benefited from the contributions of many other interested parties, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), producers, research centres and the private sector. Their contributions were fundamental to the work of the team and are greatly appreciated.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CONAF	National Forest Corporation, by its Spanish acronym
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNDR	National Fund for Regional Development, by its Spanish acronym
FPIC	free, prior and informed consent
GEF	Global Environment Facility
INDAP	Agricultural Development Institute, by its Spanish acronym
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MTR	mid-term review
NGO	non-governmental organization
PLADECO	Community Development Plan, by its Spanish acronym
PLADETUR	Tourism Development Plan, by its Spanish acronym
RECOGE	Species Restoration, Conservation and Management, by its Spanish acronym
SAG	Agriculture and Livestock Service, by its Spanish acronym
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEREMI	Regional Ministerial Secretariat, by its Spanish acronym
SMART	specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound

Map of the Republic of Chile



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Source: Ministry of Education, 2023. Map conforms to UN.2010. *Map of Chile.* https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/chile

Executive summary

1. This is the executive summary of the terminal evaluation report of the project "Mainstreaming conservation and valuation of critically endangered species and ecosystems in development-frontier production landscapes in the regions of Arica y Parinacota and Bibío" (hereinafter the project or the intervention).

2. The project was financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for an amount of USD 2.4 million. Co-financing was expected from different government and private entities for an amount equivalent to USD 6.6 million, reaching a total budget of USD 9 million.

3. The evaluation aimed to independently assess the following aspects of the project: relevance of the design and actions implemented; effectiveness in achieving outputs, outcomes and objectives; efficiency in the use of resources; factors that may have affected execution; the incorporation of cross-cutting perspectives; and the probabilities that the effects of the project will be sustained once funding stops (sustainability). Based on this assessment, lessons learned were extracted to formulate recommendations that can increase the likelihood of project sustainability and improve the implementation and execution of future initiatives.

4. This evaluation also reports back to the donor and project partners (the GEF, government institutions and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO]), as well as entities that were relevant stakeholders and counterparts in the execution.

Main findings by evaluation criteria

Relevance. Rating: Satisfactory

Finding 1. The project presented a high level of integration and alignment with the Republic of Chile's international commitments to environmental matters. It effectively contributed to four Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and two tangentially. Regarding international instruments, it responded to Objective B of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and contributed directly to six Aichi Biodiversity Targets (CBD, 2018).

Finding 2. The project complied with the frameworks and guidelines defined by the GEF in its 2014–2018 Global Framework and FAO in its main strategic, programmatic and regional frameworks. It also aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Chile.

Finding 3. The project aligned with Chile's environmental policies and regulations. At the same time, it supported both the mission of the relevant institutions and the synergistic interaction among them to promote a culture of biodiversity conservation in Chile.

Finding 4. The project adequately covered the transition zones between the productive and conservation areas. This involved areas where the four target species are present, generating highly important information with respect to territorial coverage. However, its specific impact in the territory of the northern macrozone (on the valley or farm scale) and the selection of intervention sites could have been optimized in terms of efficiency and conservation impact.

Finding 5. Overall, the project was consistent with the needs of producers and owners who use the ecosystem services provided by the threatened biodiversity in the territory. Besides material and infrastructure inputs, the intervention supported users and beneficiaries in non-material aspects, such as recognition, learning, inspiration and emotional well-being. However, it did not always respond adequately to territorial needs due to limitations in the design phase.

Effectiveness. Rating: Satisfactory

Finding 6. The main objective of the project was achieved at a satisfactory level: the conservation criteria of the four threatened species were incorporated into the management of the "development frontier" territories in the project's target regions. This was done through the implementation of forestry, agriculture and livestock good practices. The development of local capacities, awareness raising and the incorporation of biodiversity into local policies and regulatory frameworks also played a role.

Finding 7. The project represented an important effort to improve social awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation. It also promoted greater inter-institutional coordination for the mainstreaming of environmental commitments on sectoral agendas.

Finding 8. The project closed with a positive balance of verifiable compliance in its value added components (Components 1, 2 and 3). It also had a positive evolution of its performance after the necessary improvements and corrective measures identified in the mid-term review (MTR).

Finding 9. The project helped to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders to promote the protection of the four threatened species, particularly in terms of the good forestry and agricultural practices implemented.

Finding 10. The project developed an adequate territorial management plan based on instruments and good practices. These focused on recovering the habitats of the four species. However, it was not possible to achieve habitat recovery or measure the recovery of populations within the project's time frame of action.

Finding 11. The project managed to adequately incorporate criteria for the conservation of threatened species in public policy instruments and municipal frameworks. This was mainly done through Species Restoration, Conservation and Management (RECOGE, by its Spanish acronym) plans, ordinances and the National Fund for Regional Development (FNDR, by its Spanish acronym).

Finding 12. The project also developed a series of additional initiatives whose relevance was not foreseen during the design process but ended up addressing needs that had emerged during execution.

Finding 13. The strategic conservation approach, based on the selection of emblematic species to support the technical-scientific work, was innovative and effective in terms of making the problem visible. However, the integration of other existing approaches and methodologies from earlier stages would have offered opportunities to increase its efficiency in terms of effective conservation.

Efficiency. Rating: Moderately satisfactory

Finding 14. The committed financial resources were sufficient to execute the activities and achieve the outputs that had been promised in the project document. Despite initial challenges, this was done with quality.

Finding 15. Given the scope, the project would have benefited from more personnel in the field. In terms of efficiency, this also involves incentives and better human talent management practices.

Finding 16. Overall, management performance improved in the last phase of the project. There were positive effects on efficiency, including a high level of professionalism and commitment on behalf of the technical personnel.

Sustainability. Rating: Likely

Finding 17. The project's greatest legacy in terms of sustainability lies in its high level of inter-institutional coordination. Indeed, it has fostered the updating, prioritization and strengthening of conservation policies. Although the project's sustainability strategy was designed late and could have used more supporting elements, it activated several institutional and financial sustainability levers that should ensure the continuity of its positive effects and outputs.

Finding 18. The main lever for driving the sustainability of conservation efforts on pilot farms involves ongoing support from the following entities: the Agricultural Development Institute (INDAP, by its Spanish acronym); the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Economy (Undersecretary of Tourism). This is to be done through their respective plans and extension agents from the Regional Ministerial Secretariat (SEREMI, by its Spanish acronym), as well as dialogues and intersectoral alliances with the Ministry of the Environment.

Factors affecting performance. Rating: Moderately satisfactory

Finding 19. The intervention logic and selection of project components was coherent with the project's general objective. However, room for improvement was identified in terms of the formulation of goals and indicators.

Finding 20. The lack of scientific consensus and solid baselines in the design phase made the conservation approach, based on the selection of emblematic species, less effective in terms of effective conservation.

Finding 21. The project concluded with the creation of an effective, integrated and responsive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. This involved substantial input into results-based management and reports in the project's final stage. However, the late operationalization of this system entailed some challenges in terms of the detection, mitigation and management of difficulties faced by the project.

Finding 22. FAO fulfilled its role as implementing agency. Indeed, it supported the identification and design phase and supervised the project. In the project's first phase, however, there were conditions that made it difficult to fully exercise its role.

Finding 23. FAO, in its role as executing agency, and the Ministry of the Environment, in its role as main co-executing partner, satisfactorily performed their day-to-day project management duties. They ensured the appropriate use of funds and oversaw the acquisition of goods and services as required by the project. However, two different phases were identified that showed substantial improvements in their management performance.

Finding 24. Of the total commitments by the financing partners, the amount received was equivalent to 82 percent. The deficit of resources was covered through additional investments by FAO and the National Forest Corporation (CONAF, by its Spanish acronym).

Finding 25. The diversity of institutional and academic stakeholders that participated in the intervention was a crucial factor. In fact, this ensured the project's most important result – its ability to promote multistakeholder coordination for the development of environmentally relevant processes.

Finding 26. The project was successful in integrating the main entities related to territorial policies in border areas and those concerned with environmental conservation. The steering committee and species working groups functioned both at the decision-making level and at the scientific-technical level on the basis of public consultation.

Finding 27. An exceptional effort was made towards the generation of practical scientific-technical knowledge derived from the development of monitoring methodologies and recovery plans. This

was optimized during project implementation, especially in terms of the flow of external feedback, and represents a potential that must be exploited to ensure the continuity of the project's impacts. However, the lack of an explicit communications strategy from the beginning and the limited resources allocated to this area reduced its effectiveness.

Gender. Rating: Moderately unsatisfactory

Finding 28. The project document had established the inclusion of a gender approach in different components and outputs but did not contemplate a specific plan to reduce gender gaps or measures to promote compliance with FAO gender policy standards (FAO, 2013b). However, there were specific actions to ensure the participation of women in project activities.

Indigenous Peoples. Rating: Satisfactory

Finding 29. During implementation, the project sought – alongside the FAO regional expert on Indigenous Peoples – to correct the design deficit regarding integration of the ethnic-differential approach. The project complied with the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) procedure according to the required guidelines.

Environmental and social safeguards. Rating: Satisfactory

Finding 30. Regarding environmental safeguards, the project activities guaranteed respect for local ways of life and ecological balances. Due to the presence of Indigenous Peoples in the intervention areas, the project's moderate environmental and social risk classification is considered adequate.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance: the project contributed to the priorities identified in the FAO strategic frameworks, globally and at the country level, as well as the GEF priorities. The project was aligned with the international commitments signed by Chile on environmental matters and with the national legislation and institutional missions of the co-executing partners. In terms of the environment, it sought to address one of the most pressing problems facing the country, which is the accelerated deterioration of terrestrial ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity. The project was consistent with the needs of the beneficiaries but could have responded more effectively to territorial needs with better consultation in the design phase.

Conclusion 2. Effectiveness: the project not only managed to incorporate the importance of conservation in the agendas of the institutional stakeholders associated with the intervention but also established a modus operandi for their cooperation with interest groups dedicated to conservation. This has impacted the institutional memory of the participating partners and constitutes an important precedent for future interventions.

Conclusion 3. Efficiency: highly satisfactory levels of budget execution were present upon project closure. This corresponds to the high level of achievement of results and product goals, implying that the resources were used efficiently.

5. In terms of resource management, the project would have benefited from a more extensive technical-operational structure to cover the large areas of intervention, as well as incentives and good practices for human talent. In addition, changes implemented in the project's last phase brought improvements to the management processes with positive contributions to the general efficiency of the intervention.

Conclusion 4. Sustainability: despite not having had a sustainability strategy until late in the implementation stage, both institutional and financial levers were in place by project closure. These increase the likelihood of sustaining its positive effects. In addition, the project generated important contributions within all of its components. Their full potential could be realized during the new administration in terms of continuing education and training efforts. This also involved matters related to the scalability and replicability of good forestry, agricultural and tourism practices. In fact, these were systematized as an output during the intervention.

Conclusion 5. Factors affecting performance: regarding design quality, the project's intervention strategy was consistent with its objective. However, the structure of the indicators was confusing in that the process indicators were mixed with outcome and impact indicators. Moreover, several of them did not fully meet the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) criteria. Also, its main goals (those related to conservation) were not sufficiently grounded in evidence and were overestimated. Despite being an intervention on the "development frontier," the socioproductive goals received less attention than the conservation goals.

6. The M&E system suffered an excessive delay in its design and implementation. This limited the possibility of identifying failures in the first half of its life cycle and applying corrective measures until after the MTR. It is recognized, however, that the important effort made to develop this system in the third year of project implementation allowed the project to close with satisfactory results and means of verification.

7. In terms of implementation quality, FAO fulfilled its role as implementing agency. The Organization supported the identification and design phase and supervised the project. However, conditions during the project's first phase made it difficult to fully execute this role. Greater technical support, the timely analysis of potential risks in the design phase and a monitoring system for technical execution linked to financial execution upon project launch would have contributed positively to the quality of implementation.

8. In terms of the quality of execution, FAO, in its role as implementing and executing agency, and the Ministry of the Environment, in its role as main co-executing agency, satisfactorily performed their day-to-day management functions for the project. They ensured an appropriate use of funds and supported the purchases and acquisitions of goods and services as required by the project. Two different phases were identified in their management that showed substantial improvements.

9. The project had a high level of participation among key stakeholders, institutions and experts. These actors were positively managed while defining relevant environmental processes in the territory. However, the design phase lacked a strategic mapping of stakeholders. This action would have provided the intervention with a more strategic perspective.

10. On communications and knowledge management, the project generated an important range of training and informative materials and products, as well as efforts to systematize good forestry, agricultural and tourism practices. Their potential use has yet to be fully realized. Although there was not an explicit communications strategy, the project achieved effective visibility in institutional terms but lacked awareness raising for general dissemination.

Conclusion 6. Cross-cutting issues: for gender equality and Indigenous Peoples, the ethnic-differential and gender approaches were not fully covered during project formulation. This led to inevitable repercussions for its effective implementation. Despite these design challenges, efforts were made during implementation to develop the FPIC processes. The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean provided technical support to achieve better results.

11. Regarding environmental and social safeguards, the project's activities had no negative impacts. The assessment considers the appropriate project risk classification.

Recommendations

To the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, FAO Chile and the Ministry of the Environment on the identification and development of interventions, knowledge management and communications, financial execution and co-financing (Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Recommendation 1. In the future, similar GEF and FAO interventions should develop a comprehensive transdisciplinary and participatory assessment as part of the research and prior consultation process. Based on a mapping of structural elements of the territory (synergies, conflicts, dynamics that could affect the intervention), this would incorporate the largest possible number of variables and allow for a correct analysis of stakeholders, processes and risks.

12. Suggestions are as follows:

    i. Before the effective start of the project, ensure the availability of a space (or make an effective use of existing spaces, such as the project launch workshop) to review the intervention's design, feasibility and political-institutional relevance, logical framework, theory of change, goals and indicators.

    ii. The intervention should harness FAO's knowledge and experience when it comes to geographic information tools and technologies. Such tools can be part of the project from the beginning of its life cycle – especially ones that have a territorial impact and face complex multifactorial dynamics with multiple stakeholders.

Recommendation 2. In the future, similar FAO-GEF interventions should develop a communications strategy with annual and even quarterly plans while ensuring their alignment with FAO corporate standards. Incorporate insights from not only the specialized scientific sector but also local communities and the traditional ecological knowledge from Indigenous Peoples.

13. Suggestions are as follows:

    i. Include a basic outline of the communications strategy in the formulation of the project document. Have sufficient resources (human, financial, material) to implement its planned activities throughout the project.

    ii. Ensure greater effectiveness of the communications strategy. Start with an analysis of the target audience and adequately segment communication channels by media, language level, format, periodicity and specific indicators for each target group.

Recommendation 3. For similar FAO-GEF interventions in the future, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit should support FAO Chile in reaching agreements with the resource partners, negotiating co-financing agreements, providing suitable tools to promote the materialization of co-financing and monitoring the contribution of the partners in a more transparent way. This will benefit all of the parties involved.

Recommendation 4. In the future, similar FAO-GEF interventions should ensure that the initial commitments include the institutionalization and sustainability of the processes supported by the intervention. This should be discussed in the assessment phase and form part of the project development and its day-to-day management.

14. Suggestion is as follows:

    i. Develop a strategy to ensure the sustainability of results from the early phases of project execution.

To FAO and the Ministry of the Environment on the integration of different disciplines, knowledge and approaches to conservation (Recommendations 5 and 6)

Recommendation 5. For future interventions, integrate sectoral and thematic specialists (socioanthropological, biodiversity conservation, gender, Indigenous Peoples, geographic information technologies) not only in the design phase but also during execution. This ensures a more inclusive view of disciplines and knowledge in order to enhance the intervention strategy and the scope and variety of activities – bolstering project impact.

15. Suggestion is as follows:

    i. It would be beneficial if these specialists could also monitor the interventions, especially during the first year, to support the technical teams in the implementation and legitimization phase. This should be formalized through a plan with activities to both train team personnel and provide technical support.

Recommendation 6. For future projects, consider broadening the conservation approach based on emblematic species. Complement it with large-scale approaches that are closer to the ecosystem.

16. Suggestions are as follows:

    i. Consider lessons learned on integrated conservation approaches that have been used in similar projects, such as the hydrographic basin and ecological planning. This aims to adopt the optimal combination of conservation approaches from the beginning of the project.

    ii. Conduct knowledge exchanges with technicians who have participated in other projects with complementary approaches. This aims to outline common methodologies, promote the exchange of good practices and gradually develop a joint strategy that establishes a methodology for optimization.

To FAO and the Ministry of the Environment on cross-cutting issues (Recommendations 7 and 8)

Recommendation 7. Future interventions should incorporate a specific plan to reduce the gender gap and comply with the standards established by FAO and the GEF in their gender equality policies and guidelines. This aims to achieve their gender equality and empowerment objectives.

17. Suggestion is as follows:

    i. Consider the development of this plan as part of the goals and activities of the logical framework and the theory of change. It should ensure sufficient resources, both in financial and management terms, to effectively contribute to reducing the gender gap at all levels (institutional and social).

Recommendation 8. Future interventions in contexts with a significant presence of Indigenous Peoples should incorporate an intercultural plan to ensure the application of an ethnic-differential approach. It should also utilize their ancestral knowledge to promote biodiversity conservation.

Executive Summary Table 1. The GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/subcriteria	Rating[i]	Summary of comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	The project was generally relevant. It aligned with the FAO-GEF strategic priorities and national priorities.
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project aligned with the FAO-GEF strategic priorities.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	MS	The project aligned with national priorities on conservation issues. Although a greater inclusion of producer groups in consultations held during project design would have ensured greater alignment with territorial needs, the project responded adequately to beneficiary needs.
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MS	The project was coherent with other interventions in Chile. However, greater coordination and exchange of information with other projects in terms of conservation approaches would have ensured a greater impact in this regard.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	The results contributed to incorporating conservation criteria for the four species in the management of territories on the "development frontier."
B1.1. Delivery of project outputs	S	The project closed its execution with a positive balance of verifiable results.
B1.2. Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	MS	The project met the planned objectives. However, it was not possible to achieve habitat recovery or measure the recovery of populations attributable to it within the project's time frame of action.
B1.3. Likelihood of impact	L	Good forestry, agricultural and tourism practices were adopted by the producers. Also, conservation criteria were adequately incorporated into public policy instruments and municipal frameworks, laying the foundations for the desired effects to be produced.
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MS	The project would have benefited from having a larger field team and better human talent management practices.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Despite not having developed a sustainability strategy in the design phase, the project managed to activate several sustainability levers. However, there are some risks that could materialize in the future.
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	The project left several financing proposals in the approval process upon closure, ensuring the financial sustainability of its impacts.
D1.2. Sociopolitical risks	MU	A possible risk is that the environmental agenda of the current government does not have sufficient support for its implementation.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Some of the sustainability instruments promoted by the project are conditional on the commitment of the territorial stakeholders and the resources necessary to execute them.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	No environmental risks were identified.
D2. Catalysis and replication	L	It is considered that the political-institutional conditions exist (a favourable environment) for the replication and scalability of the project.

GEF criteria/subcriteria	Rating[i]	Summary of comments
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MU	There is room for improvement in the formulation of goals and indicators.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	The introduction of a national coordinator translated into improvements in project execution. However, relationship difficulties arose within the team at this stage, diminishing communication.
E2.1. Quality of project implementation by FAO (Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer, Project Task Force, etc.)	MS	There is room for improvement with respect to technical support provided by FAO and the analysis and identification of risks.
E2.2. Project oversight (project steering committee, project working group, etc.)	MS	A disconnect between management and the operational team was detected. This resulted in delays in the operationalization of decisions adopted by the management committees.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MS	Compliance with the total commitments made by the partners (cash and in-kind) reached 82 percent. However, compliance with monetary commitments was only 8 percent.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	Despite not having developed a strategic mapping of stakeholders in the design phase, the project achieved high participation of stakeholders with effective coordination.
E6. Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	Despite efforts made in the generation of technical-scientific knowledge, the implementation of a communications strategy from the beginning of the project with adequate resources allocated to this area would have increased its effects.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	The late introduction of the M&E system brought challenges and consequences for the detection, mitigation and management of difficulties faced by the intervention.
E7.1. M&E design	S	Although implemented late, the design of the M&E system was satisfactory.
E7.2. M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	MS	A system for monitoring technical progress linked to financial progress would have allowed for more effective M&E.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	There were deficiencies in the project design. Weaknesses persisted even after improvements were made as a result of the MTR.
F. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MU	The project worked with women to ensure high levels of participation in many activities. However, the lack of a plan aimed at reducing gender gaps limited the possibilities for the project to fully comply with the standards established by the gender policies of FAO and the GEF.
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	Despite challenges due to design flaws in integrating the ethnic-differential approach, the project complied with the FPIC procedures.
F3. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project's activities ensured respect for traditional ways of life and ecological balances. The classification of the project with moderate environmental and social risk due to the presence of Indigenous populations in the intervention areas is considered adequate.
Overall project rating	**MS**	

Note: [i] See Appendix 3 for more information on the GEF evaluation criteria rating system.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. The terminal evaluation, of which this report is the main product, was considered in the project document based on requirements from the donor, the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It was carried out with a dual purpose. The evaluation reports back to the GEF and the national and regional governments. It also has a learning purpose. In the process of assessing the achievement of outcomes in the areas of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, lessons learned were identified to sustain and expand the results of the project and ensure their continuity. The evaluation examined factors that either contributed to or limited the achievement of results, the reasons and circumstances of them being achieved or not achieved, the inclusion of a gender and Indigenous Peoples approach, and good practices. The evaluation also examined unexpected results, both positive and negative.

2. The findings are provided as evidence for the design of new projects and to improve the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) implementation or operating mechanisms based on lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Target audience

3. The primary intended users and uses of this report are outlined in the following points.

   i. **The project's executing and implementing team (FAO, Ministry of the Environment, National Forest Corporation [CONAF, by its Spanish acronym], Agricultural Development Institute [INDAP, by its Spanish acronym], and Agriculture and Livestock Service [SAG, by its Spanish acronym])** may use the findings to improve the design and implementation of future interventions in the country or region, including ongoing projects in similar areas or other potential areas of work.

   ii. **All involved local governments, partners and local beneficiary communities** can use the conclusions and lessons learned to improve and strengthen the scope of the results while ensuring continuity of the processes launched by the project.

   iii. **The FAO-GEF Coordination Unit** will use the results to report back to the GEF and report on the achievement of project objectives and indicators. In addition, the evidence generated by the project can be used to improve the implementation of the FAO-GEF portfolio at the regional and country levels. It will also share the lessons learned and good practices developed by this project with the FAO-GEF community.

   iv. **FAO Chile, the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean and FAO headquarters** will use the main results of the evaluation for the strategic planning and design of future GEF and non-GEF proposals.

   v. **Other donors and organizations** interested in supporting projects on the conservation of biodiversity and threatened species in the region may benefit from this report.

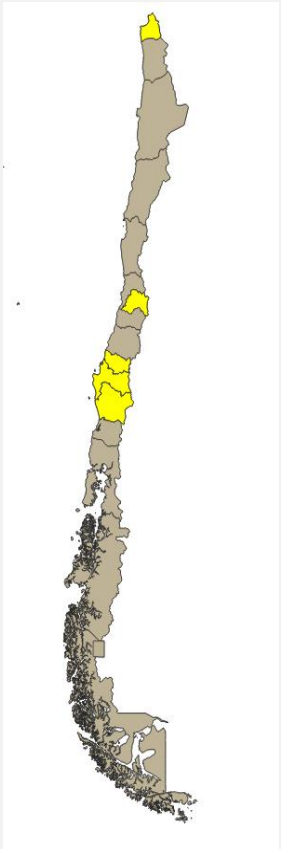
1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

4. Regarding its material scope, the terminal evaluation covered the expected outcomes and the outputs and activities of the four project components.

5. Regarding its temporal scope, the terminal evaluation considers the project execution period from October 2017 (start of implementation) to October 2022 (end of the consultation phase).

6. Regarding geographic coverage, the evaluation team reviewed the project documentation and consulted key informants in the intervention areas. The informants are located in the Arica y Parinacota (northern macrozone), Biobío, Ñuble and Araucanía (southern macrozone) Regions. Management and technical personnel in Santiago and other cities were also consulted. In the field, the team focused on key informants located in the intervention areas. Virtual consultations were held with the project's management and technical personnel in their places of residence or work.

Figure 1. Evaluation zones



Macrozone	Region	Evaluation coverage	Modality
Northern macrozone	Arica y Parinacota	Medium	In-person and virtual
Santiago and other cities	Santiago metropolitan area	Medium	Virtual
Southern macrozone	Biobío	Medium-High	In-person and virtual
	Ñuble	Low	In-person and virtual
	Araucanía	Low	Virtual

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team. Map conforms to UN. 2010. *Map of Chile*. https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/chile.

7. Table 1 presents the evaluation questions as indicated in the terms of reference. These questions guided the development of the evaluation matrix that had been approved by the monitoring committee.

Table 1. Evaluation questions by GEF criteria

Criteria	Guiding questions
Relevance	**Question 1.** To what extent are the project results aligned with the focal areas and strategies of the GEF, the FAO operational programme, the country priorities, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs of the beneficiaries? Have there been any changes in the relevance of the project since it was designed, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of its objectives and targets? How effective was the project's responsiveness to address these changes? To what extent have project activities been complemented by other existing interventions in the country?
Effectiveness	**Question 2.** What intended or unintended results and effects has the project achieved and to what extent did these contribute to the achievement of its objectives?
Efficiency	**Question 3.** How cost-effective has the project's implementation been? To what extent has it been able to adapt to any change in conditions (government and policy changes, COVID-19, project team changes, etc.) to improve the efficiency of project execution?
Sustainability	**Question 4.** How sustainable are the results achieved to date at the environmental, social, institutional and financial levels? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of project achievements?
Factors affecting performance	**Question 5.** What are the main factors that have influenced the performance of the project (design, implementation, execution, monitoring and evaluation [M&E], co-financing, project partnerships, and communications and knowledge management)?
Gender	**Question 6.** To what extent have gender aspects been considered in project design and implementation? Has the project ensured gender equality in participation and benefits, contributing to the empowerment of women?
Indigenous Peoples	**Question 7.** How were local communities and Indigenous Peoples considered in the design and implementation of the project?
Environmental and social safeguards	**Question 8.** To what extent have environmental and social concerns been taken into account in the design and implementation of the project?

Source: Terms of reference of the evaluation.

1.4 Methodology

8. A general evaluation methodology was used based on a combination of the following three approaches:

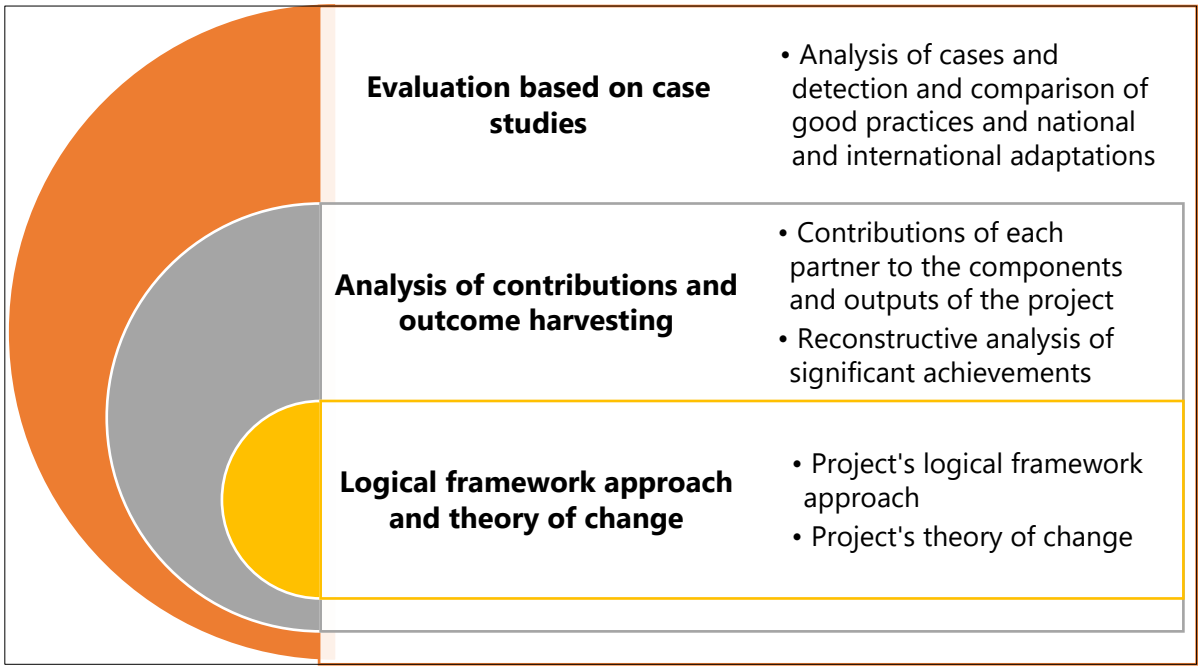
   i. The core evaluative approach was based on a combination of the logical framework approach (to design the intervention) and the theory of change (incorporated during the mid-term review [MTR] in 2020). This approach was especially useful in analysing the design and management of the intervention, specifically the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

   ii. The analysis of contributions was combined with an outcome harvesting approach. This allowed the evaluation team to infer the causal relationships between the processes and outputs planned and implemented by the project and their effects

on both the expected and unexpected results in terms of the intervention's general and specific objectives. This approach generated information on the project's effectiveness and progress towards its intended impacts and sustainability.

iii. The evaluation team then used an approach based on case studies by contrasting the document analysis tool with what was verified in the field. This relied on the available theoretical and empirical knowledge in terms of conserving threatened species. It also involved mechanisms for the sustainable use of natural resources in fragile or vulnerable habitats and biological spaces of special interest. This approach made it possible to establish parallels and differences with other cases. At the same time, the level of relevance and efficiency of the project could be evaluated in terms of its design, process and results.

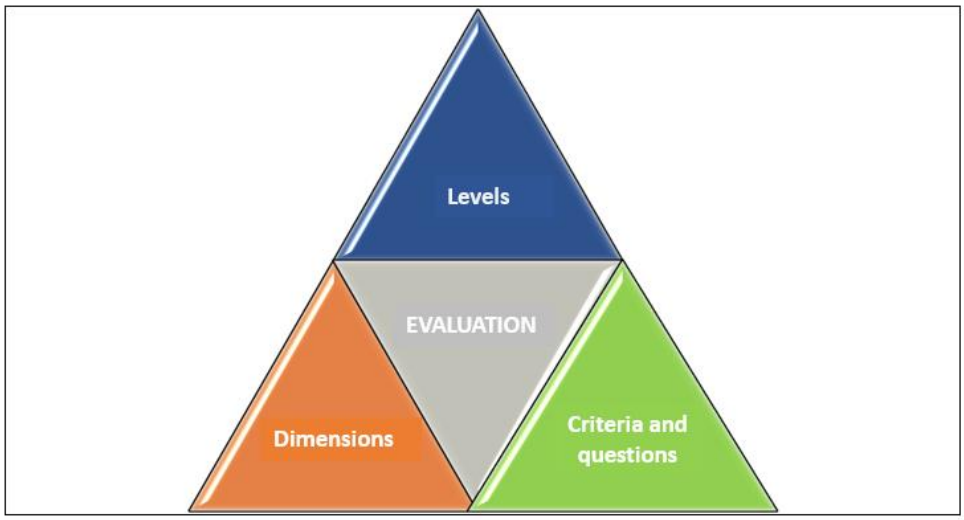
Figure 2. Synthesis of evaluative approaches



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

9. The evaluation matrix was developed based on a trifocal approach to ensure that no relevant element was left out. This approach included an analysis by level (macro-meso and micro), by component (design, management, results) and, lastly, by criteria and questions.

Figure 3. Diagram of the evaluation's structural elements



Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

10. The information obtained during the evaluation process was interpreted through at least three sources (triangulation). This allowed for the identification of indications and hypotheses to generate findings which, once systematized, became conclusions.

11. The evaluation tools were almost exclusively qualitative. These are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluative research techniques

METHODOLOGY	TECHNIQUES	PROFILE OF KEY INFORMANTS
Qualitative	Review of documentation and case studies	✓ The GEF methodological framework documentation ✓ Project documentation (agreements, working documents, progress reports, MTR, technical reports, verification sources, financial information, etc.) ✓ Bibliography on international and national policies and practices for the conservation of threatened species and biodiversity ✓ General documentation on country policies ✓ Documentation on areas visited
Qualitative	Semi-structured interviews(Three processes conducted in person and virtually)	Project personnel and key informants at the regional, national, macrozonal and local team levels
		Personnel and key informants from entities associated with the intervention in the public sector and international cooperation agencies, as well as social and professional associations and private sector partners
		Beneficiaries
Qualitative and quantitative	Progress of activities and results matrix	By intervention and results obtained for each component
Qualitative	Direct verification	Verification of materials acquired and physical or virtual infrastructure initiatives carried out (software, networks, information systems, etc.)

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

12. The consulted stakeholders were decided upon with the evaluation monitoring committee. This was based on criteria of the stakeholder's level of involvement in the project and

knowledge of it, as well as geographic coverage. The consultations carried out by the evaluation team involved a total of 77 people from 27 participating institutions.

1.5 Limitations

13. The evaluation's implementation faced a series of challenges that had to be resolved. Table 3 highlights the main challenges and measures that were taken to address them.

Table 3. Limitations of the evaluation

ISSUE	CHALLENGE OR THREAT	MEASURE(S)
Evaluation team	A field visit by the evaluation's lead consultant was not possible due to administrative reasons that went beyond their control and ability to travel.	The FAO Regional Head of Evaluation accompanied the evaluation specialist on site visits.
Project team	There was a lack of project coordinators in the field during the closure process, both nationally and in the northern macrozone.	A formal information channel to receive feedback was developed with the help of staff.
Duration of field phase	Limited time was available for the field phase considering the temporal, geographic and material scope of the project.	An attempt was made to optimize the consultation phase as much as possible in order to compensate for the short field visits. The consultations were complemented with virtual interviews.
Physical access	There were security problems that prevented access to some project sites.	Telephone consultations were conducted where possible.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.

1.6 Structure of the report

14. After this introduction, Section 2 presents the background and context of the project. Section 3 presents the main findings for each evaluation question. The conclusions and recommendations are presented in Section 4 and the lessons learned in Section 5. The report includes the following appendices: 1) list of key agents consulted; 2) the GEF evaluation criteria rating table; 3) the GEF rating scheme; and 4) the results matrix.

2. Background and context of the project

Box 1. Basic project information

Country: Chile
FAO project code: GCP/CHI/033/GFF
Project title: Mainstreaming conservation and valuation of critically endangered species and ecosystems in development-frontier production landscapes in the regions of Arica y Parinacota and Bibío
Implementing and executing agency: FAO
Co-executing partners: Ministry of the Environment, CONAF, INDAP, SAG
Co-financing entities: Ministry of the Environment, CONAF, SAG, FAO
Project start date: 25 September 2017
Project completion date: 30 November 2022
MTR date: from July to October 2020

Source: Terms of reference of the evaluation.

2.1 Brief description of the context and the project

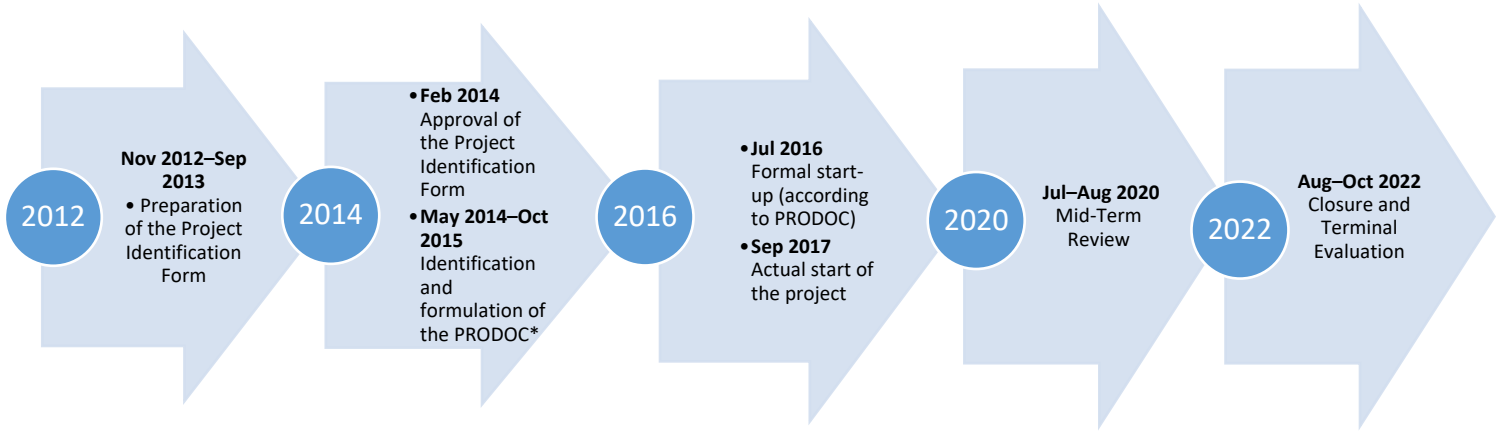
15. The context and the project are described here with background information obtained from the terms of reference of the evaluation and the project document. At a global level, biodiversity loss has increased significantly in recent decades because of human activities. This has resulted in the alteration and degradation of ecosystems around the world, leading to the extinction of an important number of animal and plant species. The average number of native species in most major terrestrial biomes has been reduced by at least 20 percent, potentially affecting ecosystem processes and their services that benefit people. It is estimated that, on average, about 25 percent of the identified species of animal and plant groups are threatened.

16. Parallel to the verifiable and accelerated degradation of environmental vectors, the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (2011–2020) was launched to promote its vision of living in harmony with nature and managing its resources sustainably. In addition, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in a resolution adopted in March 2019 to promote the implementation of its Strategic Plan on Biodiversity.

17. The Mainstreaming conservation and valuation of critically endangered species and ecosystems in development-frontier production landscapes in the regions of Arica y Parinacota and Bibío project (hereinafter the project or the intervention) was developed in response to the two aforementioned challenges. Originally proposed by Regional Ministerial Secretariat (SEREMI) environment staff in the Biobío Region, the project complemented the GEF initiative under FAO's mandate as part of its mission to protect natural areas.

18. The period between project conception and design and its effective start date was extended for five years. Project execution, originally scheduled for 36 months, reached 60 months.

Figure 4. Project timeline



*Note: * PRODOC refers to the project document*

Source: Elaboration by the evaluation team.

19. The project implemented four components to achieve its overall objective. This included three value added components and one to provide support.

i. **Component 1:** sensitization and capacity building to support the protection of four threatened species in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions. This involved updated information mechanisms for decision-making, environmental education for strategic audiences and tools to promote good practices in productive systems. For this component, the following result was expected.

- Outcome 1.1. Strengthened capacity of local stakeholders to implement good forestry, agricultural and livestock practices that consider the conservation of the habitat of four threatened species (Arica hummingbird, Darwin's fox, huemul, queule).

ii. **Component 2:** integrated territorial management based on good forestry, agricultural and livestock practices aimed at the recovery of the habitats of four threatened species in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions. This involved tools for the ecological planning of productive landscapes and the identification and implementation of good practices. For this component, the following result was expected.

- Outcome 2.1. The populations of the four threatened species are stabilized due to reduced pressure on their habitats, which is a result of the planning and management of the territory through a biodiversity conservation approach.

iii. **Component 3:** incorporation of criteria for the conservation of threatened species in public policy instruments and municipal regulatory frameworks in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions. This proposed that municipal ordinances be issued through the Species Restoration, Conservation and Management (RECOGE) plans

to promote the conservation of species and financing for conservation in land management. For this component, the following result was expected.

- Outcome 3.1. Public policies and regional regulatory frameworks incorporate the conservation criteria of the four threatened species based on the territorial management experiences of Component 2.

iv. **Component 4:** results-based management through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and dissemination. This involved reporting, communication and evaluation activities to closely monitor the project's implementation and facilitate learning, adaptation and compliance with expected results. For this component, the following result was expected.

- Outcome 4.1. Results-based management approach of the project implemented.

20. The following categories were identified in the mapping of project stakeholders.

i. Implementing and executing agency

- **FAO:** supervised project implementation and provided technical support for its development

ii. Main co-executing partner

- **Ministry of the Environment:** responsible for the overall project leadership through the Division of Natural Resources and Biodiversity

iii. Partners participating in project decision-making

- **CONAF:** co-executing project partner and steering committee member that participated in the elaboration of the RECOGE plans, the standardization of monitoring, the creation of protected areas (network of microreserves for conservation as part of the action plan) and verification of queule for forest restoration
- **SAG:** co-executing partner and permanent member of the project's national steering committee (SAG regional representatives participated in the project's regional technical committees and provided personnel and technical assistance to strengthen good practices. It participated in the elaboration of the RECOGE plans and the analysis of the territorial management proposals for pilot areas and intervention communities.)
- **INDAP:** in coordination with the Ministry of the Environment, provided technical assistance in implementing pilot farms, strengthening the capacities of the technical team and promoting the participation of professionals in the Local Development Programme and the INDAP Indigenous Territorial Development Programme in the intervention territories (at the national level, it also supported the development of studies to identify the benefits of adopting good practices and to develop a certification system for good practices to strengthen the sustainability and scalability of territorial achievements.)

iv. Beneficiaries at the government level

- **Regional governments of Ñuble and Biobío:** co-executing partners that coordinated, together with the Ministry of the Environment, actions for institutional strengthening and played a role in prioritizing regional regulations and investment projects for the conservation of threatened species
- **SEREMI:** regional environmental authority and regional education authority
- **Ministry of National Assets:** facilitated the commodatum of government land for microreserves
- **National Tourism Service:** strategic actor in the project since it oversaw the programme to raise awareness and disseminate information on endangered species (it also participates in regional technical committees)
- **Municipalities:** the municipalities of Arica, Camarones, Pinto, Coihueco, Cobquecura, Tome, Curanilahue, Cañete, Contulmo and Los Alamos participated in the planning processes for territorial management and the protection of areas of interest for conservation in border areas (they also participated in and benefited from environmental education programmes. Some municipalities included conservation criteria in their municipal regulatory frameworks)

v. Partners with technical or economic participation in the project

- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs):** AvesChile, Canopy, Aumen and the Nahuelbuta Foundation served as strategic partners and co-financers that participated in the regional committees, shared their monitoring methodologies and, occasionally, supported the implementation of good practices on certain properties
- **Private sector:** the companies Corteva (formerly Pioneer, DuPont Group), Forestal Arauco and Syngenta supported the implementation of some of the good practices pilots and dissemination programmes

vi. Local stakeholders and direct beneficiaries of the project

- **Landowners, farmers and ranchers:** as direct beneficiaries of the project, they participated in workshops to raise awareness and implemented good practices for sustainable production
- **Academia:** University of Concepción, University of the Biobío, University of Tarapacá, University of Saint Thomas, Andrés Bello National University, Catholic University of Temuco or San Sebastián University and the Catholic University of the Maule provided technical equipment and knowledge for the implementation of the project and its outputs (some academics participated on the species subcommittees)
- **Community associations:** Los Huemules and Las Trancas Pinto were project partners in favour of protecting huemules and the environment

- **Primary schools:** teachers and students participated in workshops on education and environmental awareness, as well as the development of the Vocational Training Unit in Arica
- **Participating Indigenous communities:** within the project framework, the surrounding Indigenous communities were consulted to request their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) before staring operations in the intervention districts of the Biobío Region

21. Table 4 details the financial resources.

Table 4. Planned project financing

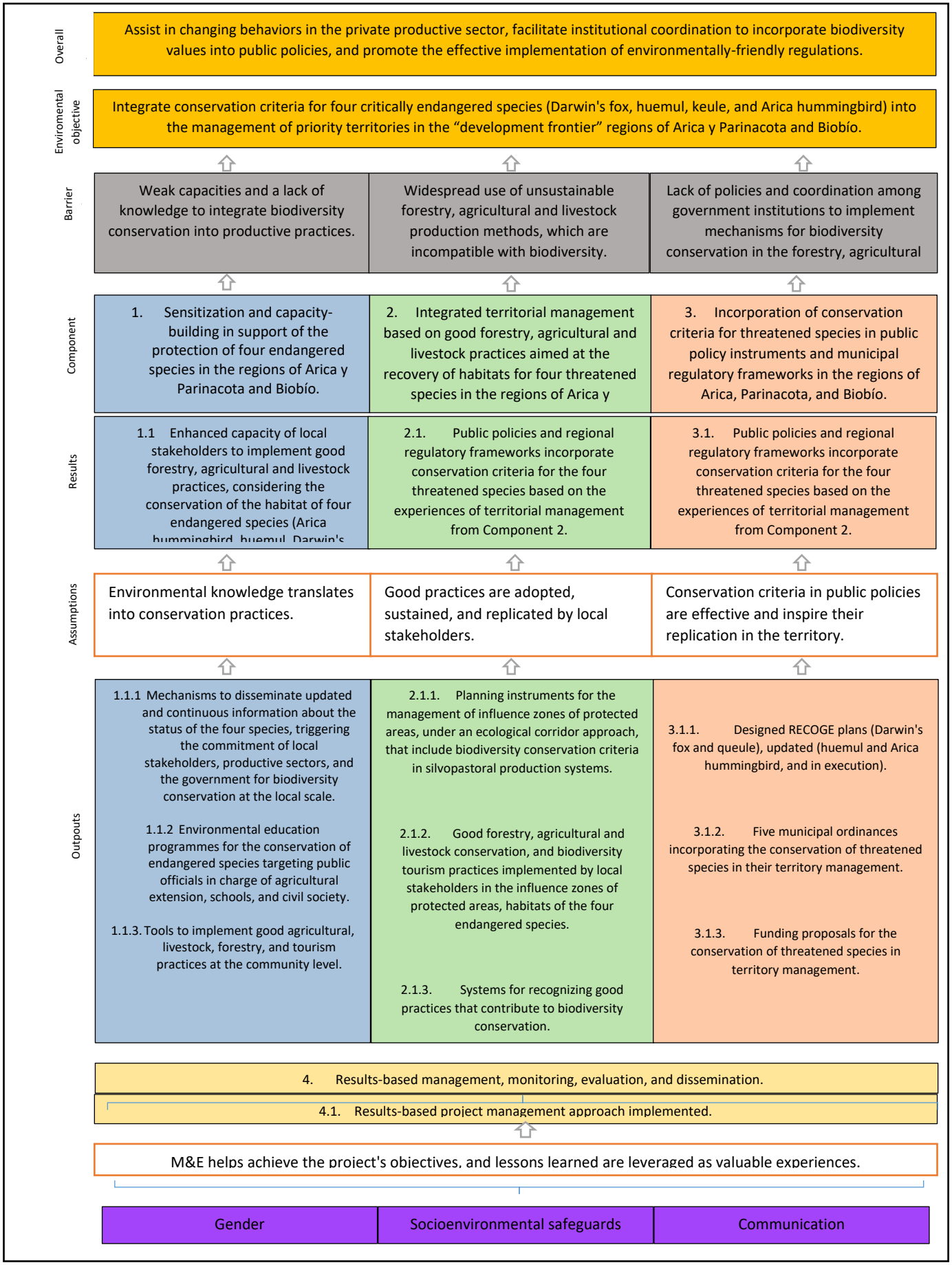
Source	Amount (USD)
GEF grant	2 411 416
Co-financing	6 610 611
- Ministry of the Environment	1 640 921
- CONAF	1 623 447
- SAG	200 319
- AvesChile	1 451 272
- Ética en los Bosques [Ethics in the Woods]	301 000
- Aumen	221 400
- The Keule Foundation	28 000
- Private contributions	813 252
- FAO	331 000
Total budget	9 022 027

Source: Project document.

2.2 Theory of change

22. The project did not have a theory of change at its initial development stage. This was incorporated later with the completion of the MTR and is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Theory of change



Source: MTR

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance

Finding 1. The project presented a high level of integration and alignment with Chile's international commitments to environmental matters. It effectively contributed to four Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and two tangentially. Regarding international instruments, it responded to Objective B of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and contributed directly to six Aichi Biodiversity Targets (CBD, 2018).

23. The project made an effective contribution to four SDGs, including a significant contribution to the following: SDG 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; and SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. It made an average contribution to SDG 17, Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. It also made indirect contributions to: SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; and SDG 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

24. Regarding the specific international instruments on biodiversity, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (UN, 1992), the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the 2010 Aichi Biodiversity Targets (CBD, 2018), the project contributed to Strategic Objective B of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity: reduce direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use. Regarding the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the intervention contributed directly to the achievement of the following targets: 1) awareness of the value of biodiversity; 4) public-private partnerships for sustainable production and consumption; 7) production sensitive to the conservation of biodiversity; 12) avoiding extinction and improving the conservation of endangered species; and 19) generation, use and dissemination of knowledge about biodiversity. It also contributed indirectly to targets and 20) mobilization of financial resources to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011–2020).

25. The project contributes to the objectives of the Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere, which was signed in 1940 and ratified by Chile in 1967 (Decreto Supremo [Supreme Decree] 531) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1967). Although indirectly, the project's activities in the northern macrozone (Arica y Parinacota Region) also made modest yet important contributions to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which was signed in 1994 and ratified by Chile in 1998 (Decreto Supremo [Supreme Decree] 2065) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998).

Finding 2. The project complied with the frameworks and guidelines defined by the GEF in its 2014–2018 Global Framework (GEF, 2014) and FAO in its main strategic, programmatic and regional frameworks. It also aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Chile.

26. The project aligned with the 2014–2019 FAO Strategic Framework and Objectives (FAO, 2013a), contributing to Strategic Objective 2: increase the provision of goods and services from agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable way. Regarding FAO's regional priorities for Latin America and the Caribbean, the project addressed challenges

in terms of developing sustainable and resilient agriculture based on actions that promote agriculture, fishing, livestock and forestry production. In turn, it also considered the integration of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services. At the level of the 2015–2018 FAO Country Programming Framework for Technical Assistance in Chile (FAO, 2014), the design of the intervention contributed to Pillar II: governance of natural resources and forestry, agricultural and fishing systems under climate change scenarios. It also aligned with Action 2.3: protection of biodiversity, conservation of natural and genetic resources for food security.

27. Regarding the GEF-5 biodiversity focal area (GEF, 2011c), the intervention contributed to Biodiversity Outcome 2.1: incorporate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in productive landscapes and marine territories. It did so by increasing the number of landscapes certified according to internationally or nationally recognized environmental standards that incorporate biodiversity. In addition, it contributed to the Biodiversity Result 2.2. It did so by improving the effectiveness of actions at the landscape level, promoting the integration of landscape management with the valuation of biodiversity and conservation plans. The intervention also focused on productive landscapes in the "development frontier".

28. Although established long after formulation, the project contributed to the 2019–2022 United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Chile (UN Chile, 2020). Two direct effects were expected to be achieved in 2022 within the strategic areas of: Environmental development; Resilience, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, desertification and land degradation; and Biodiversity and ecosystem services, specifically related to work. First, state institutions at the national, regional, and local levels were strengthened in climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable management and the conservation of natural resources, ecosystems and their biodiversity, as well as risk management and socioenvironmental conflict. Second, the productive and social sectors bolstered their environmental sustainability through innovation and governance mechanisms in compliance with international environmental norms and standards.

Finding 3. The project aligned with Chile's environmental policies and regulations. At the same time, it supported both the mission of the relevant institutions and the synergistic interaction among them to promote a culture of biodiversity conservation in Chile.

29. The project aligned with the National Biodiversity Strategy (Ministry of the Environment, UNDP and GEF, 2017). In fact, it reflected Chile's international commitments that had been updated for the period from 2017 to 2030. These aimed at: promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity for human well-being, reducing threats to ecosystems and species and protecting and restoring biodiversity and its ecosystem services; developing awareness, knowledge and participation of the population in the protection of biodiversity as a source of their own well-being; developing a robust institutional framework, good governance and fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of biodiversity; and incorporating biodiversity objectives into policies, plans and programmes of the public and private sectors. Within this National Biodiversity Strategy, the project helped to implement the Action Plan for Native Species (Ministry of the Environment, n.d.), which includes the four threatened species.

30. In terms of the national political-regulatory framework, the project somewhat contributed to the General Environmental Law (Chilean National Congress, 1994), the National Policy for the Protection of Threatened Species (Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency,

2007), the General Environmental Law (Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency, 2010), the regulation of RECOGE plans (Ministry of the Environment, 2014 DS No. 1/2014) and the Exempt Decree No. 13 (Ministry of Agriculture, 1995).

31. Regarding support for the mission mandates of its national strategic partners, the project design aligned with the objective of the Ministry of the Environment to ensure the implementation of environmental policies, plans and programmes. Indeed, this aimed to protect and conserve biodiversity and renewable natural and water resources through the promotion of sustainable development. It also aligned with CONAF's general objective of developing the country through the sustainable management of forest ecosystems and related nature aspects. As for SAG, the project supported its mission to promote the development of agriculture, forests and livestock through the protection and improvement of animal and plant health. It also complemented INDAP objectives. As part of the Ministry of Agriculture, these seek to promote the economic, social and technological development of small agricultural producers and farmers. The aim was to expand and improve the access of family farmers to local, regional, national and international markets by promoting traditional and differentiated high-quality products.

Finding 4. The project adequately covered the transition zones between the productive and conservation areas. This involved areas where the four target species are present, generating highly important information with respect to territorial coverage. However, its specific impact in the territory of the northern macrozone (on the valley or farm scale) and the selection of intervention sites could have been optimized in terms of efficiency and conservation impact.

32. The decision during the project's identification phase to expand both taxonomic coverage (first Darwin's fox and queule, then the Arica hummingbird) and geographic coverage (from the Biobío Region to the Arica y Parinacota Region) turned out to be logical and highly important. First, Arica y Parinacota is a region that has lagged behind in environmental matters with little priority on environmental protection in its land management policies. Also, Arica y Parinacota has been neglected by international cooperation agreements, especially environmental projects. Basing the initiative in this region was important.

33. A second level of analysis of the project's geographical relevance deals with zone selection and interventions in each macrozone. The evaluation highlights that the project document did not clearly establish specific project intervention areas.

34. In the southern macrozone, the justification for the intervention in the Araucanía Region was supported by the presence of Darwin's fox. In fact, the most threatened population of the species is found in this region. The southern macrozone is also relevant in terms of landscape continuity. However, in the northern macrozone, doubts remain about the criteria used in the selection of the specific locations (properties) for intervention in the valleys of Vítor (where the largest population of the species is found), Chaca and Camarones. This is because the anthropic activity in the Azapa Valley likely expelled the Arica hummingbird from this area long ago. The opportunity cost of acting there and not intensifying activities in the other three valleys may have been high in terms of resource use.

Finding 5. Overall, the project was consistent with the needs of producers and owners who use the ecosystem services provided by the threatened biodiversity in the territory. Besides material and infrastructure inputs, the intervention supported users and beneficiaries in non-material

aspects, such as recognition, learning, inspiration and emotional well-being. However, it did not always respond adequately to territorial needs due to limitations in the design phase.

35. Overall, the project adequately responded to the needs of producers and owners. Beyond material inputs, which were highly valued, it is worth noting the positive results in terms of the intangible benefits received by the beneficiary producers and owners. In fact, they reported improvements in their quality of life due to greater awareness on the importance of environmental protection and the integration into their lives of practices to conserve biodiversity.

36. In addition, several key informants agreed that both the identification of the project and its formulation revealed shortcomings in terms of establishing the needs of local populations. The lack of participation of local communities, including Indigenous Peoples and small- and medium-sized landowners, in project design and formulation made it difficult to adequately assess demand in the territory and meet their needs.

37. Although a GEF project with the main objective of contributing to environmental protection, it would have been beneficial for the project to include not only institutional stakeholders but also more landowners, producers, companies and local territorial agents to respond more effectively to their needs.

38. This finding is also corroborated by the lack of a baseline regarding the ethnic-cultural composition of the specific populations in the intervention areas. In fact, the structure of land tenure in these areas is undefined. A baseline would allow for targeted intervention strategies to be determined according to the profile of those who own the land or have the right of usufruct on the properties (physical or legal entities, small- or large-scale landowners, mestizo farmers, Indigenous communities, etc.).

39. Satisfactory (S).

3.2 Effectiveness

Finding 6. The main objective of the project was achieved at a satisfactory level: the conservation criteria of the four threatened species were incorporated into the management of the "development frontier" territories in the project's target regions. This was done through the implementation of forestry, agriculture and livestock good practices. The development of local capacities, awareness raising and the incorporation of biodiversity into local policies and regulatory frameworks also played a role.

Finding 7. The project represented an important effort to improve social awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation. It also promoted greater inter-institutional coordination for the mainstreaming of environmental commitments on sectoral agendas.

Finding 8. The project closed with a positive balance of verifiable compliance in its value added components (Components 1, 2 and 3). It also had a positive evolution of its performance after the necessary improvements and corrective measures identified in the MTR.

40. The evaluation determines an average level of achievement of expected outcomes of 87.5 percent and a level of achievement of expected outputs close to 80 percent, which is considered satisfactory (see Appendix 4). This is based on a detailed analysis of the expected outputs of the intervention, as well as their comparison with the available evidence (means of verification).

41. The outcomes harvested by the project are broad in scope and reflect significant efforts to promote institutional and technical-scientific coordination. This demonstrates the ability of the project's macrozonal teams to adapt to the complex institutional reality and its changing dynamics and needs. It also shows how the teams overcame the significant challenges that had affected the implementation process, such as mobility limitations due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, government changes, the creation of a new region and social conflict in the Araucanía Region.

3.2.1. Components and results

42. **Component 1:** sensitization and capacity building to support the protection of four threatened species in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions.

Finding 9. The project helped to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders to promote the protection of the four threatened species, particularly in terms of the good forestry and agricultural practices implemented.

43. The project promoted the elaboration of monitoring procedures by species. These procedures were valuable both as specific products and for what they entailed as processes of debate, consensus, consultation, and scientific-technical and administrative cooperation. In addition to meeting these goals, the project went further by participating in the creation of additional procedures (Arica hummingbird, queule, seed collection) and the preparation of complementary information, such as the queule study and documents on this species. The project contributed to standardizing information and making it available to relevant stakeholders through the generation of this material.

44. The Environmental Education Programme on the conservation of endangered species targeted agricultural extension agents, schools and civil society. It benefited more than 60 percent of municipal students and more than 2 000 people. The workshops provided manuals for professionals, teachers and students. In addition, the programme developed and implemented the Vocational Training Unit, which initially consisted of strengthening project-based school learning in the Arica y Parinacota Region as a pilot initiative. The experience of the Chitita school and its principal stands out. Here, the training unit was successfully applied in the educational community while considering the sociocultural context of the Amara Indigenous Peoples. In this and other educational experiences, the project’s importance is observed through the permanence of the learning and its appropriation by the teachers themselves. In fact, they have found creative ways to ensure the continuity of the programme in their schools. Some examples include educational units on the Arica hummingbird that the teachers created and made available on YouTube, as well as murals or other artwork related to the species.

45. The project proposed capacity building for the implementation of good sustainable agricultural and forestry practices and biodiversity conservation through the development of local capacities and awareness raising. This was achieved by strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders (300 farmers) and by providing tools to implement good practices in productive systems, such as manuals of good agricultural and tourism practices and training workshops. In addition, the evaluation verified that the good practices were implemented by family farmers in the field with the support of regional public institutions, municipalities, NGOs and private companies. The evaluation also confirmed the willingness and enthusiasm of family farmers to continue developing good practices through their own means, even after project closure. However, the farmers themselves acknowledge that,

despite their will and enthusiasm, the implementation cost of some practices is beyond the families' reach or requires a high investment of time. In some cases, this may affect the sustainability of the practice.

46. The project supported technical processes to improve access to the online platform of the National Biodiversity Strategy, the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Biodiversity and the National Biodiversity Information System (SIMBIO). This action added value to the platform and improved its content. In fact, this platform will facilitate the M&E and reporting of the implementation of the RECOGE plans for the relevant species. This information is available to not only the Ministry of the Environment but also other stakeholders and institutions linked to the conservation of these species. In this regard, the project helped to fulfil the national goals related to greater transparency in managing the biodiversity policy.

47. **Component 2:** integrated territorial management based on good forestry, agricultural and livestock practices aimed at the recovery of the habitats of four threatened species in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions.

Finding 10. The project developed an adequate territorial management plan based on instruments and good practices. These focused on recovering the habitats of the four species. However, it was not possible to achieve habitat recovery or measure the recovery of populations within the project's time frame of action.

48. This component focused on promoting integrated territorial management based on good forestry and agricultural practices, which aimed at the recovery of habitats and the stabilization of the population of the four species. This is achieved by reducing pressure on their habitats. Planning instruments aimed to manage zones of influence of the protected areas. In fact, the project successfully developed planning instruments. In particular, it supported the design of the management plan for the area of influence of the Nevados de Chillan-Laguna Laja Biosphere Reserve and proposed the preparation of a management plan for the network of microreserves.

49. Regarding the goals of this component, there were some difficulties in the feasibility of their measurement. As mentioned, the project aimed to stabilize the populations of the four species through the recovery of habitats and the reduction of pressure on them. This goal was difficult to assess. In fact, at the beginning of the project, there was no reliable database with the population sizes of the four species – nor was this information available for all species by project closure. This made it impossible to effectively measure habitat recovery, let alone the stabilization of the population that could be attributed to it. In addition, it is worth mentioning that it was difficult to measure the population dynamics within the project's time frame due to other factors, such as limited knowledge about population fluctuations and cycles.

50. The project implemented good biodiversity conservation and tourism practices with local stakeholders in the habitat of threatened species. Ten types of good practices were implemented with 300 farmers trained and five types of good practices implemented at non-pilot sites. Rancho Grande reflects a positive experience where learning went beyond the pilot experience and extended into neighbouring properties. This demonstrates: 1) the dedication and motivational capacity of extension agents in the field; 2) the good response to the pilot experiences shown by some of the landowners; and 3) the willingness of the landowners to implement the techniques and processes learned during the project.

51. Interviews with key stakeholders and experts revealed that the priority areas identified by the project for the conservation of each species were not always correct. This is because the threats that contribute the most to their population decline were not addressed. Regardless, the project generated some positive results, as in the case of the huemul where the territorial management is expected to continue through a cooperation among private companies and other partners. The Arica hummingbird, however, is at the other extreme. This species faces a critical, even alarming, population situation. In this case, the evaluation confirms that the identification of the priorities for the species (carried out at the design level) was incorrect and did not contribute to a recovery of the habitat or the species' population as the project had proposed. In this regard, efforts in terms of restoring the habitat of the species would have had a greater impact than, for example, the creation of flower strips and other good practices.

52. Component 2 was difficult to assess given the available data. This highlights the extent to which an intervention's design limitations can affect the entire project cycle. The goal related to the protected area was based on calculations during the intervention design. These were not very rigorous. Moreover, there were areas within the intervention zone that: a) had already been protected prior to the intervention itself (as with all of the protected areas of the National System of Protected Wilderness Areas of the State and the Biosphere Reserve of the Nevados de Chillán Biological Corridor, Laguna de Laja, created in 2011); and b) in no case can be included in the literal sense of what the project document identified as areas of influence within the protected areas under the implementation of good practices, which clearly excluded everything related to outputs like training or territorial policies (RECOGE plans, municipal ordinances). The second goal of this component, which dealt with stabilizing the species' populations, was clearly unreliable given the lack of rigorous data on population sizes for any of the four species in the intervention's identification and formulation – nor do these data exist five years later. Although monitoring systems were, in principle, validated during the project, these were not fully operational and cannot be used retroactively.

53. The good practices identification system was an important element. This is because the project was largely based on a series of good practices implemented in the territory to serve as models. The problem with this output is its limited time frame and viability in terms of the institutionalization of processes required for the effective ongoing support of social and productive agents in the areas of influence within the protected areas.

54. **Component 3:** incorporation of criteria for the conservation of threatened species in public policy instruments and municipal regulatory frameworks in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions.

Finding 11. The project managed to adequately incorporate criteria for the conservation of threatened species in public policy instruments and municipal frameworks. This was mainly done through RECOGE plans, ordinances and the National Fund for Regional Development (FNDR, by its Spanish acronym).

55. The project participated in the design of three RECOGE plans (Darwin's fox, queule, huemul) and in the updating of one plan (Arica hummingbird). It is worth noting that the RECOGE plans are the result of an inter-institutional effort to include the necessary expertise on each species. The conservation criteria of each species were therefore incorporated under the proper management and collaboration of the project.

56. The project met and exceeded the goal for the number of municipal ordinances created, concluding with one ordinance approved to date and another six in the process of approval. The ordinances have the potential capacity to determine land use and permit activities based on the carrying capacity of ecosystems. This is why they are also considered a valuable instrument for continuity and long-term work.

57. The project developed various financing proposals to diversify its funding sources: two presented to the FNDR, three to the innovation fund for regional competitiveness and another for public-private financing. This demonstrates intersectoral collaborative efforts in both macrozones that have generated the will to continue the protection and conservation of species in each territory with the commitment of local resources.

Finding 12. The project also developed a series of additional initiatives whose relevance was not foreseen during the design process but ended up addressing needs that had emerged during execution.

58. This includes the integration of biodiversity criteria into the 2021–2030 Community Development Plan (PLADECO, by its Spanish acronym) for Arica and the Tourism Development Plan (PLADETUR, by its Spanish acronym), which is the framework for the PLADECO in the Camarones District. This also involves the promotion of the recently approved Biobío Regional Biodiversity Policy and efforts to obtain national and regional resources (FNDR) for the continuation of conservation efforts.

Finding 13. The strategic conservation approach, based on the selection of emblematic species to support the technical-scientific work, was innovative and effective in terms of making the problem visible. However, the integration of other existing approaches and methodologies from earlier stages would have offered opportunities to increase its efficiency in terms of effective conservation.

59. The project promoted an *in situ* conservation scheme for species outside of the protected areas – also known as off-reserve management. The importance of this approach lies in the fact that protected areas represent just 12 to 13 percent of the planet's land area. Therefore, effective biodiversity protection is not possible without addressing the spaces located outside of these areas. The selection of the four project species was not exclusively based on taxonomic characteristics linked to their conservation. Rather, they were selected based on a strategic perspective that aimed to harness these critically threatened species and social sensitivity as a launching pad for a more ambitious environmental strategy. Besides deserving particular attention, these emblematic species served to promote a multiplier effect that extended to the habitat of each of the four species. In addition, they helped to disseminate conservation efforts and, at the same time, prioritize the issue on institutional agendas. This decision to focus on four species was especially effective in highlighting the problem and the positive change in the population's perception of a culture of conservation. Indeed, this constitutes an important factor that could impact public policy frameworks in the medium and long term with a consequent allocation of public resources.

60. The evaluation found areas for improvement in terms of effectively curbing threats to ecosystems in the intervention areas. First, the project’s strategic vision initially considered the four species as the tip of the iceberg, that is, of a much greater action with ecosystem impact. This aspect was finally reflected in Component 2: integrated territorial management based on good forestry, agricultural and livestock practices aimed at the recovery of the habitats of four threatened species in the Arica y Parinacota and Biobío Regions (including

support for the protection of certain areas). A scope of action beyond the habitat of each of the four species was also integrated.

61. The evaluation also highlights a lack of complementarity with other more holistic approaches, such as the basin, ecological planning and ecological restoration approaches. This concerns the early stages of project development. In fact, early complementarity would have enhanced the project's effectiveness in terms of conservation. Although the ecological planning approach had not been contemplated from the start, it was later integrated – first in the southern macrozone then, based on lessons learned, in the northern macrozone.

62. Finally, the lack of scientific consensus, assessments and solid baselines for this project and its target species made it difficult for this approach to be successfully validated (see Section 3.5.1 Quality of design).

63. Satisfactory (S).

3.3 Efficiency

Finding 14. The committed financial resources were sufficient to execute the activities and achieve the outputs that had been promised in the project document. Despite initial challenges, this was done with quality.

64. The project was efficient with respect to financial execution. It reached a high rate of resource expenditure granted by the GEF (greater than 90 percent as of July 2022), corresponding to a high level of achievement for the outcomes and outputs. Despite the initial challenges, this result was achieved. The first phase was characterized by a low degree of financial execution.

Table 5. Project expenses by component

Expense items	Budgeted	Executed	Level of execution
Component 1	**704 742**	697 360	98.95%
Component 2	**1 151 310**	1 096 076	95.20%
Component 3	**282 179**	194 137	68.80%
Component 4	**158 356**	111 117	70.17%
Management	**114 829**	77 982	67.91%
Total GEF	**2 411 416**	**2 176 672**	90.27%

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team based on the project's financial documents.

65. The project's low level of financial execution in the initial phase was due to delays caused by different factors, including: necessary adjustments for the project's adaptation to a new government[1] amid delays between the project design (from 2011 to 2013) and its effective start date (2017); the initial launch period of the regional teams; the creation of a new administrative region in Chile (Ñuble Region) in 2018 within one of the project implementation areas; and the time required to renew the agreements and commitments with the new representatives of the recently created region.

[1] As mentioned in Section 3.1 Relevance, the project was designed during the government of former President Michelle Bachelet. Its execution began during the government of former President Sebastián Piñera.

66. Added to these factors were the mobility restrictions imposed by the State of Chile and FAO as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis. This contributed to delays in the execution of field activities. In fact, some activities had to be adapted to virtual platforms.

67. As of June 2020, the project had only achieved a degree of financial execution of 35 percent. These conditions and delays resulted in three no-cost extensions for the project. This made it possible to close the intervention with a high level of budget execution, corresponding to a high level of achievement of outcomes and outputs.

Finding 15. Given the scope, the project would have benefited from more personnel in the field. In terms of efficiency, this also involves incentives and better human talent management practices.

68. The evaluation found shortcomings in the project's technical-operational structure. In fact, there was a lack of sufficient permanent personnel in the field to cover large areas, especially in the southern macrozone. This impacted the project's efficiency, resulting in work overload and difficulties in carrying out all of the activities within the scheduled times.

69. Additionally, the project faced challenges in terms of labour relations within the execution team. This had negative consequences for project management: slowed communications and more staff turnover in the field. The evaluation determined that better human talent management practices – including greater incentives and recognition, both material and symbolic, and better conditions of professional stability in hiring processes – would have mitigated these challenges and achieved greater productivity and permanence of professionals in the project.

Finding 16. Overall, management performance improved in the last phase of the project. There were positive effects on efficiency, including a high level of professionalism and commitment on behalf of the technical personnel.

70. Despite the previously identified challenges, there is evidence of a positive evolution of overall performance. In fact, the MTR was the turning point. The adopted improvements include: the incorporation of a national coordinator; changes in each regional coordination unit to improve the effectiveness of progress and accountability based on management by results; and greater clarity in roles and reporting lines. These facilitated significant progress for the project in the final third of its implementation period. This progress addressed management processes, effective implementation and the ability to communicate results.

71. The evaluation recognizes the enormous effort made by members of the project management unit who have maintained a high level of professionalism and total dedication to the project's institutional and social commitments. This, despite all of the internal and external obstacles plus conditions of constant stress and work overload.

72. Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.4 Sustainability

Finding 17. The project's greatest legacy in terms of sustainability lies in its high level of inter-institutional coordination. Indeed, it has fostered the updating, prioritization and strengthening of conservation policies. Although the project's sustainability strategy was designed late and could have used more supporting elements, it activated several institutional and financial sustainability levers that should ensure the continuity of its positive effects and outputs.

73. In its design phase, the project did not propose an explicit sustainability strategy segmented by pillars and strategic stakeholders. This would have allowed for activities and pathways to be clearly located for their effective materialization. However, a sustainability strategy was formulated in September 2021. This made a significant contribution to anchoring the project's main results at the national and local levels.

74. The most important factor to ensure institutional sustainability and continuity of the project's positive impact is given by Chile's international commitments, the 2022–2026 government programme and the National Biodiversity Strategy. This also involves the mission of the main participating institutions: the Ministry of the Environment; CONAF; the Ministry of Agriculture (INDAP and SAG); the National Service of the Undersecretary of Tourism; the Ministry of National Assets; and the Ministry of Education. Also, if the proposed Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service is formally created, then the transfer of conservation powers to the Ministry of the Environment will be the best guarantee that biodiversity conservation will become a state policy. It will also facilitate a more balanced interaction with other policies such as urban planning, production, energy and agrifood.

75. Regarding regulatory and programmatic sustainability, the RECOGE plans and the inclusion of environmental criteria in PLADECO and PLADETUR will contribute to the sustainability of the processes promoted by the project – even though they are specific tools and linked to the effective commitment of the territorial stakeholders and the necessary resources to execute them. In addition, the project's emphasis on the creation of municipal ordinances constitutes its most notable contribution in terms of strengthening physical-territorial planning. This is because the ordinances have the capacity to determine land use and prioritize activities based on the real carrying capacity of ecosystems.

76. Regarding financial sustainability, the project participated in the formulation of seven proposals for financing processes and projects related to conservation through mechanisms such as the FNDR, the Regional Innovation for Competitiveness Funds and other sources for a total of more than USD 20.4 million. As of the presentation date for this report, projects representing 13 percent of this amount were approved and are in the process of execution. These are: the FNDR of the Biobío Region (to implement the regional policy); three Innovation for Regional Competitiveness Funds in the Ñuble Region; and one small project for co-existence chicken coops that has already been executed.

77. Finally, the capacities developed among state officials at all levels through trainings provided by the project have facilitated the institutionalization of conservation as a priority. This is at least linked to their time in office, which is important to ensure that the processes and implementation of management practices, procedures, strategies and programmes promoted by the project continue beyond 2022.

78. An unfavourable political scenario is the main factor that could jeopardize the sustainability of the project's positive effects. Certainly, the promising environmental and biodiversity conservation agenda that the current government has promoted, both in its political programme and in its proposal for a new constitution, could end up not having enough support for its effective implementation. This could result in a substantial reduction in the effective financial resources provided by the central government. There would be repercussions for the funds available at the territorial and regional levels, which would then affect conservation plans and strategies. It could also mean a new delay in approving a law to create the proposed Biodiversity and Protected Areas Service. This law would facilitate

the necessary connectivity between areas of the National System of Protected Areas, allowing the environmental authority to intervene in private areas that are adjacent to protected areas. Most of these are currently managed by their owners with their own financing and without a proper management plan.

Finding 18. The main lever for driving the sustainability of conservation efforts on pilot farms involves ongoing support from the following entities: INDAP; the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Economy (Undersecretary of Tourism). This is to be done through their respective plans and extension agents from SEREMI, as well as dialogues and intersectoral alliances with the Ministry of the Environment.

79. The pilot farm experiences that have the greatest future viability are those owned by families with high purchasing power. This demographic does not depend on farm activities as their main source of income. Manuals for the identification of good practices play an important role in this process. In addition, the training workshops organized by the project, as well as its technical manuals and guidelines, continue to provide effective support for families. Regarding the socioproductive sustainability of the intervention, an impact analysis is necessary at the pilot farm level given the lack of indicators in the project's logical framework. This is to determine, based on evidence, the level of improved income and general living conditions of the owners.

80. Likely (L).

3.5 Factors affecting performance

3.5.1. Quality of design

Finding 19. The intervention logic and selection of project components was coherent with the project's general objective. However, room for improvement was identified in terms of the formulation of goals and indicators.

81. The project was based on a clear intervention strategy that was coherent with its main objective. The result was a trio of key outcomes with corresponding impacts: a) awareness raising and education initiatives, which change the cultural perceptions that make social and institutional stakeholders more willing to address dynamics not traditionally prioritized in the territories; b) the development of good practices models, which influences the socioproductive practices of the territorial agents to modify land use patterns, techniques and technologies – even the type of activities carried out; and c) its impact on the creation of territorial management instruments which, in theory, can be used to generate the conditions for the effective transversal incorporation of conservation into a range of sectoral and territorial policies. This influences the development of a society and its planning and management matrix for territorial policies.

82. Although the intervention's vertical logic was fully coherent from a qualitative point of view, a quantitative analysis highlighted a lack of adequate harmonization between the objectives. This means that it was not possible to determine the direct quantitative impact of each component on the project's overall goal. Moreover, this prevents optimal quantitative analysis and monitoring of the intervention, which could have helped to identify which workflows should be enhanced (due to their positive effects on the goal) and which should be modified. Additionally, Component 2, which focused on promoting good practices to reduce threats to biodiversity, included activities and processes such as

the promotion of new protected areas. This should have been included under Component 3 considering its focus on territorial management.

83. Based on the analysis of the intervention's horizontal logic, the lack of a clearly defined baseline prevented the logic behind the formulation of various goals from being adequately explained. This resulted in a lack of specificity in many of them (S factor in the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound [SMART] criteria). Also, some goals lacked measurability (M factor in the SMART criteria) because the measurement systems were not available at the assessment date, nor were the data collection chains that would have allowed for rigorous monitoring and the determination of effective compliance.

84. The evaluation also found that, considering the intervention's duration and the effective financing and personnel involved, each of the three value added components of the intervention (except for Component 4 on support services) deserved the category of specific objective, rather than of result or component.

Finding 20. The lack of scientific consensus and solid baselines in the design phase made the conservation approach, based on the selection of emblematic species, less effective in terms of effective conservation.

85. With respect to the intervention's conservation goals (protected area and stabilized populations of threatened species), it should be noted that at the time of project formulation there was no scientific consensus on the assessments, baselines or the necessary biostatistical evidence to support the goal related to the stabilization of the population of certain species. Part of the reason is the difference in the estimated species population ranges and the fact that the techniques and monitoring systems implemented until 2017 for these species had only been able to measure the presence of individuals – not population sizes. The inconsistency and unreliability of the data meant that the project's main conservation goal lacked evidence, making the species-by-species approach unverifiable in practice. The lack of relevance of these "taxonomic" goals is also evident when results are presented in terms of recovered populations and activities are classified as good practices, even though their effective impact on the protection and recovery of target species is unknown.

86. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU).

3.5.2. Monitoring and evaluation system

Finding 21. The project concluded with the creation of an effective, integrated and responsive M&E system. This involved substantial input into results-based management and reports in the project's final stage. However, the late operationalization of this system entailed some challenges in terms of the detection, mitigation and management of difficulties faced by the project.

87. Although the project ended with an effective M&E system, its design and implementation were completed in a late phase of project execution following the MTR recommendations. This meant that the system was not operational during most of the project cycle and had important consequences. In fact, it the intervention lacked its main results-based management tool.

88. It is also underscored that the implementation of the MTR recommendations, including the consequent implementation of an effective M&E system, was decisive in several key aspects for overall project improvement. Although some aspects related to project identification

were left out (reformulation of goals, processes and activities, modifications in the configuration of the work teams), there was a positive evolution of the general M&E performance with improvements adopted in each regional coordination unit. This led to greater effectiveness of results-based management and reporting. As mentioned under efficiency, the project showed significant progress in the final third of its execution period in terms of its management processes and transparency, its effective execution and its ability to communicate results.

89. Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.5.3. Quality of implementation

Finding 22. FAO fulfilled its role as implementing agency. Indeed, it supported the identification and design phase and supervised the project. In the project's first phase, however, there were conditions that made it difficult to fully exercise its role.

90. FAO fulfilled its role as implementing agency. It provided support in the project identification and design phase, in the preparation of the concept note, and in the approval, launch, supervision and evaluation of the project. This was done according to the guidelines of the FAO-GEF agreements. The Lead Technical Officer played a very important, initial role in supporting the project's coordination, while support was also provided by a specialist in Indigenous Peoples' issues and FAO technical teams, among others.

91. Room for improvement was observed with respect to the guidance and support provided by FAO in some stages of the project. This was largely due to the change in the Lead Technical Officer and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as general management aspects and specific methodologies that required specialized knowledge throughout execution. For example, the project would have benefited from a permanent general consultant on biodiversity conservation to help guide and supervise efforts to generate good practices. In terms of Indigenous Peoples, the FAO expert made a significant yet limited contribution during the FPIC processes. It is also important to point out that, after the change in the Lead Technical Officer, the role of the main technical consultant and that of FAO Chile through the GEF Sectoral Coordinator were key in providing support to the project.

92. An adequate analysis and anticipation of the risks faced by the project was never fully achieved. This was partly due to shortcomings in project planning (see Section 3.5.1 Quality of design), even though it incorporated innovative approaches and practices from inception. This included the questioning of productive practices and traditional ways of life, activities and consumption. Indeed, such aspects would have foreseeably generated resistance and friction with local institutions and cultures. In this regard, a multidimensional analysis from the beginning would have made it possible to establish a specific intervention strategy for each territory to be implemented in well-differentiated phases. This would have laid the foundation for the incorporation of a conservation approach adapted to the rhythms of social change, different cultural contexts and the resilience of productive agents. Moreover, this strategic perspective would have required the ongoing support of FAO specialists, at least during the first year of intervention in matters related to: 1) conservation; 2) ethnic-differential and intercultural approaches; 3) gender; 4) political-regulatory impact in terms of environmental issues; and 5) the use of technologies for communication, conservation, training and physical-territorial planning.

93. Although the general accounts were managed by the FAO Chile accounting office, the project did not have a financial monitoring system to report on the outcomes and outputs

of the project. The M&E tool was implemented in August 2021, but earlier implementation of this tool would have facilitated adequate technical and financial monitoring.

94. Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.5.4. Quality of execution

Finding 23. FAO, in its role as executing agency, and the Ministry of the Environment, in its role as main co-executing partner, satisfactorily performed their day-to-day project management duties. They ensured the appropriate use of funds and oversaw the acquisition of goods and services as required by the project. However, two different phases were identified that showed substantial improvements in their management performance.

95. The project went through two different management phases: the first (from 2017 to 2020) was characterized by the installation of technical teams in the territory and by the primary rollout of the inter-institutional consultation both at the national and regional levels; and the second phase (from 2021 to 2022) that prioritized effectiveness through results-based management and the generation of significant outputs that could also be communicated to demonstrate the progress made. During the first phase, the technical and management team, based at the project's national headquarters in the Ministry of the Environment in Santiago, worked closely with fluid communication among the macrozonal coordination units. However, there was an operational disconnect among the regional coordination units and between their actions and the project document goals. In the second phase of the project cycle and with the introduction of a national coordinator following the MTR recommendations, the planning and monitoring processes to measure the contribution of the outputs to the project goals substantially improved. In addition, work began on the elements of institutionalization and sustainability, as well as the systematization of good practices and the communication of project management milestones. However, at this stage, difficulties arose within the team that reduced communication and made it difficult to manage a two-sided intervention (in the northern macrozone and southern macrozone). As a result, the project could not fully take advantage of the complementarities, synergies and potential economies of scale generated by the actions in the two macrozones. Despite this situation, the project achieved its highest level of performance in the second stage.

96. In addition, there were delays in the operationalization of the decisions adopted on the steering committees. This can be attributed to a certain disconnect between project leadership and the operational teams, which created difficulties for the project in terms of management. Also, communication channels could have been faster and used in a more timely manner. For example, alerts about institutional roadblocks (especially in the northern macrozone and relationship difficulties between institutions and the project) and social problems (specifically in the southern macrozone with respect to Indigenous communities) that were not communicated through the most effective channels, could have been dealt with in earlier stages. Finally, the coordination between the steering committee and the regional technical committees could have been more effective in practice, and the national operational committee introduced in the last year of the project did not fully close the gap between the decision-making and operational levels.

97. Another aspect that created difficulties for project management was the rotation in positions of responsibility.[2] Although the steering committee managed to meet annually to address the main aspects related to the metasupervision of the project, its role in the timely correction of problems that had hindered the intervention could have been more effective.

98. Last, room for improvement is identified, especially in the initial phase with respect to the definition and clarity of the powers and responsibilities of each management and technical position. However, a substantial improvement in this aspect was observed in the period from 2021 to 2022.

99. Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.5.5. Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing

Finding 24. Of the total commitments by the financing partners, the amount received was equivalent to 82 percent. The deficit of resources was covered through additional investments by FAO and CONAF.

[2] The FAO team related to the project experienced a series of personnel changes during its implementation, including the positions of Lead Technical Officer, Funding Liaison Officer and the GEF Sectoral Coordinator. For its part, the Ministry of the Environment also changed the National Directorate of the project.

Table 6. Co-financing of the project

SOURCES	ENTITY	TYPE	Amount committed in project document (USD)	Amount effectively disbursed as of 30 June 2022 (USD)	Proportion of the commitment effectively invested (%)	Average compliance with total investment by financing group (%)	Compliance with monetary resources by group in relation to total monetary resources committed (%)
National government	Ministry of the Environment	Cash	358 070	72 952	20.4	66.6	20.7
		In-kind	1 282 851	158 852	12.4		
	CONAF	In-kind	1 623 447	4 423 600	272.5		
	SAG	Cash	30 000	7 359	24.5		
		In-kind	170 319	7 103	4.2		
NGO	Aumen	Cash	61 400	4 533	7.4	22.6	0.11
		In-kind	160 000	2 200	1.4		
	Keule	Cash	3 000	3 000	100.0		
		In-kind	25 000	0	0.0		
	Ética Los Bosques	Cash	24 000	5 000	20.8		
		In-kind	277 000	4 315	1.6		
	Ayes Chile	Cash	1 047 636	0	0.0		
		In-kind	403 636	200 000	49.5		
Private companies	Forestal Arauco	In-kind	397 242	99 800	25.1	13.1	No cash commitment
	Pioneer	In-kind	416 010	5 200	1.2		
	Anpros, Syngenta	Cash	NEW	11 354	New		
GEF	FAO	Cash	31 000	30 000	96.8	115	96.8
		In-kind	300 000	400 000	133,3		
TOTAL			6 610 611	5 435 268	**82.2**	**65.4**	**7.9**

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team based on the project's financial documents.

100. The financial resources committed by FAO were sufficient to execute the activities and achieve the outputs committed in the project document with a high level of quality. Also, of the total amount committed by the financing partners (cash and in-kind), 82 percent was received by the project, and the deficit was covered by overinvestments made by CONAF and FAO with respect to the amounts initially committed.

101. However, as shown in the last column of Table 6 regarding compliance with the monetary resources committed by the partners, these contributions were low with only 8 percent of the amount received. The causes could not be clearly defined based on the documentation reviewed. It is possible, however, to point out that the primary factor was likely determined by the effects of the global health crisis caused by COVID-19 on the country's economy and the consequent reallocation of budget items based on emerging priorities. Also, a lack of capacity was observed to identify, systematize and report the contributions actually made by the institutions at the central level but mainly in terms of territorial

implementation. At the internal level, it is evident that no steering committee meeting included this problem on the agenda, preventing its monitoring and control.

102. Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.5.6. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Finding 25. The diversity of institutional and academic stakeholders that participated in the intervention was a crucial factor. In fact, this ensured the project's most important result – its ability to promote multistakeholder coordination for the development of environmentally relevant processes.

103. The project was designed with a high level of participation of stakeholders from the Chilean public administration, academia, NGOs and companies operating in the intervention areas. This multistakeholder cooperation was decisive in prioritizing the conservation issue and, at the same time, promoting synergies among different sectors, some of which had never incorporated environmental issues into their work processes. In this regard, FAO also harnessed its experience in the management of decision-making groups at the national level, including conducting processes and implementing multistakeholder projects.

104. As mentioned under relevance (see Section 4.1), the evaluation team identified a limitation regarding the participation of interested parties. This involves the lack of a strategic stakeholder mapping to establish the effective contributions of each partner. This would have clearly defined their competencies and added value, delineating feasible goals. The most notable case is that of INDAP, an institution that was initially under-represented both in terms of its potential contributions and from the perspective of the financial and institutional sustainability of the project. During project execution, however, its involvement grew as the project evolved and the effective importance of this stakeholder in the intervention territories was confirmed.

105. The project – without specific actions in the project document and in a context of historical complexity regarding the territorial dynamics of the southern macrozone – was proactive in promoting biodiversity conservation with the private sector. However, some associations with private companies had negative implications for the implementation of activities at the territorial level, especially in the framework of activities focused on conservation near the Nahuelbuta National Park in the Araucanía Region. Although it is recognized that work at the territorial level must consider private companies since they are part of the dynamics of the territory, it is also important to assess how this work is promoted in order to maximize the benefits of partnerships with private companies and minimize their negative impact on the intervention activities.

Finding 26. The project was successful in integrating the main entities related to territorial policies in border areas and those concerned with environmental conservation. The steering committee and species working groups functioned both at the decision-making level and at the scientific-technical level on the basis of public consultation.

106. The operation of the project's steering committee involved a complex inter-institutional agreement process due to the number of stakeholders and their diversity of competencies. The inter-institutional coordination facilitated by the project was clearly shown by the systematization of the monitoring of the four threatened species due to collaboration among academia, the administration and research centres, and specialized NGOs. In addition, coordination in the development of good forestry and agriculture practices

facilitated the agreement signed between INDAP and the Ministry of the Environment, and the agreements signed with the municipalities of the Arica y Parinacota Region for the development of the PLADECO and PLADETUR. This established specific work areas, integrating good tourism practices with an environmental perspective. Another result of this coordination was the inter-institutional agreement in developing the network of microreserves (SEREMI of the Ministry of the Environment, CONAF and SEREMI of the Ministry of National Assets). Finally, the links established among this project, the GEF Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems project, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment made it possible to optimize its development, specifically its impact on the training and sensitization of public officials.

107. Satisfactory (S).

3.5.7. Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products

Finding 27. An exceptional effort was made towards the generation of practical scientific-technical knowledge derived from the development of monitoring methodologies and recovery plans. This was optimized during project implementation, especially in terms of the flow of external feedback, and represents a potential that must be exploited to ensure the continuity of the project's impacts. However, the lack of an explicit communications strategy from the beginning and the limited resources allocated to this area reduced its effectiveness.

108. The project and its processes represented a valuable opportunity to mobilize, systematize and institutionalize knowledge in terms of biodiversity conservation. In this regard, the methodology used, especially in the southern macrozone, could be seen as the most important achievement of the intervention's management. This process was mainly based on: a) collecting and systematizing specialized scientific-technical knowledge about conservation approaches and techniques in each committee and work group by species; b) working together, from a multidisciplinary perspective, on innovative methodologies to involve the best experts available; c) institutionalizing these practices through coordinated work with technicians from public agencies; and d) generating a series of secondary dissemination, and awareness and training materials, based on the specialized technical inputs, to share this knowledge and make it available to society.

109. The project did not have a general communications strategy from its inception, nor did it have an explicit plan linked to its objectives by target audience. This presented a structural challenge since the project proposed a transformation of sociocultural perceptions towards understanding, integration and the valorization of biodiversity conservation beyond its explicit goals. Communications, as a function of the project, was only addressed in the project document at the level of project activities (in terms of dissemination) and not from its consideration as a key strategic tool for a project that is more focused on raising awareness than on generating concrete impact. The following aspects may partially account for this problem. First, communication was located solely and exclusively under the umbrella of Component 1 and not as a transversal function of the entire intervention. Second, there was not enough staff to cover this function, especially considering the geographic dispersion of the intervention and its institutional, thematic and financial importance. Third, as a cause of the aforementioned factors and with regard to budget allocation, the total investment made in communication barely reached 3 percent of the funds allocated to the project.

110. In terms of communications management, at first, the project's communication activities were left entirely to the discretion of the regional coordination units. After the first year of execution, the project steering committee proposed to cover the communications weakness by hiring a consulting agency. This agency was given the task of positioning the project, its activities, outputs and achievements in the media, with special emphasis on conventional media (radio, press, television). This goal was fully achieved, and among the products commissioned was the elaboration of a communications strategy for the project. Although the outsourcing of communications benefited from the consultant's extensive experience, it could not give the project's communications criteria sufficient importance to effectively serve as an input for decision-making. Instead, it was treated based on the logic of a report on the outputs produced.

111. Difficulties from FAO's internal processes were also identified. For example, the necessary approval processes for communications products by the FAO Office of Communications at headquarters considerably delayed the publication of these materials and, consequently, their relevance. FAO also prohibited the use of the project's own social networks for sharing updated information and starting a conversation at the sociocommunity level, especially among young audiences. This proved to be another limitation.

112. Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.6 Cross-cutting issues

3.6.1. Gender

Finding 28. The project document had established the inclusion of a gender approach in different components and outputs but did not contemplate a specific plan to reduce gender gaps or measures to promote compliance with FAO gender policy standards (FAO, 2013b). However, there were specific actions to ensure the participation of women in project activities.

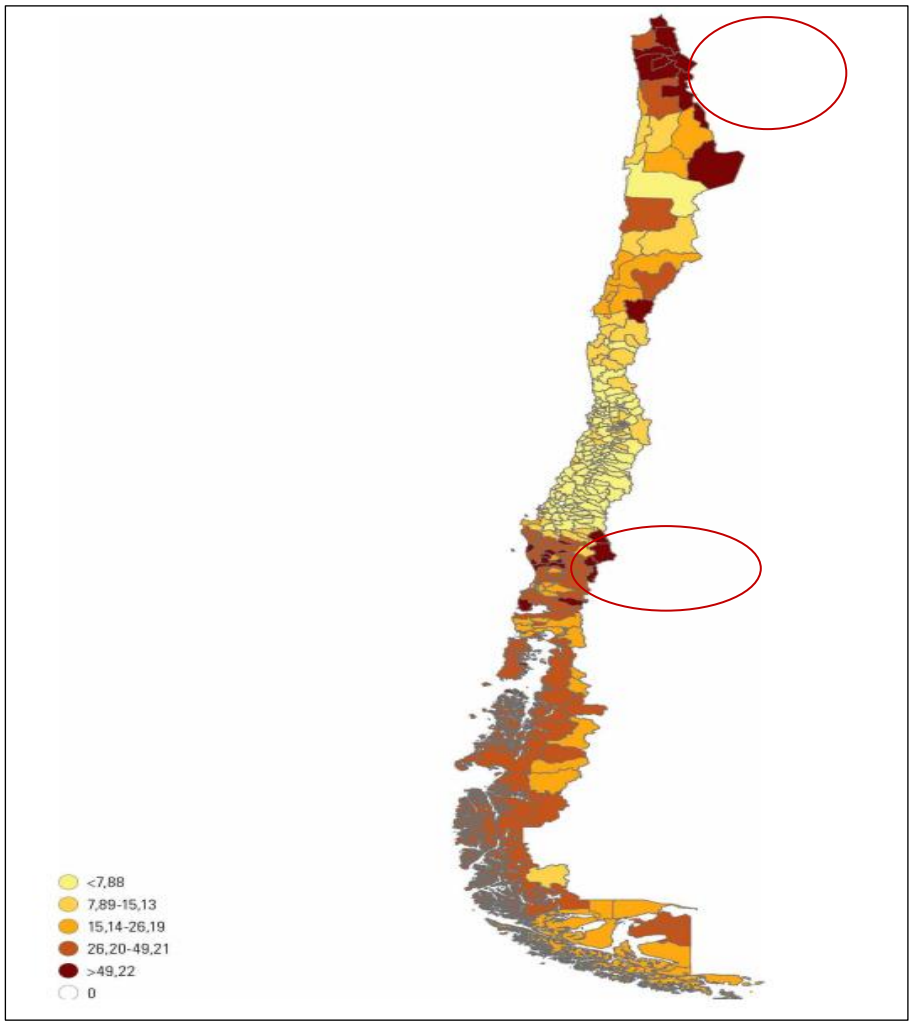
113. The project worked with women landowners in both the northern and southern macrozones. It benefitted from the division of labour in the intervention zones that place women in an active role in working the land. Indeed, this guaranteed high levels of women's participation in many intervention activities. The project also collected data disaggregated by sex to monitor the participation of women and ensure a level of parity in access to activities.

114. However, the lack of a specific plan aimed at reducing gender gaps inevitably limited the project's possibilities to fully comply with the standards established by FAO's gender policy to achieve its equality objectives.

115. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU).

3.6.2. Indigenous Peoples

Figure 6. Project intervention zones and current Indigenous population in the districts of Chile



Note: This map was modified by the evaluation team to indicate the project's intervention sites.

Source: ECLAC & FILAC, 2017 (Map 2). Map conforms to UN. 2010. *Map of Chile.* https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/chile.

Finding 29. During implementation, the project sought – alongside the FAO regional expert on Indigenous Peoples – to correct the design deficit regarding integration of the ethnic-differential approach. The project complied with the FPIC procedure according to the required guidelines.

116. The project was classified as having a moderate level of risk in the approval phase. This was due to its implementation in areas with Indigenous populations. Indeed, it indicates an awareness of a relevant presence of Indigenous Peoples in the intervention areas. However, the design of the project's components and activities did not include a holistic approach to indigenous worldviews, the unique food and agricultural practices of Indigenous communities, their life strategies and their specific sociocultural circumstances. The project could have benefited from these aspects in terms of possible contributions to models and human development practices.

117. The evaluation recognizes that, during project implementation – especially in the southern macrozone – an attempt was made to correct design shortcomings when it came to

integrating the ethnic-differential approach. This, among other aspects, was due to the intervention of the regional FAO expert on Indigenous Peoples. The project signed the FPIC agreements in the northern macrozone with the Azapa, Codpa, Taltape and Chaca Indigenous communities, and in the southern macrozone with the Caramávida, Cayucupil, Las Veguillas and Antuco communities – but not with the Las Guardias de San Fabián community. Most of these agreements were signed in 2018, except for the one in Cayucupil with the Mapuche Corporation of Nahuelbuta. This was signed on 25 July 2019, two years after the start of the intervention. The FPIC process for the Declaration of the Nahuelbuta Biosphere Reserve, which was expected to be one of the project's most important milestones, was interrupted after the first stages in the process. This was due to the fact that social conflict in the area, as acknowledged by the communities themselves, did not facilitate an advancement in the process. According to the team from the southern macrozone, "the necessary conditions for a participatory and inclusive process, in accordance with the FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and Convention 169, did not exist" (FAO, 2022). This relates to pre-existing socioenvironmental conflict between local communities and some private sector companies in the territory that are external to the project.

118. Satisfactory (S).

3.6.3. Environmental and social safeguards

Finding 30. Regarding environmental safeguards, the project activities guaranteed respect for local ways of life and ecological balances. Due to the presence of Indigenous Peoples in the intervention areas, the project's moderate environmental and social risk classification is considered adequate.

119. Regarding the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (GEF, 2011a) for GEF partner agencies, the assessment did not find any actions with environmental harm directly linked to any of the project activities – whether directly executed by the technical staff or by its institutional, social or private sector partners.

120. FAO conducted an environmental and social risk assessment during the project's approval phase. The Organization classified the project as moderate risk. This was mainly due to the presence of Indigenous communities near the project intervention areas. Specifically, the main risks identified in the consultation phases were related to inter-institutional coordination and the private sector's continued involvement in sustainable productive activities. The evaluation considers this classification to be adequate.

121. Satisfactory (S).

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance: the project contributed to the priorities identified in the FAO strategic frameworks, globally and at the country level, as well as the GEF priorities. The project was aligned with the international commitments signed by Chile on environmental matters and with the national legislation and institutional missions of the co-executing partners. In terms of the environment, it sought to address one of the most pressing problems facing the country, which is the accelerated deterioration of terrestrial ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity. The project was consistent with the needs of the beneficiaries but could have responded more effectively to territorial needs with better consultation in the design phase.

Conclusion 2. Effectiveness: the project not only managed to incorporate the importance of conservation on the agendas of the institutional stakeholders associated with the intervention but also established a modus operandi for their cooperation with interest groups dedicated to conservation. This has impacted the institutional memory of the participating partners and constitutes an important precedent for future interventions.

Conclusion 3. Efficiency: highly satisfactory levels of budget execution were present upon project closure. This corresponds to the high level of achievement of results and product goals, implying that the resources were used efficiently.

122. In terms of resource management, the project would have benefited from a more extensive technical-operational structure to cover the large areas of intervention, as well as incentives and good practices for human talent. In addition, changes implemented in the project's last phase brought improvements to the management processes with positive contributions to the general efficiency of the intervention.

Conclusion 4. Sustainability: despite not having had a sustainability strategy until late in the implementation stage, both institutional and financial levers were in place by project closure. These increase the likelihood of sustaining its positive effects. In addition, the project generated important contributions within all of its components. Their full potential could be realized during the new administration in terms of continuing education and training efforts. This also involved matters related to the scalability and replicability of good forestry, agricultural and tourism practices. In fact, these were systematized as an output during the intervention.

Conclusion 5. Factors affecting performance: regarding design quality, the project's intervention strategy was consistent with its objective. However, the structure of the indicators was confusing in that the process indicators were mixed with outcome and impact indicators. Moreover, several of them did not fully meet the SMART criteria. Also, its main goals (those related to conservation) were not sufficiently grounded in evidence and were overestimated. Despite being an intervention on the "development frontier", the socioproductive goals received less attention than the conservation goals.

123. The M&E system suffered an excessive delay in its design and implementation. This limited the possibility of identifying failures in the first half of its life cycle and applying corrective measures until after the MTR. It is recognized, however, that the important effort made to develop this system in the third year of project implementation allowed the project to close with satisfactory results and means of verification.

124. In terms of implementation quality, FAO fulfilled its role as implementing agency. The Organization supported the identification and design phase and supervised the project. However, conditions during the project's first phase made it difficult to fully execute this role. Greater technical support, the timely analysis of potential risks in the design phase and a monitoring system for technical execution linked to financial execution upon project launch would have contributed positively to the quality of implementation.

125. In terms of the quality of execution, FAO, in its role as implementing and executing agency, and the Ministry of the Environment, in its role as main co-executing agency, satisfactorily performed their day-to-day management functions for the project. They ensured an appropriate use of funds and supported the purchases and acquisitions of goods and services as required by the project. Two different phases were identified in their management that showed substantial improvements.

126. The project had a high level of participation among key stakeholders, institutions and experts. These actors were positively managed while defining relevant environmental processes in the territory. However, the design phase lacked a strategic mapping of stakeholders. This action would have provided the intervention with a more strategic perspective.

127. On communications and knowledge management, the project generated an important range of training and informative materials and products, as well as efforts to systematize good forestry, agricultural and tourism practices. Their potential use has yet to be fully realized. Although there was not an explicit communications strategy, the project achieved effective visibility in institutional terms but lacked awareness raising for general dissemination.

Conclusion 6. Cross-cutting issues: for gender equality and Indigenous Peoples, the ethnic-differential and gender approaches were not fully covered during project formulation. This led to inevitable repercussions for its effective implementation. Despite these design challenges, efforts were made during implementation to develop the FPIC processes. The FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean provided technical support to achieve better results.

128. Regarding environmental and social safeguards, the project's activities had no negative impacts. The assessment considers the appropriate project risk classification.

4.2. Recommendations

129. To the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, FAO Chile and the Ministry of the Environment on the identification and development of interventions, knowledge management and communications, financial execution and co-financing (Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Recommendation 1. In the future, similar GEF and FAO interventions should develop a comprehensive transdisciplinary and participatory assessment as part of the research and prior consultation process. Based on a mapping of structural elements of the territory (synergies, conflicts, dynamics that could affect the intervention), this would incorporate the largest possible number of variables and allow for a correct analysis of stakeholders, processes and risks.

130. Suggestions are as follows:

i. Before the effective start of the project, ensure the availability of a space (or make effective use of existing spaces, such as the project launch workshop) to review the

intervention's design, feasibility and political-institutional relevance, logical framework, theory of change, goals and indicators.

ii. The intervention should harness FAO's knowledge and experience when it comes to geographic information tools and technologies. Such tools can be part of the project from the beginning of its life cycle – especially ones that have a territorial impact and face complex multifactorial dynamics with multiple stakeholders.

Recommendation 2. In the future, similar FAO-GEF interventions should develop a communications strategy with annual and even quarterly plans while ensuring their alignment with FAO corporate standards. Incorporate insights from not only the specialized scientific sector but also local communities and the traditional ecological knowledge from Indigenous Peoples.

131. Suggestions:

i. Include a basic outline of the communications strategy in the formulation of the project document. Have sufficient resources (human, financial, material) to implement its planned activities throughout the project.

ii. Ensure greater effectiveness of the communications strategy. Start with an analysis of the target audience and adequately segment communication channels by media, language level, format, periodicity and specific indicators for each target group.

Recommendation 3. For similar FAO-GEF interventions in the future, the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit should support FAO Chile in reaching agreements with the resource partners, negotiating co-financing agreements, providing suitable tools to promote the materialization of co-financing and monitoring the contribution of the partners in a more transparent way. This will benefit all of the parties involved.

Recommendation 4. In the future, similar FAO-GEF interventions should ensure that the initial commitments include the institutionalization and sustainability of the processes supported by the intervention. This should be discussed in the assessment phase and form part of the project development and its day-to-day management.

132. Suggestion is as follows:

i. Develop a strategy to ensure the sustainability of results from the early phases of project execution.

133. To FAO and the Ministry of the Environment on the integration of different disciplines, knowledge and approaches to conservation (Recommendations 5 and 6)

Recommendation 5. For future interventions, integrate sectoral and thematic specialists (socioanthropological, biodiversity conservation, gender, Indigenous Peoples, geographic information technologies) not only in the design phase but also during execution. This ensures a more inclusive view of disciplines and knowledge in order to enhance the intervention strategy and the scope and variety of activities – bolstering project impact.

134. Suggestion is as follows:

i. It would be beneficial if these specialists could also monitor the interventions, especially during the first year, to support the technical teams in the implementation and legitimization phase. This should be formalized through a plan with activities to both train team personnel and provide technical support.

Recommendation 6. For future projects, consider broadening the conservation approach based on emblematic species. Complement it with large-scale approaches that are closer to the ecosystem.

135. Suggestions are as follows:

i. Consider lessons learned on integrated conservation approaches that have been used in similar projects, such as the hydrographic basin and ecological planning. This aims to adopt the optimal combination of conservation approaches from the beginning of the project.

ii. Conduct knowledge exchanges with technicians who have participated in other projects with complementary approaches. This aims to outline common methodologies, promote the exchange of good practices and gradually develop a joint strategy that establishes a methodology for optimization.

136. To FAO and the Ministry of the Environment on cross-cutting issues (Recommendations 7 and 8)

Recommendation 7. Future interventions should incorporate a specific plan to reduce the gender gap and comply with the standards established by FAO and the GEF in their gender equality policies and guidelines. This aims to achieve their gender equality and empowerment objectives.

137. Suggestion is as follows:

i. Consider the development of this plan as part of the goals and activities of the logical framework and the theory of change. It should ensure sufficient resources, both in financial and management terms, to effectively contribute to reducing the gender gap at all levels (institutional and social).

Recommendation 8. Future interventions in contexts with a significant presence of Indigenous Peoples should incorporate an intercultural plan to ensure the application of an ethnic-differential approach. It should also utilize their ancestral knowledge to promote biodiversity conservation.

5. Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1. Even though a project's objectives may be aimed at environmental conservation, the interventions should prioritize producers and communities through direct support for strategies, plans, solutions and good practices that combine the development expectations of the population with the shock absorption and regenerative capacity of the biosphere. In this regard, the impact on regulatory frameworks and public policy planning must be sustained and expanded, but always to the same extent as territorial cohesion, equal opportunities and productive economic development policies.

Lesson learned 2. Regarding the potential risks that working with the private sector entails for FAO and its partners, it is important to take the necessary measures to identify private companies with which to collaborate – considering the territorial context – to ensure that they do not have negative impacts on the development of activities in the territory.

Lesson learned 3. The project would have benefited from the involvement of or regular communication with other strategic stakeholders – for example, under the structure of a strategic committee – in order to expand the impact and scalability of the project. More specifically:

i. the United Nations Environment Programme in its role as an observer, both due to the natural competencies of this body and from the perspective of improving the effectiveness of multilateral aid;

ii. at the national level, the Council of Ministers for Sustainability, the National Committee for Protected Areas, the National Corporation for Indigenous Development, the National Committee for Biodiversity, the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research, the Chilean Wood Corporation and the Communication, Education and Public Awareness Programme on Biodiversity;

iii. at the regional level, the Regional Biodiversity Committees as the territorial units of the National Biodiversity Committee; and

iv. since mining activity also directly affects one of the four target species (queule) and potentially all of the species in its future development, the Ministry of Mining could have been more involved – at least in the workshops and courses for awareness raising and the training of officials.

Lesson learned 4. The practices formulated and implemented during the project must be given sufficient time to be consolidated before being considered good practices and moving forward with their extension and replication. In the case of the good tourism practices promoted by the project, it is necessary that they meet the validation criteria proposed in the manual that was formulated within the project's framework before thinking about their eventual systematization and replication.

Lesson learned 5. The project produced an important amount of information, protocols, and training and dissemination materials for different target audiences and a series of good practices that can be used far beyond the project's limited scope. For this reason, it is essential that other projects in development have access to those materials and processes generated by this intervention.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Abello	Ximena		INDAP Municipality of Curanilahue
Águila	César	Good Practices	Municipality of Cobquecura
Álvarez Trigo	Manuel	Professional Support	INDAP Arica y Parinacota
Andrade	Victoria	Communications Officer	FAO
Anjari	Juan	Former National Project Coordinator	FAO
Arellano	Diego	SEREMI	SEREMI Arica y Parinacota
Arellano	Fernanda	Southern Macrozone Coordination Assistant	FAO
Arévalo	Paula	Former Regional Coordinator	FAO
Azua	Pablo Octavio	Former Keule Extensionist	FAO
Ballesteros	Cecilia	Indigenous Peoples Specialist	FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Becker	María Esther	Beneficiary	Pilot farm owner
Belmonte	Eliana	Professor, Faculty of Sciences	University of Tarapacá
Belmonte	Eliana	Professor, Environmental Sciences	University of Tarapacá
Bertín	Ariana	Professor, Queule Subcommittee	University of Concepción
Beyzaga	Fresia	Pilot Project for Good Agricultural Practices	Arica y Parinacota good practices beneficiary
Bordeau	Alberto	Head, Department of Wilderness Protected Areas, Biobío Region	CONAF
Briones	Raúl	BIOFOREST Researcher	Forestal Arauco
Campos Aguirre	Lorenzo	Funding Liaison Officer	FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Carrasco	Patricia	Regional Project Counterpart	SEREMI Biobío
Coper Jacques	Andrés	Southern Macrozone Coordination Assistant, Darwin's Fox Extensionist	FAO
Cornejo	Cristian	Head, Natural Resources and Biodiversity	SEREMI Biobío
Corti	Paulo	Expert	Austral University
Crowley	Eve	FAO Representative	FAO Chile
Cuevas	Ricardo	Municipal Counterpart	Municipality of Tome
Demarchi	Gladis	MTR Consultant	Independent
Díaz	Sandra	Former National Project Director	Ministry of the Environment
Enzunza	Victoria	Queule Pilot Project	Infrastructure beneficiary
Escalona	Hector	Queule Pilot Project	Infrastructure beneficiary
Esquivel	Ignacio	Municipality of Arica	Municipality of Arica
Estades	Cristian	Expert	University of Chile
Fernandez	Fernando	Chitita School Teacher	Chitita school
Flores	Edgardo		Nahuelbuta Natural Foundation

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Galindo	Ivan	Beneficiary	Pilot farm owner
Hernández Guzmán	Marta	Head, Biodiversity	SEREMI Araucanía
Hinojosa	Ana		CONAF Ñuble
Jarschel	Bárbara	Lead Technical Consultant	FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Jelves	Marcelo	Deputy Regional Director, Bíobío Region	INDAP
Jiménez	María Cecilia	Responsible, Programme for the Recovery of Environmental Services of the Ecosystems, Arauco Province	SEREMI Biobío
Laban	Nicolás	Quele Infrastructure Pilot	Costa Sur NGO
Lara	Fabiola	Biobío Regional Coordinator	INDAP
Leyton	María Eugenia	Good Agricultural Practices Pilot Project Beneficiary	Owner of Arica y Parinacota property
Leyton	Nancy	Good Agricultural Practices Pilot Project Beneficiary	Owner of Arica y Parinacota property
López	Rodrigo		Aumen NGO
Macaya	Jessika	Educator, Kindergarten	Kindergarten Rayito de Sol
Mamani	Margarita	President Junta de vecinos (JJVV) [neighbourhood association] Chaca	Farmer trained in good agricultural practices, Arica y Parinacota
Manuschevich	Daniela	Head, Natural Resources and Biodiversity Division	Ministry of the Environment
Mazzini	Lelia	Regional Director	National Tourism Service, Arica y Parinacota
Mellado	Valeria	Ñuble Regional Counterpart	INDAP Ñuble
Mery	Joel	Professional	Picaflor de Arica Natural Monument, CONAF
Monroy	Tamara	Northern Macrozone Coordination Assistant	FAO
Moreira	Darío	Expert	University of Chile
Morera	Rodrigo	GEF Sectoral Coordinator	FAO
Moure	Maya	MTR Consultant	Independent
Muñoz	Cristian	Municipal Counterpart	Municipality of Tome
Muñoz	Darío	Keule Subcommittee Member	Catholic University of the Maule
Ortiz	Hivy	Programme Officer	FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Parra	Mauricio	Head, Corporate Affairs	Compañía Manufacturera de Papeles y Cartones [Paper and Cardboard Manufacturing Company]
Pimentel	Matias	Infrastructure Pilot Project Beneficiary	Infrastructure beneficiary
Reicher	Oscar	Regional Secretary of the Environment, Bíobio Region	SEREMI Biobío

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Rivas	Mario	SEREMI Ñuble Coordinator	SEREMI Ñuble
Rivera	Francisco	Good Tourism Practices Pilot Project Beneficiary	Beneficiary of good tourism practices, Arica y Parinacota
Rocha	Diana		INDAP, Municipality of Curanilahue
Rodríguez	Francisco Javier	Conservation Manager	Compañía Manufacturera de Papeles y Cartones [Paper and Cardboard Manufacturing Company]
Saavedra	José	Director	Los Huemules Association
Sáez	Andrea	Assistant to the FAO Representative (in charge of the budget)	FAO Chile
Salas	Rocío	Project Team Consultant	FAO
San Martín	Pablo	Counterpart	Ñuble regional government
Sánchez	Pamela	Professor and Member of the Darwin's Fox Subcommittee	Catholic University of Temuco
Schulbe	Christopher	Professional, Division of Natural Resources and Biodiversity, Arica y Parinacota	SEREMI Arica y Parinacota
Sepúlveda	Christopher	Head, Department of Protected Wilderness Areas, Ñuble	CONAF
Silva	Jorge	Infrastructure Pilot Project Beneficiary, Rancho Grande	Infrastructure beneficiary
Stutzin	Miguel	GEF Focal Point in Chile	Ministry of the Environment
Tala	Charif	National Project Director	Ministry of the Environment
Urrea	Jorge	Head, Department of Territorial Planning	Biobío Regional Government
Urrutia	Natalia	Consultant Responsible for the Arica y Parinacota Environmental Education Programme	FAO
Valdebenito	Mariela	Head of Development, INDAP Arica y Parinacota	INDAP
Valdés	Manuel		Dosel NGO
Verdugo	Elcira	Treasurer	Observadores de Aves [Bird Watchers]

Appendix 2. GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/subcriteria	Rating[i]	Summary of comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	The project was generally relevant. It aligned with the FAO-GEF strategic priorities and national priorities.
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project aligned with the FAO-GEF strategic priorities.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	MS	The project aligned with national priorities on conservation issues. Although a greater inclusion of producer groups in consultations held during project design would have ensured greater alignment with territorial needs, the project responded adequately to beneficiary needs.
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MS	The project was coherent with other interventions in Chile. However, greater coordination and exchange of information with other projects in terms of conservation approaches would have ensured a greater impact in this regard.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	The results contributed to incorporating conservation criteria for the four species in the management of territories on the "development frontier."
B1.1. Delivery of project outputs	S	The project closed its execution with a positive balance of verifiable results.
B1.2. Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	MS	The project met the planned objectives. However, it was not possible to achieve habitat recovery or measure the recovery of populations attributable to it within the project's time frame of action.
B1.3. Likelihood of impact	L	Good forestry, agricultural and tourism practices were adopted by the producers. Also, conservation criteria were adequately incorporated into public policy instruments and municipal frameworks, laying the foundations for the desired effects to be produced.
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MS	The project would have benefited from having a larger field team and better human talent management practices.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Despite not having developed a sustainability strategy in the design phase, the project managed to activate several sustainability levers. However, there are some risks that could materialize in the future.
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	The project left several financing proposals in the approval process upon closure, ensuring the financial sustainability of its impacts.
D1.2. Sociopolitical risks	MU	A possible risk is that the environmental agenda of the current government does not have sufficient support for its implementation.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Some of the sustainability instruments promoted by the project are conditional on the commitment of the territorial stakeholders and the resources necessary to execute them.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	No environmental risks were identified.

GEF criteria/subcriteria	Rating[i]	Summary of comments
D2. Catalysis and replication	L	It is considered that the political-institutional conditions exist (a favourable environment) for the replication and scalability of the project.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MU	There is room for improvement in the formulation of goals and indicators.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	The introduction of a national coordinator translated into improvements in project execution. However, relationship difficulties arose within the team at this stage, diminishing communication.
E2.1. Quality of project implementation by FAO (Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer, Project Task Force, etc.)	MS	There is room for improvement with respect to technical support provided by FAO and the analysis and identification of risks.
E2.2. Project oversight (project steering committee, project working group, etc.)	MS	A disconnect between management and the operational team was detected. This resulted in delays in the operationalization of decisions adopted by the management committees.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MS	Compliance with the total commitments made by the partners (cash and in-kind) reached 82 percent. However, compliance with monetary commitments was only 8 percent.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	Despite not having developed a strategic mapping of stakeholders in the design phase, the project achieved high participation of stakeholders with effective coordination.
E6. Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	Despite efforts made in the generation of technical-scientific knowledge, the implementation of a communications strategy from the beginning of the project, with adequate resources allocated to this area, would have increased its effects.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	The late introduction of the M&E system brought challenges and consequences for the detection, mitigation and management of difficulties faced by the intervention.
E7.1. M&E design	S	Although implemented late, the design of the M&E system was satisfactory.
E7.2. M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	MS	A system for monitoring technical progress linked to financial progress would have allowed for more effective M&E.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	There were deficiencies in the project design. Weaknesses persisted even after improvements were made as a result of the MTR.
F. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MU	The project worked with women to ensure high levels of participation in many activities. However, the lack of a plan aimed at reducing gender gaps limited the possibilities for the project to fully comply with the standards established by the gender policies of FAO and the GEF.
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	Despite challenges due to design flaws in integrating the ethnic-differential approach, the project complied with the FPIC procedures.
F3. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project's activities ensured respect for traditional ways of life and ecological balances. The classification of the project with moderate environmental and social risk due to the presence of Indigenous populations in the intervention areas is considered adequate.
Overall project rating	**MS**	

Note: [i] See Appendix 3 for more information on the GEF evaluation criteria rating system.

Appendix 3. The GEF rating scheme

Project outcomes and outputs

Rating	***Description***
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	*Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings.*
Satisfactory (S)	*Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings.*
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	*Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.*
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	*Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.*
Unsatisfactory (U)	*Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings.*
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	*Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings.*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow for an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.*

Project implementation and execution

Rating	***Description***
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	*There were no shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** exceeded expectations.*
Satisfactory (S)	*There were no or minor shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** meets expectations.*
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	*There were some shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** more or less meets expectations.*
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	*There were significant shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** is somewhat lower than expected.*
Unsatisfactory (U)	*There were major shortcomings and the quality of **implementation** or **execution** is substantially lower than expected.*
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	*There were severe shortcomings in the quality of **implementation** or **execution**.*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow for an assessment of the quality of **implementation** or **execution**.*

Monitoring and evaluation

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	*There were no shortcomings and the quality of **M&E design and implementation** exceeded expectations.*
Satisfactory (S)	*There were no or minor shortcomings and the quality of **M&E design and implementation** meets expectations.*
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	*There were some shortcomings and the quality of **M&E design and implementation** more or less meets expectations.*
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	*There were significant shortcomings and the quality of **M&E design and implementation** is somewhat lower than expected.*
Unsatisfactory (U)	*There were major shortcomings and the quality of **M&E design and implementation** is substantially lower than expected.*
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	*There were severe shortcomings in the quality of **M&E design and implementation**.*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow for an assessment of the quality of **M&E design and implementation**.*

Sustainability

Rating	***Description***
Likely (L)	*There is little or no risk to sustainability.*
Moderately Likely (ML)	*There are moderate risks to sustainability.*
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	*There are significant risks to sustainability.*
Unlikely (U)	*There are severe risks to sustainability.*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.*

Appendix 4. Results matrix

Outcome 1.1. Strengthened capacity of local stakeholders to implement good forestry, agricultural and livestock practices that consider the conservation of the habitat of four threatened species (Arica hummingbird, huemul, Darwin's fox, queule)				
OUTCOME AND OUTPUT GOALS	**Declared compliance with project document goals**	**Evaluability assessment (verifiable information from sources of verification)**	**Verifiable progress reviewed by the evaluation team**	**Source of verification**
GOAL OF OUTCOME 1.1 2 250 school students and 1 250 people from the selected municipalities sensitized	2057/2250 3929/1250	**MODERATE** Sources correctly organized, but the result is only able to be evaluated with regard to attendance at awareness raising and training events – not with respect to their effectiveness (impact). This is because a clear link cannot be established between the number of students that participated (attendees) and the number of sensitized students. Therefore, the main obstacle to validating this goal as highly satisfactory is that there is no qualitative information available or conventional test-type evaluative elements. In terms of the assessment, it has not been possible to apply questionnaire-type tools to measure the effective use of these activities on an *ex post* basis.	92% 100% **S**	- Verification table of indicators of sensitized and trained people - Attendance lists (reviewed sample of 35 awareness raising and training events)
GOAL OF OUTCOME 1.2 1 500 civil servants and 350 farmers from the selected municipalities sensitized	1567/1500 731/350		100% **S**	
GOAL OF OUTPUT 1.1.1 Four mechanisms implemented to disseminate updated and permanent information on species status	- Public information system - Darwin's fox procedure - Huemul procedure - Hummingbird webpage	**HIGH** The results achieved are measurable, but there is a lack of a population goal for each species and information about the mechanisms implemented. The development of manuals and a webpage does not ensure an effective contribution towards the goal that should have been based on the number of people reached by dissemination, awareness raising and training activities. Also lacking among the indicators is a qualitative component that measures the effective use of the information generated and published.	100% **HS**	- Contracts, manufacturing by-products and SIMBIO website - Monitoring manuals of Darwin's fox and huemul - Project website review - Assessment of key informants on the usefulness of monitoring manuals
GOAL OF OUTPUT 1.1.2 Environmental education programmes for the conservation of endangered species for	1/1 Environmental education programme for municipal schools	**MODERATE** This output faced several design issues that affected the ability of the project to achieve this goal during the implementation process. The first and most important is that there was no	100% UA 100%	Review of pedagogical materials produced: manuals; children's publications; PowerPoint

Outcome 1.1. Strengthened capacity of local stakeholders to implement good forestry, agricultural and livestock practices that consider the conservation of the habitat of four threatened species (Arica hummingbird, huemul, Darwin's fox, queule)				
OUTCOME AND OUTPUT GOALS	**Declared compliance with project document goals**	**Evaluability assessment (verifiable information from sources of verification)**	**Verifiable progress reviewed by the evaluation team**	**Source of verification**
agricultural extension agents, school administrators and civil society	designed and implemented 60 percent of students in municipal schools in selected districts trained 1/1 Environmental education programme for the general population 3 929/3 000 participants in the programme (40 percent women)	baseline that made explicit which specific schools or public sector agencies were to be targeted, so it is not possible to determine the real effectiveness in achieving the goal of 60 percent of students trained or the relevance in the specific selection of students for any of the environmental education programmes implemented. Second, there was no strategic plan or general educational programme that established the specific objectives (in terms of skills to be acquired), stages and beneficiaries of the training provided, which is normally the case in any curriculum or training course. In addition, there are no means to verify that there was an internal evaluation of the quality and use of these training courses, which is an essential factor in determining the success of any education programme.	100% **S**	presentations; and webinars in video format Interviews with key institutional informants
GOAL OF OUTPUT 1.1.3 Tools to implement good agricultural, livestock, forestry and tourism practices at the community level	5/6 manuals 731/300 farmers	**MODERATE** These two outputs should not have been separated from the previous output and should be part of an environmental education programme – organized or targeted by type of beneficiary but based on the same initial research and compilation effort. The evaluation of this output faced the same problem as with Output 1.1.2: there were no impact indicators or effective tools to measure the use of training in terms of understanding and retention of information, as well as the practical implementation of the acquired knowledge.	83.3% 52% **S**	Review of manuals, PowerPoint presentations and webinars in video format Interviews with key institutional informants

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