Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Project Evaluation Series
07/2020





Mid-term evaluation of "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems"

Project Evaluation Series
07/2020

Mid-term evaluation of "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems"

Project code: GCP/GLO/530/GFF
GEF ID: 5724

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 2020

Required citation:
FAO. 2020. *Mid-term evaluation of "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems".* Project Evaluation Series, 07/2020. Rome.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO.

© FAO, 2020



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode).

Under the terms of this licence, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the work is appropriately cited. In any use of this work, there should be no suggestion that FAO endorses any specific organization, products or services. The use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons licence. If a translation of this work is created, it must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original [Language] edition shall be the authoritative edition."

Disputes arising under the licence that cannot be settled amicably will be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the licence except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules will be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules and any arbitration will be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Third-party materials. Users wishing to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is needed for that reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from infringement of any third-party-owned component in the work rests solely with the user.

Sales, rights and licensing. FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased through publications-sales@fao.org. Requests for commercial use should be submitted via: www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request. Queries regarding rights and licensing should be submitted to: copyright@fao.org.

Cover photo credits (top to bottom): 1. ©FAO/Giulio Napolitano, 2. & 3. ©FAO/Juan Carlos Rey Brina, 4. ©FAO/Roberto Faidutti.

Contents

Acknowledgements v
Acronyms and abbreviations vi
Executive summary vii
1. Introduction 1
1.1 Purpose of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) 1
1.2 Intended users 1
1.3 Scope and objective of the MTE 2
1.4 Methodology 4
1.5 Limitations 5
2. Context and background of the project 7
2.1 Theory of change 12
3. Key findings and MTE questions 17
3.1 Relevance 17
3.2 Effectiveness 22
3.3 Efficiency 31
3.4 Sustainability 35
3.5 Factors affecting performance 38
3.6 Cross-cutting dimensions 41
4. Conclusions and recommendations 45
4.1 Conclusions 45
4.2 Recommendations 48
5. Lessons learned 53
References 55
Bibliography 59
Appendix 1. Global Environment Facility (GEF) evaluation criteria rating table and rating scheme 61
Appendix 2. Co-financing Table 67
Appendix 3. Results matrix for assessing degree of achievement of project outcomes 68
Appendix 4. Stakeholders interviewed during the MTE 73
Appendix 5. MTE matrix (evaluation questions and sub-questions) 75
Appendix 6. MTE itinerary including field missions (agenda) 78
Appendix 7. Summary of progress towards project objective and outcomes 81

Boxes, Figures and Tables

Boxes

Box 1: MTE questions and sub-questions 3

Figures

Figure 1: Reconstructed theory of change (country implementation) 14
Figure 2: Project organizational structure 33

Tables

Table 1: Recommendations table 49
Table 2: MTE ratings & achievements summary table 61
Table 3: Progress towards results matrix (achievement of outcomes against mid-term targets) 68

Acknowledgements

The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) would like to thank everyone who contributed to this report. The evaluation was conducted by Mr James Gasana (team leader), with valuable support from Mr Yasin Mahadi Sheikh Salah (national consultant, Kenya) and Mr Juan Carlos Rey Brina (regional consultant, Uruguay). Ms Renate Roels (evaluation manager, OED) managed the evaluation while Mr Martin Corredoira (office assistant, OED) provided administrative support throughout the mid-term evaluation exercise. Internal peer reviewers from OED, Ms Sara Holst and Amélie SolalCeligny, provided comments on the draft report.

We would like to acknowledge Ms Vivian Onyango, agricultural officer, FAO Plant Production and Protection Division (AGPM) and project focal point, who provided invaluable support and assistance throughout the process and contributed to our understanding of the project. A special thanks also goes to the project staff of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the project staff of FAO Uruguay for facilitating and hosting the Kenya and Uruguay country missions, as well as to the other colleagues participating on the project task force and steering committee of the project, Mr Ernest Mbogo and Mr Fredrick Aloo from the participatory rangeland and grassland assessment methodology (PRAGA) team and the project and FAO staff in Niger, Burkina Faso and Kyrgyzstan for allowing us to interview them through Skype, or for responding to our questions in writing.

We also wish to recognize the valuable contributions of the project target communities and key project stakeholders who openly shared their experiences and thoughts on the project. Their insight, knowledge, advice and comments were critical to the evaluation team's work and are deeply appreciated.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ASAL	Arid and semi-arid lands
CAF	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas, Uruguay
COP	Conference of the Parties
DPSIR	Driving force-Pressure-State-Impact-Response Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representative
GDI	IUCN Global Dryland Initiative
ID	Impact driver
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IS	Intermediate state
LADA	Land Degradation Assesment in Dryland
LD	Land degradation
LDA	Land degradation assessment
OPIM	Operational Partners Implementation Modality
PRAGA	Participatory Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land management in Grassland and Pastoral Systems
Prodoc	Project document
ROtI	Review of outcomes to Impacts
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SLM	Sustainable land management
MGAP	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca), Uruguay
MVOTMA	Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay (Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente)
UdeLaR	University of the Republic, Uruguay (Universidad de la República)
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WAMIP	World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous People

Executive summary

Introduction

1. The project "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems GCP/GLO/530/GFF" (hereafter referred to as "PRAGA" or "the Project") is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and put in place by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The project aims to strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas, comprising of grasslands and rangelands, in assessing land degradation (LD) and making informed decisions to promote sustainable land management (SLM) in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided, through testing the Participatory Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land management in Grassland and Pastoral Systems methodology (PRAGA) at local level and further adapting the global indicators while assessing policies, in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger, Kyrgyzstan, and Uruguay.

2. A mid-term evaluation (MTE) has been conducted for this project to assess and rate the achievements and shortcomings of the project to date, and to draw recommendations for the ongoing project implementation in order to improve the project's performance and to increase the prospects for achieving its objectives.

3. The evaluation questions were focused on the relevance of the Project; its progress in achieving planned outcomes in the participating countries (effectiveness); its efficiency; the likelihood of sustainability; factors affecting performance; and cross-cutting dimensions such as inclusiveness, gender equality and attention to climate change. The MTE methods comprised: desk review of project documents; discussions and interviews with key informants (including the pastoralist communities' representatives in Kenya and Uruguay). The evaluation team visited two of the five countries: Kenya from 18 to 22 November 2019 and Uruguay from 2 to 6 December 2019.

Main findings

4. The main findings of the evaluation are presented below, grouped by evaluation question.

Question 1. How adequate was the project design in supporting the activities and expected outcomes?

Finding 1. The design of the activities to test the PRAGA methodology for land degradation assessment (LDA) is congruent with the key challenges to be addressed and overall aligned to national/GEF/FAO goals and strategies. Similarly adequate is the emphasis on a participatory approach integrating the perspective of different user groups and the engagement of pastoralist communities and other rangelands users, national and sub-national government entities. The PRAGA methodology is considered of good quality, yet it could be further strengthened. The overall project design could benefit from a theory of change (TOC) that illustrates how the methodology testing results will lead to the expected impact.

Question 2. What results have been achieved so far, and what is still outstanding?

Finding 2. For outcome 1, the project had considerable success in engaging its national stakeholders and local pastoral communities in the implementation of its LDA activities, including site selection, indicator selection and testing, trainings and workshops and the actual conducting of the assessment, but it did not have an equal success in engaging them in the development of the framework and PRAGA methodology. Despite their importance to the project objective, outcomes 2 and 3 have made relatively limited progress to date.

Question 3. To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently?

Finding 3. In terms of concrete deliverables, outputs under outcome 1 are being achieved at reasonable costs, while most outputs under outcomes 2 and 3 are delayed, thus reducing delivery efficiency for the two outcomes. The main cause of this low efficiency is the delay in project start. The project made a commendable effort to mitigate the impact of the delay by accelerating the implementation of outcome 1. The project has a good scope of (international) co-financiers, while it has one government co-financier. The fragmentation of project implementation roles and responsibilities weakened the performance.

Question 4. To what extent are steps being taken to ensure the sustainability of the intervention?

Finding 4. Prospects for sustainability of the project results are mixed: they are good in countries where the government is involved in implementation, where there is a strong ownership of the LDA indicators identification process, and where the methodology is already being promoted for new initiatives; and they are hindered in all the five pilot countries by weak delivery of important outputs under outcomes 2 and 3, the still weak dissemination of learning from project results, and the lack of exit strategies and sustainability plans.

Question 5. What are the main factors that have affected or are likely to affect effectiveness, that could prevent future progress towards the eventual achievement of the project's intended longer-term impact?

Finding 5. The PRAGA methodology could be more rigorous and more comprehensive in order to provide not only locally relevant but also globally comparable indicators. A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system could have helped collect the necessary data and information to support learning. The fragmented responsibilities and roles affected project performance. Collaborations with universities and local consultants has allowed access to local knowledge and better comprehension of LD processes and pastoralists' perception of LD. The project suffered from serious delays, but is able to adapt to new situations.

Question 6. 6a: To what extent were gender equality considerations reflected in the project design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men? To what extent has the project ensured the inclusion of local herders, women groups, youth and indigenous people? 6b: To what extent have climate change issues been taken into account?

Finding 6. While the Project was successful in engaging local pastoralist groups, the design and implementation of the Project has not sufficiently taken into account inclusiveness, gender issues in particular, at the strategic level. Similarly the participation of youth is relatively weak and there is insufficient attention to climate change aspects in the PRAGA methodology field guide.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance – adequacy of the project implementation participatory approach and of PRAGA implementation model. The project's participatory approach for the implementation of the PRAGA methodology was an important strength and appreciated by the project stakeholders. The methodology is relevant in view of the low cost of its use and the participation of the pastoralist communities. However, the design did not include activities to develop the capacities of partner institutions, or those of other relevant stakeholders for SLM. The gender dimension in the design of outcomes and outputs is lacking and the participation of women and youth is weak.

Conclusion 2. Relevance – appropriateness of the project design in regard to its objective. The choice of components and respective outcomes was appropriate. However, the project design did not provide tailored theory of changes (TOCs) that underpin the project at global level and the pilot country levels with their different contexts.

Conclusion 3. Effectiveness – results achieved so far: outcome 1. There is good progress towards achieving outcome 1. However, the planned adaptation of global indicators and using them to assess policies has not taken place yet, thus restricting the scale at which the PRAGA methodology testing results can be used.

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness – results achieved so far: outcome 2. There are some efforts to use early project results in policy processes concerning rangeland management in Uruguay, Kenya and Burkina Faso. Yet, the intended linking of the LD assessment results to national decision-making processes lacks a clear and systematic approach, resulting in a lack of visibility and clarity for both national and local government where relevant.

Conclusion 5. Effectiveness – Results achieved so far: outcome 3. The planned monitoring system for the systematic provision of information on progress towards the project outcomes has not been set-up. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at country level is not based on annual M&E plans articulated by the results matrix indicators, and the formats for transmitting reports are disparate. The Project is not yet realizing its potential to systematically capture and disseminate lessons and best practices.

Conclusion 6. Efficiency. The Project efficiency faced challenges due to late start and fragmented management and implementation arrangements. These challenges slowed the progress in achieving two of the three Project outcomes. The Project has a good scope of co-financiers and follows FAO financial procedures.

Conclusion 7. **Sustainability.** Prospects for putting in place the necessary conditions for scaling up and sustainability of results are mixed among the countries. Country ownership is considered likely where the government is involved in implementation, like in Burkina Faso and Niger, and where the methodology is being used in new initiatives, as it is the case in Kenya. In Uruguay the foundations for sustaining the Project's results have been laid through partnership with the private sector, and plans have been made to promote scaling-up.

Recommendations

Relevance

Recommendation 1.1. Use Driving force-Pressure-State-Impact-Response Framework (DPSIR) not only for data analysis after collection but also for framing a system of "criteria and indicators" for the participatory assessment of LD and SLM in grassland and pastoral areas.

Recommendation 1.2. To facilitate learning from project experiences and the final evaluation, develop an overall project TOC and country level TOCs that better explain the causality chain to achieve the results and contribute to the objective of SLM. The theory of change should identify intermediate states, impact drivers and assumptions that are not necessarily under the control of the project. It should also integrate an enhanced gender and youth inclusiveness approach, and engagement of the private sector.

Effectiveness

Recommendation 2.1. Take steps to enhance and complete the PRAGA methodology, by providing a framework with globally comparable indicators and criteria in the social, economic and governance dimensions in order to capture holistically the rangeland health dynamics and the link to various ecosystem services.

Recommendation 2.2. Establish a clear and systematic approach to:

i. enhance engagement with partner governments, the private sector, relevant SLM partners of other FAO interventions as well as pastoralists' organizations, movements and networks at country and regional level in order to facilitate and enhance the linking of LD assessment results to national decision-making processes; and

ii. report on progress towards outcomes, disseminate the LD assessment methods, and to aggregate and disseminate best practices and lessons learned.

Recommendation 2.3. Improve the targeting strategy for the engagement of women and youth. Gender sensitive indicators need to be captured in the Logframe and the PRAGA methodology and should be contextualized to the need of both men and women. The same should be done for climate change and the respective identification of indicators for the LD monitoring framework. At implementation level, the Project should capture specific local LD knowledge from women in pastoralist communities, and use derived indicators to inform policy and decision making processes regarding national and subnational SLM plans and strategies.

For the above improvements, the Project needs to use a gender expert to include sex-disaggregated targets in the logical framework, and to advice on how to make LDA indicators include those that measure the socio-economic implications of LD on women in pastoral communities.

Efficiency

Recommendation 3.1. More dialogue and interaction are required between the various project partners to coordinate project implementation, facilitate relationship building, and clarify the progress of the project and the expected roles and inputs of each project stakeholder.

Recommendation 3.2. The two partners, FAO and IUCN, should duly follow the institutional and management arrangements for the implementation of the Project as described in the Prodoc. The role of the FAO Representatives (FAORs) in Project implementation must be clarified and the responsibility strengthened to ensure effective and efficient results, like in the case of Uruguay, where FAO's convening power is considered as a comparative advantage by the Project's partners, which puts it in good position for policy dialogue on range management issues, partnership engagement, sustainability and the collection of lessons learned.

Recommendation 3.3. A one-year no cost extension is necessary, to allow the Project to complete all activities related to outcomes 2 and 3, and in addition, to outcome 1 for Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Burkina Faso.

Sustainability and scaling-up

Recommendation 4.1. In Kenya and Kyrgyzstan, adopt and implement appropriate modalities to further involve the subnational governments in the implementation. Prepare and submit to key project partners an exit strategy that will show how key results will be sustained after project completion. The plan should indicate a coordinated approach and clear responsibilities and outputs for each project partner. To support sustainability and scaling up of project results, collaboration with government agencies and FAOR/country programme needs to be enhanced and strategic linkages with other SLM interventions, sector fora and multi-stakeholder / knowledge platforms, as well as regional pastoral networks need to be further explored.

GEF rating table

5. The following table summarizes the assessment and rating of the Project performance.

FAO - GEF Rating Scheme	Rating	Summary Comments
1) RELEVANCE		
A1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	S	In the GEF context, the Project is in line with the GEF 5 Land Degradation Focal Area (objective LD-4 "Adaptive Management and Learning: increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in SLM/sustainable forest management (SFM)/integrated natural resource management (INRM) by GEF and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification [UNCCD] Parties). In FAO's framework, it is line with outcomes 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of Strategic objective 2. However climate change, being one of GEF's focal areas, has not been sufficiently treated.
A2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities	HS	The Project objective and outcomes are aligned with national agro-sylvo-pastoral policies and development strategies of the five pilot countries. For Kenya, it is expected to provide the necessary capacity and policy environment for improving the decisions and investments in rangeland. For Burkina Faso, it is in line with its vision on investing in SLM in its "Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management". For Niger, it is in line with Ordinance of 2010 relating to pastoralism. For Kyrgyzstan, it is in line with the Pasture Law promulgated in 2009. For Uruguay, it is in line with the General Law of Environmental Protection of 2000.
A3. Complementarity with existing interventions	S	The Project is complementary to other initiatives such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, or those within the IUCN Global Dryland Initiative (GDI). Collaborations could be further enhanced.
A4. Overall strategic relevance	S	Relevant from A1 through to A4.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	For outcome 1, the Project had considerable success in engaging its national stakeholders and local pastoral communities in the implementation of its LDA activities, including site selection, indicator selection and testing, trainings and workshops and the actual conducting of the assessment, but it did not have an equal success in engaging them in the development of the framework and PRAGA methodology. Despite their importance to the objective, outcomes 2 and 3 have made relatively limited progress to date.
B1.1 Delivery of outputs	MS	The Project has not fully delivered on output 1.3 of outcome 1. There are a number of early positive developments under outcome 2, but the level of progress is not commensurate with expected achievements at a stage beyond mid-point of its planned duration, Delivery is limited for output 3.1 and output 3.3. output 3.2 is this evaluation.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	MS	Same as above.

FAO - GEF Rating Scheme	Rating	Summary Comments
- Outcome 1	MS	PRAGA methodology procedural and operational manual developed and its testing at local level completed in three of the five countries and progressing well in the two others, but refining and finalizing the method based on lessons learned not achieved yet.
- Outcome 2	MS	The LDA results have not yet linked to national and local decision-making processes, yet there are a number of relevant and positive developments underway. In Kenya and Uruguay there are some efforts to use early Project results in policy process concerning rangeland management. Despite the weak progress for outcome 2, In Burkina Faso, participants in the Inception workshop identified two potential deliverables.
- Outcome 3	MU	Project does not have an M&E articulated on the Project logical framework and lacks an M&E plan. There are mixed achievements with regard to capturing and aggregating information. The documenting and presenting of best practices and lessons learned on the overall project remains limited thus far.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	MS	Delayed start taken into account, delivery is lower than expected at this stage close to Project completion.
B1.3 Likelihood of Impact	Not rated at MTE	
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MS	The Project suffered serious delays to start; but after the start there were good efforts in the five countries to deliver on outcome 1. Outcome 1 is being achieved at reasonable costs, while most outputs under outcomes 2 and 3 are behind schedule. Overall fragmented project responsibilities and low level of engagement of FAORs in three of the five pilot countries. Good scope of international co-financiers versus one national financial partner. Project is following FAO financial procedures.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood to sustainability	ML	There is political support of the project in four pilot countries and PRAGA methodology has been tested with success. Components 2 and 3 have outputs that condition sustainability; these are not likely to be completed before end of the Project.
D2. Financial sustainability	L	There are no financial risks; the Project has almost completed the most important component (outcome 1), and has resources for the remaining activities.
D3. Socio-political sustainability	ML	There are no socio-political risks in most countries; only implementation in Niger has been affected by insecurity; but the risk was successfully managed by the Project. In Kyrgyzstan the government ownership is relatively weak.
D4. Institutional and governance risks	MU	While the Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) adopted for Project implementation is appealing, there are gaps in the roles of various project stakeholders as far as country level execution is concerned, and the level of engagement of the various FAO country offices is mixed. The FAO and IUCN operational

FAO - GEF Rating Scheme	Rating	Summary Comments
		partnership could not avoid the long delay of Project start, and the delayed delivery of many outputs under outcomes 2 and 3.
D5. Environmental risks	L	There is no risk to environment that is due to project activities.
D6. Catalysis and replication	MS	The Project results have not yet linked to national and local decision-making processes, and consequently they are not yet influencing the local, national and international policies as planned. However, in Kenya, Uruguay and Burkina Faso there are some (potential) efforts to use early Project results in policy process concerning rangeland management.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MS	The operational partners did not show the capacity to start at expected dates and there was an overall one year delay, and additional delays in three of the five countries. The fragmented responsibility over certain project components between FAO and IUCN and the weak engagement of FAORs in most pilot countries contributed to the delays.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	The PRAGA methodology could be more rigorous and more comprehensive. The PRAGA methodology procedural and operational manual and the developed indicators have not yet been disseminated. An M&E system could have helped collect the necessary data and information to support learning.
E2.1 Project oversight (FAO, project steering committee [PSC], project task force [PTF], etc.)	MU	FAO made an effort to maintain an oversight over the Project; but its oversight was uneven for the five pilot countries, amongst others due to the weak role of FAORs in three out of five countries. There was no evidence of the contribution of the PSC to providing guidance to the Project.
E3. Quality of project execution	MU	Overall the Project's outcome 1 was well executed, and is quasi completed in three out of five countries. But two other important outcomes are unlikely to be completed before the closure.
E3.1 Project management arrangements and delivery (Project management unit, financial management, etc.)	MU	As shown under D4, there are gaps in roles of various project stakeholders as far as country level execution is concerned, and the level of engagement of the various FAO country offices is mixed. As for delivery, overall the performance was good with outcome 1, and weak with the 2 other outcomes. At country level, delivery on outcome 1 was best in Uruguay due to full engagement of FAOR.
E4. Co-financing	S	Project has a good scope of international co-financiers, yet only one national financial partner.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder involvement	MS	In all the five countries the Project worked with the planned partners (pastoralist communities, producers' cooperatives and federations, government agencies at national and sub-national levels, universities). While government agencies were involved in the implementation of Project activities in Burkina Faso, Niger and Uruguay, it was not the case in Kyrgyzstan and Kenya. The Project did not sufficiently establish partnership with women's and youth organizations, nor with private sector organizations to enhance sustainability, except in Uruguay.
E6. Communication and knowledge management	MU	The delayed achievements in outcomes 2 and 3 have weakened delivery on communication and knowledge management. The project has made some progress in documenting and presenting best practices and lessons learned on the overall project, but it remains limited thus far.

FAO - GEF Rating Scheme	Rating	Summary Comments
E7. Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	MU	The Project adequately uses institutional project supervision and project review systems, yet the Project does not have an M&E articulated on the Project on the logical framework and lacks an M&E plan. There are mixed achievements with regard to capturing and aggregating information.
E7.1 M&E Design	MU	The Project has not considered an M&E design at global or country level. Only in Uruguay the project activities have been systematically documented, representing an accumulated information that can be processed for dissemination in the future.
E7.2 M&E Plan Implementation (including financial and human resources)	U	The Project does not provide a M&E plan.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MU	There are a number of weaknesses in implementation including problems in the coordination of FAO and IUCN operational partnership; weak engagement of FAORs in the implementation of the Project in most pilot countries; delayed delivery of many outputs under outcomes 2 and 3; lack of an M&E system and M&E plan.
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MU	Gender equality and the inclusion of women and youth were not adequately integrated in the project design. During implementation the participation of women and youth was weak.
F2. Human rights issues	HS	The Project focuses on a thematic area which in many countries concerns resource users who include marginalized groups (pastoralists) and promotes a participatory approach.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	MS	The Project implemented activities that impact the environment or social relation. It focused on collecting local knowledge. There was insufficient attention to climate change.
Overall project rating for cross-cutting concerns	MU	Inclusiveness aspects not yet sufficiently focused in design and implementation, particularly for women and youth. Focus on a thematic area of interest to (marginalized) pastoralist groups. There was no harm to environment and no negative social impact, yet insufficient attention to climate change.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the mid-term evaluation (MTE)

1. This document presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) project "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems" (hereafter referred to as "PRAGA" or "the Project"). The MTE is requested by the GEF whose guidelines require the conduct of a mid-term evaluation for projects of USD 2 million and above. It is also required by FAO for project monitoring and reporting purposes and is conducted for both accountability and learning purposes of both, and of other participating institutions.

2. This evaluation serves two immediate purposes:

   i. **Decision-making**. The MTE provides the key stakeholders with important inputs for identifying appropriate and corrective actions to address particular issues or problems in design, implementation and management; and reinforce initiatives that demonstrate the potential for success.

   ii. **Drawing lessons.** The MTE also focuses on drawing lessons from the Project's experience, as the participatory approach in the establishment and management of the PRAGA methodology is an innovative aspect. Any lesson in this regard would be useful to inform other FAO and GEF sustainable rangeland management projects.

1.2 Intended users

3. The intended users of the evaluation include:

   i. project teams in the five participating countries, who will use the evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations to adjust the project activities and, in conjunction with the implementing and executing agencies and other project partners, take the necessary actions to finalize and if necessary optimize project activities before the completion of the Project;

   ii. the national and subnational governments counterparts, who will use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future planning;

   iii. FAO Country Offices in the five participating countries, and the members of the project task force, who will use the findings and lessons in the MTE to continue and improve delivery and impact of the project activities and plan for sustainability of the results achieved;

   iv. the GEF (donor) in consultation with FAO, who will use the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation to inform strategic investment decisions in the future in similar projects;

v. pastoral communities involved in the PRAGA methodology or other initiatives concerning land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral areas systems.

1.3 Scope and objective of the MTE

4. **Scope**. The evaluation focuses on the period of implementation of the Project, from project approval in 2016 until December 2019 in all the five recipient countries. The evaluation was guided by the Terms of Reference (ToRs).

5. **Objective**. The MTE delivers its findings under the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and crosscutting dimensions of gender and minority groups, and environmental and social safeguards. Its specific objectives are:

   i. to assess and rate the achievements and shortcomings of the project to date (the MTE's findings), with regard to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability of the project's outcomes under the four components, factors affecting the performance and delivery of the project results, and the cross-cutting dimensions;

   ii. to draw recommendations to be fed into the ongoing project implementation in order to improve the project's performance and to increase the prospects for achieving its objectives.

6. The evaluation is guided by six overarching evaluation questions and respective sub-questions in relation to these criteria and dimensions, as presented in Box 1.

Box 1: MTE questions and sub-questions

Main Questions	Sub-Questions
1. Relevance: How adequate was the project design in supporting the activities and expected outcomes?	1.1 To what extent is the project design realistic and able to empower pastoralists/pastoral institutions and government practitioners?
	1.2 Did the Project benefit from and integrate available knowledge from relevant international frameworks with tools and methods to assess LD and SLM as well as similar projects in the countries?
	1.3 To what extent are the project objectives aligned to national and regional agro-sylvo-pastoral policies and development strategies, GEF goals and FAO CPF in recipient countries, as well as other relevant projects undertaken by the government or other development partners?
	1.4 Was the project design participatory in the sense that it took into consideration the inputs and needs of the targeted global, national and local stakeholders and the operational partners?
	1.5 How was the internal coherence of the Project in terms of synergies and complementarity between objectives, components, activities and outputs?
	1.6 Did the project objective and design remain relevant over time?
2. Effectiveness: What results have been achieved so far, and what is still outstanding?	2.1 To what extent has local knowledge been captured in the (development of the) PRAGA methodology?
	2.2 To what extent has the Project managed to engage national stakeholders and local pastoral communities in the entire development of the framework and PRAGA methodology e.g. site selection, indicator selection and testing, trainings and workshops and the actual conducting of the assessment?
	2.3 To what extent are the capacities of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands strengthened to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM?
	2.4 To what extent has the Project been able to influence local, national and international policies? And to what extent has the project been able to initiate regional activities (for the Sahelian countries and dissemination with neighboring countries in Uruguay)?
	2.5 To what extent has the PRAGA methodology and framework of global comparable indicators been disseminated at global level at relevant international fora?
	2.6 To what extent has the Project established the planned M&E activities?
	2.7 To what extent is the Project collecting lessons and best practices?
3. Efficiency: To what extent has the Project been implemented efficiently?	3.1 To what extent are the Project activities following the planned timeline?
	3.2 To what extent were the management/implementing arrangements appropriate to deliver the Project in an efficient manner?
	3.3 To what extent has the Project made the best use of knowledge inputs?
4. Sustainability of project outcomes: To what extent are steps being taken to ensure the sustainability of the intervention? (e.g. ownership among stakeholders, integration in new projects/programmes)	4.1 What is the likelihood that project results will continue after project completion?
	4.2 What is the likelihood that the targeted stakeholders will take ownership of the implemented methodology and other project activities?
	4.3 What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and benefits (consider financial, socio-economic, institutional and governance, and environmental)?
	5.1 To what extent is the choice and range of partners included in project implementation, and their capacities, appropriate?

Main Questions	Sub-Questions
5. Factors affecting progress: What are the main factors that have affected or are likely to affect effectiveness, that could prevent future progress towards and the eventual achievement of the Project's intended longer-term impact?	5.2 What have been the challenges related to the financial management of the Project?
	5.3 To what extent is the PRAGA methodology rigorous and comprehensive?
	5.4 To what extent are the developed indicators both locally relevant and globally comparable?
	5.5 To what extent are the developed indicators, the standardized procedural and operational manual available, accepted and used by the targeted stakeholders?
	5.6 To what extent are the M&E activities (e.g. indicators, guidelines) able to collect the necessary, timely, accurate and comparable data and information?
6. Crosscutting dimensions: To what extent were social and climate concerns considered in the design, and are monitored in the implementation of the project?	6.1. To what extent were gender equality considerations reflected in the project design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men? To what extent has the Project ensured the inclusion of local herders, women groups, youth and indigenous people?
	6.2 To what extent have climate change issues been taken into account?

Source: Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToRs)

1.4 Methodology

7. The evaluation adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* (2016) and was in line with the OED *Evaluation Manual* (2015) and methodological guidelines and practices. It adopted a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered underpinned the validation and analysis and supported the conclusions and recommendations. It adopted a set of internationally recognized evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability) to which it adds two additional crosscutting dimensions – gender and minority groups, and environmental and social safeguards, and also looks at factors affecting performance. The evaluation also used the GEF rating system to rate the success of the project on a six-point scale: highly satisfactory (HS); satisfactory (S); marginally satisfactory (MS); marginally unsatisfactory (MU); unsatisfactory (U); and highly unsatisfactory (HU). The GEF criteria scorings are presented in Appendix 1.

8. An evaluation matrix was developed to guide the evaluation. The evaluation matrix included key questions and sub-questions, indicators, the methods and tools for collecting data and information, the likely sources of information and the GEF evaluation criteria that the question seeks to address. The evaluation matrix is presented in Appendix 5. The matrix also indicates which stakeholders were to be interviewed.

9. Data collection methods included desk research and review, interviews with various stakeholders and key informants at FAO Headquarters (HQ) and in the pilot countries (e.g. project staff, FAO Representation staff, project governmental partners, target groups, consultants), focus group discussion with target communities groups (e.g. pastoralist communities, women in pastoralist communities, producers cooperatives staff); and direct observations. A list of people interviewed is provided in Appendix 4.

10. Country missions were undertaken from 18 to 22 November 2019 for Kenya and 2 to 6 December 2019 for Uruguay. A debriefing meeting was held at the end of each country mission, where the MTE team presented the preliminary findings. An overall debriefing of country visits was presented by the team leader to the project task force and GEF-focal point in December 2019. For the non-visited countries, Burkina Faso, Kyrgyzstan and Niger, interviews were carried out via Skype and telephone in December 2019 and early January 2020. Further analysis of the data was conducted to generate preliminary conclusions and recommendations in February 2020, and prepare the draft MTE report.

11. The evaluation team was composed of one international consultant (team leader), one local consultant for the Kenya mission and one regional consultant for the Uruguay mission.

1.5 Limitations

12. Two main limitations affected the sources of information. First, only two of the five pilot countries could be visited due to prevailing security issues and budget limitations. Selected project executing agencies and key partners in the other three countries were interviewed by telephone or Skype, and some information was obtained through email exchange. However, country visits allowed deeper analysis and therefore the examples in this report are largely linked to Kenya and Uruguay. Second, project progress reporting formats are disparate and do not systematically provide country level information based on Results Matrix indicators and an M&E system. Similarly, with the exception of Uruguay, it was difficult to get country level budget details per source, including all co-funding sources.

13. Although it took quite some time to obtain all relevant project reports from the pilot countries, which delayed the triangulation of findings, there was a good engagement of stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

2. Context and background of the project

14. **Context.** Grasslands and rangelands cover around 25 percent of the global land area and include the drylands of Africa (66 percent of the total continental area) and the Arabian Peninsula, the steppes of Central Asia and the highlands of Latin America. Grasslands and rangelands make an important contribution to the maintenance of an ecosystem's function and biodiversity. In addition to providing feed for livestock, they play an important role as a habitat for wildlife, for water cycling and for the conservation of plant genetic resources. They are also important for the maintenance of fauna, including birds, pollinators and other insects.

15. Rangeland degradation is one of the main problems faced by these resources globally, and is due to several environmental, social, economic institutional and social factors, often as a result of inadequate policies, as well as unsustainable agropastoral practices (e.g. deforestation, charcoal production and agro-pastoral practises). In the target countries, rangelands are of great environmental, economic, social and conservation importance, because they offer key ecosystem services and livelihood to millions of people who depend pastoralism and other forms of livestock production.

16. In Sahelian countries like Burkina Faso and Niger, pastoralism is a complex system in which the community way of life and the mode of animal production complement each other. The domestic ruminants are raised on 170 million hectares (ha) of rangelands (CEDEAO-SWAC/OECD, 2008). Pastoralism is therefore of great socio-economic importance as it directly affects millions of people who dependent on access to rangeland resources.

17. **In Burkina Faso**, since the great drought of the 1970s, there has been a continuous degradation of land and natural resources, which constitutes a major concern of public authorities and rural populations. It is estimated that 170 000 ha of agropastoral lands are degraded annually. According to the Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques & Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (2013), this deterioration is accentuated with the effects of climate change, demographic growth, numerical increase in livestock, gold panning and urbanization. It generates new types of problems such as insecurity of tenure; the increasingly open competition between farmers in the rural world; conflicts increasing in number and gravity; and reducing the chances of achieving sustainable development. The Sahelian zone to the north is particularly affected by overgrazing where the repeated trampling of livestock degrades the plant cover and the soil, leading to wind and water erosion (Ozer *et al*, 2010). The increased agricultural land area as well as the rate of increase in livestock (11 percent between 2010 and 2014) reduce available rangeland area and increase cattle stocking rates grazing area unit.

18. To curb the phenomenon of ecosystem degradation and promote rural development, the Government of Burkina Faso has adopted policies, strategies and development plans which it is implementing to initiate actions to combat desertification, promote integration, intensification, diversification and securing of agro-silvo-pastoral activities. In the field of pastoral production, the management actions that are carried out in agropastoral and pastoral areas as well as cattle tracks aim, among other things, to:

    i. secure and improve the quality of pastoral resources;

    ii. manage the movements of livestock for better use of natural resources;

iii. improve productivity and animal production in harmony with other rural productions;

iv. improve the producers nutrition quality and incomes;

v. improve the contribution of the subsector to the national economy (Ministère de l'environnement, de l'économie verte et du changement climatique, 2016).

19. **In Niger**, rural populations and particularly pastoralist groups depend on natural resources to meet their basic needs. Range resources are highly variable, mainly due to the harmful and combined effects of factors such as droughts, deforestation, the lack of sustainable grazing management practises, the lack of organization of the occupation of pastoral landscape, etc. It is these factors which partly explain the rapid and continuous deterioration of this potential (Ministère de l'Élevage, des Pêches et des Industries Animales, 2010).

20. The pastoral production mode of Niger is largely linked to geography. Schematically, the further north you go, the more mobility dominates for reasons of availability of fodder and food security for livestock. While there is no clear break between sedentary and mobile pastoralists, production is rather mobile (nomadic and transhumant) northwards, and more sedentary with integration of agriculture and livestock southwards. Mobile pastoralists represent a third of the pastoralists in Niger but concentrate 70 percent of the livestock population (International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) & SOS Sahel UK, 2010).

21. **In Kenya**, about 80 percent of the land is characterized as arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) with pastoralism as the main source of livelihood to millions of people residing in these lands (Amwata *et al*, 2015). The economy and current land uses of the arid areas are dominated by pastoralism, while in the semi-arid areas, the land uses are a mix of pastoralism, rain fed and irrigated agriculture, small-scale businesses based on dryland products, and conservation or tourism-related activities. These areas support 70 percent of the country's livestock and 90 percent of its wild game (The Northern Rangelands Trust, no date). According to Wakhungu *et al* (2014) over 75 percent of cattle herds in the country are kept by pastoralists who supply the bulk of meat consumed.

22. The overall per hectare productivity of the ASAL rangelands is generally low. Despite a modest revenue base, rangeland administration must address a number of other challenges that include the sheer size of administrative units, with sparsely distributed populations and variable, patchy resources, the high levels of environmental variability, and the complexities of managing semi-natural ecosystems (International Land Coalition at IFAD, 2014).

23. A soil erosion risk mapping carried out through the Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland (LADA) project, revealed that almost all the counties in the country are at risk from one form of land degradation or other, and high land degradation is likely to occur on about 61.4 percent the total area of Kenya, while very high degradation affects 27.2 percent of the land. Land degradation affects especially the ASALs, where the soils are highly erodible and combined with high intensity storms, creates conditions for excessive runoff and soil erosion (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, 2016).

24. According to a study by Kihiu (2016), the estimated adoption rates of sustainable land management (SLM) practices in rangelands are alarmingly low (14.2 percent), despite the declining productivity of the ecosystems. The study identified factors conditioning the adoption of SLM practices. It was found that SLM adoption highly occurs in response to land degradation as an intervention measure to reverse and restore degrading lands. Other factors influencing adoption of SLM practices include access to extension services, agro-ecological and land characteristics, access to output markets, capacity of a household to invest in sustainable practices, and human capital endowments. The study further showed that suggest that key policy actions to achieve sustainable management of rangelands include facilitating sustainable intensification of livestock production, empowering livestock producers to participate in value-added livestock production and access to high value product markets and market opportunities; raising awareness of, promoting, and training on best practices for SLM in rangelands; creating policies enhancing extension services through appropriate training of trainers and research initiatives; and creating policies promoting collective action through capacity building and economic benefits associated with cooperation.

25. **In Kyrgyzstan**, rangeland makes up 43 percent of the land mass. Of this area, 43 percent is classified as summer pasture, 30 percent as spring-autumn pasture, and 25 percent as winter pasture. Traditionally, the Kyrgyz people, especially in the central and eastern parts of the country, have been engaged in transhumant livestock grazing, migrating with herds following the natural vegetation cycle, moving from villages in the lowlands to spring pastures in April and May, then to high altitude summer pastures in June, and slowly back to the villages after harvesting cereals in September (Scalise & Undeland, 2016).

26. Issues of land use and management are vital to mountain communities in the country. The majority of populations in the rural areas are directly dependent on livestock and small-scale mixed market-subsistence farming. These areas are characterized by high levels of poverty and active migration processes resulting in changes to land use and management practices (Shigaeva *et al*, 2013). Issues of land degradation relate to changes in the forms of grazing as pastures near villages are being used more heavily, resulting in degradation of the vegetation cover on pasturelands near villages. An estimated 33 percent of the pasture near farms and settlements is substantially degraded, 19 percent suffers from erosion and inedible weeds have overtaken (IFAD, no date). On the other hand, remote pastures are underutilized for several reasons, including limited financial resources of many small livestock owners to hire transport, damaged infrastructure (roads, bridges) and other facilities, and absence of boundaries for livestock grazing by households as well as transhumance routes (Palm, 2011).

27. **As for Uruguay**, its territory is completely included within the biogeographic region known as Pastures of the Río de la Plata, one of the largest grassland regions in the world (Soriano, 1991). The grassland currently covers almost 60 per cent of the country and is part of the temperate grasslands of South America that extend in eastern Argentina and southern Brazil, constituting one of the most extensive areas of natural grasslands in the world (Altesor *et al*, 2011). Livestock production is the most important economic activity in the country. Pastureland is mainly privately owned and covers 14.9 million ha of the 16.4 million ha of private land. It is based on cattle and sheep and uses natural pastures. 69 percent or pasture areas are directly exploited by owners, 26 percent are exploited by renters, and 5 percent are exploited in other ways (FAO, 2006). A particular aspect of the rangeland cattle production is that the main feed base is of natural pastures being highly dependent

on net primary production. Another important aspect is that the combined production of cattle (for beef) and sheep (for meet and wool) has improved the rangeland productivity.

28. However, over the last 20 years rangeland cattle production has faced competition for available land from other activities, like forest tree plantation and soybeans production (Garcia Suarez *et al*, 2018). Unsustainable cattle management over large grassland areas has led to land degradation. Herd management ignored the impact on vegetation and soil. Continuous stocking, high stocking rates, and high cattle/sheep ratios have led to soil compaction and loss of fertility, erosion and loss of some native species. It also causes loss of soil organic matter and the release of CO_2 in the atmosphere (FAO, 2006).

29. **Common threats and challenges among these countries that the Project addresses.** The project document (Prodoc) identified the common threats to grasslands and pastoral areas in target countries. Common threats posed by LD that include a decrease in soil fertility leading to the increase of poverty, food insecurity and outmigration in some instances. LD also has adverse impacts on biodiversity and genetic resources and can lead to resources shortages which foster conflicts over land resources.

30. **Three main challenges facing the rangelands and grasslands**. The first is the lack of a global comprehensive assessment and monitoring system for grasslands and rangelands. In particular, the five pilot countries lack a comprehensive, robust and integrated approach to deal with LD and SLM assessment and monitoring. Most of them lack capacity from the national to the local level to capture and capitalize on the local herders' knowledge, good practices and innovation. The second challenge is the lack of holistic indicators for assessment and monitoring systems that integrate biophysical and socio-economic dimensions into one framework. Biophysical and socio-economic indicator integration would provide a holistic picture of the state of ecosystems, the underlying drivers or causes of LD as well as the trends. The third is the lack of participatory approaches that give space for input from the land-users who should essentially be the beneficiaries of such systems. In particular, there is a need of approach that do not require specific training to analyze and interpret results from assessments, and which make these results accessible.

31. **Basic project information.** The participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems project, or PRAGA, is a three-year project implemented in five pilot countries - Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Uruguay. It was approved on 21 October 2016 and activities started on 1 February 2017. The project activities will end in April 2020. Its total budget is USD 8 401 996 of which USD 2 639 726 is a GEF grant.

32. The five pilot countries were selected from nine countries[1] originally proposed in the project identification form (PIF), based on five main criteria defined in an inception workshop for the design process which was held in January 2015. The criteria are as follows:

    i. the importance of the pastoralism sector for the countries, their economies and the livelihoods;

    ii. the effects of LD on rangelands and grasslands;

[1] The nine countries are: Angola, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kirghizstan, Morocco, Lesotho, Niger, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

iii. potential collaborations, leverage effects and co-financing;

iv. the level of access to data.

33. Based on these criteria, a selection matrix was drawn and a first list of five pre-selected countries was developed and then submitted to the different stakeholders for comments and advice. Field visits were organized to consolidate and to strengthen partnerships. The final list of pilot countries was then validated during a project preparation workshop held in September 2015.

34. The areas selected for the implementation of the Project in the different pilot countries are:

i. Gadguin and Mankarga in Burkina Faso;

ii. Isiolo/Garissa counties in Kenya;

iii. Chui, Osh, Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions in Kyrgyzstan;

iv. Tillabéri region in Niger; and

v. the Sierras Del Este and Graven ecoregions of the Merin lagoon and the Cuesta basaltica and the Gondwanic sedimentary basin ecoregions in Uruguay.

35. **Project objective and components**. The objective of the Project is to strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands, to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands. The project is structured around three main components:

i. Participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands (also referred to as PRAGA methodology).

ii. Inform international and national agro-pastoral decision making processes.

iii. Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

36. To reach its objective, the project is developing a methodology to assess and monitor land degradation and sustainable land management in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands – through a globally comparable and participatory approach. To achieve this, the Prodoc identifies 3 outcomes which correspond to the 3 components as follows:

Outcome 1: A participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands is developed and tested.

Outcome 2: National and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring procedural and operational manual and the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments.

Outcome 3: Project's outcome and output targets are monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned and best practices are captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations.

37. **Project stakeholders.** The Prodoc provides a comprehensive table of the Project's stakeholders who are found at different global, national, sub-national and local scales, and in a wide range of sectors , as follows:

Global: FAO, IUCN, UNCCD, Pastoralist Knowledge Hub and Mountain Partnership Secretariat.

Regional: Green Great Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative and Comité inter-États de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel (CILSS-Agrhymet).

Country: Ministries and national departments, local governments, civil society, local herders communities, women and youth groups.

It is worth mentioning two stakeholders who were not identified at the project design stage, but who are key partners for project implementation: Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF) in Uruguay and Camp Alatoo in Kyrgyzstan.

38. **Project institutional and implementation arrangements**. The Project is implemented under an Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) modality through an operational partners agreement (OPA) between the FAO and IUCN. As stated in the project document, FAO is the GEF Agency for the Project and is responsible for overall oversight and compliance, supervision and the provision of technical support and guidance for the Project. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the primary Operational Partner responsible for day-to-day technical and financial implementation of outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 as well as outputs 2.1 and 3.1, and is lead executing agency for Burkina Faso, Niger and Kenya. FAO is lead executing agency for Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay and is also the financial and operational executing agency for outputs 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3. National relevant ministries and national partners in the pilot countries are closely associated to the implementation of the activities on the ground, with the technical support of IUCN.

2.1 Theory of change

39. The Prodoc indicates that the project outcomes follow a logical sequence that starts with delivering outputs related to outcome 1, which provides LD assessments results that can be linked to national and local decision-making processes and allow sharing the assessment and monitoring method with relevant international mechanisms. In addition, these results are expected to generate best practices and lessons which are documented and published. While the Prodoc demonstrates a clear and logical flow from activities to outputs and to outcomes, it does not provide an explicit theory of change (TOC) that explains the links between different levels of results, and how to go from outcomes to the objective.

40. In the light of the GEF's Review of outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) Handbook "Towards Enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects" (2009), the evaluation team reconstructed the TOC to illustrate the logical sequence of intended changes to which the project is expected to contribute. The reconstructed TOC identified significant assumptions which are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts, but are largely beyond the control of the project, and the impact drivers which the project is able to influence.

41. **The reconstructed TOC** is presented in Figure 1 on the next page. Its analysis highlights two causal impact pathways that link to outcomes 1 and 2 and lead to the objective of the Project; and a third impact pathway that links to outcome 3, and is essential to support outcomes 1 and 2. The first pathway is "improved stakeholders capacity to influence policy and legal frameworks". The second pathway is "sharing information and learning nationally

and across pilot countries"; it is premised on achieving outcome 1. The third pathway is "learning lessons and capturing and disseminating best practices".

42. The process to reconstruct the TOC started at the MTE inception stage by a global-level draft based on a review of project documentation. The draft was further discussed with pilot country level project teams for amendments and validation during the missions to Kenya and Uruguay, and sent by email for comments to interviewees in Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Burkina Faso. It was also presented to the project task force during the debriefing. The main amendment suggested (primarily by the Kenya and Uruguay teams) was to better reflect the context in the TOC.

43. Discussions in Kenya found, for example, that the project objective depends on an important impact driver (ID): "Broaden community participation with women and youth participation". While this ID was ultimately kept in the global TOC, interviewees in Uruguay told the evaluation team that there is no impediment for women and youth participation. Instead, they suggested that in their case, a tailored ID would be "wide-based participation and commitment of institutional actors including Producers organizations, in the policy processes". In Kenya, important assumptions that were underlined for the project's success at global level were "FAO and IUCN facilitate comparability of methodologies (criteria, core indictors, etc.)" and "the exchange of scientific practices across regions and across stakeholders".

44. The analysis also highlights the following higher order changes or "**intermediate states**" that need to be reached in order to contribute to the Project objective:

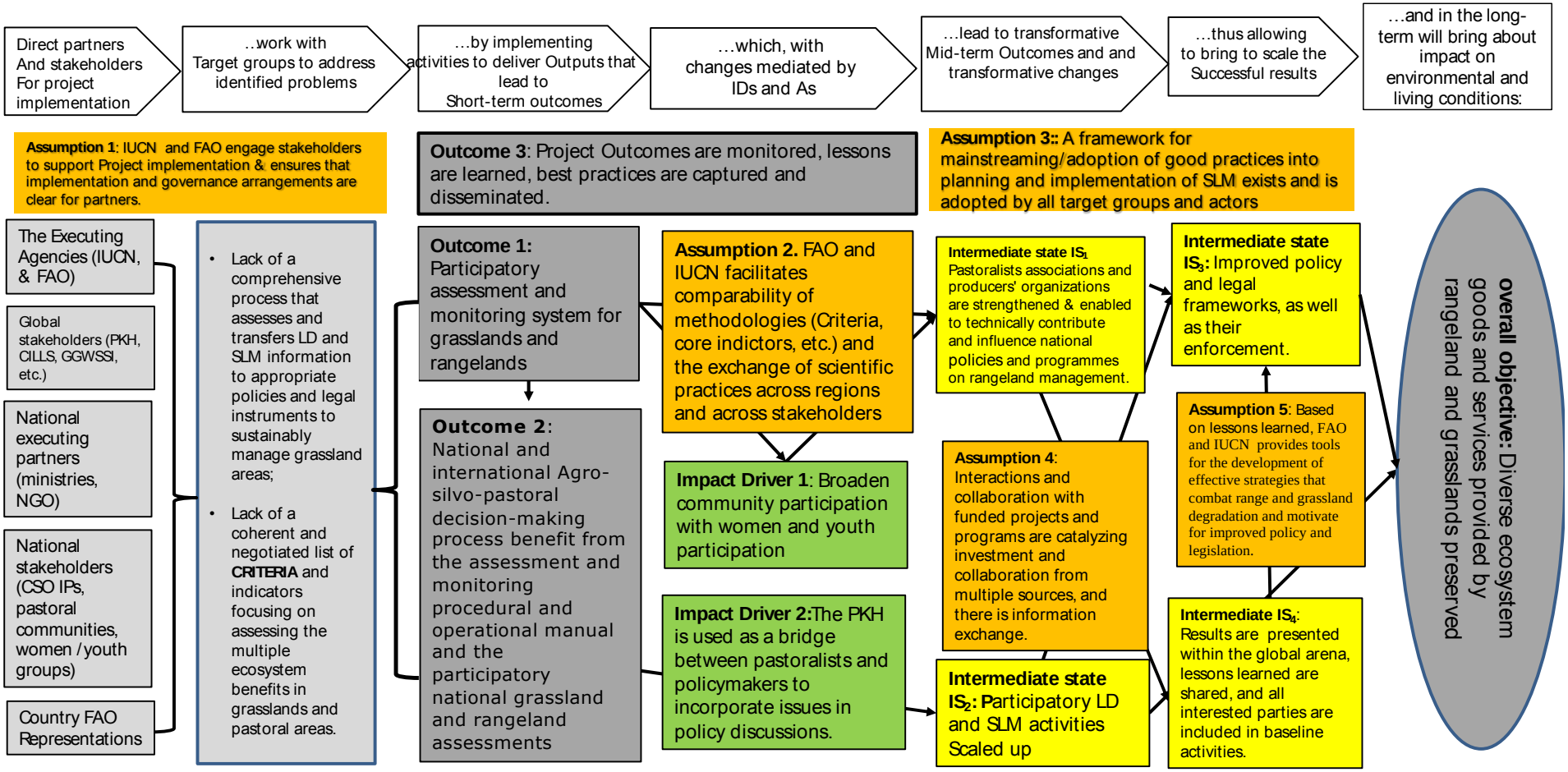
i. **IS$_1$**: Pastoralists associations and producers' organizations are strengthened & enabled to technically contribute and influence national policies and programmes on rangeland, pastoral production.

ii. **IS$_2$**: Scale up the participatory LD and SLM activities.

iii. **IS$_3$**: Improved policy and legal frameworks, as well as their enforcement.

iv. **IS$_4$**: Results are presented within the global arena, lessons learned are shared, and all interested parties are included in baseline activities.

Figure 1: Reconstructed theory of change (country implementation)



Source: Evaluation team

45. These intermediate states are critical for the success of the Project because if they are in place, they are proof of the likelihood of the Project impact and sustainability. Where IS_1 and IS_3 are not achieved, the Project would only identify LD indicators, and would heighten expectations of stakeholders without effectively achieving its expected impact which is, "diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangeland and grasslands preserved".

46. Further analysis shows that pathway 2 is closely tied to pathway 1 because achieving outcome 2 is tributary to results from outcome 1. For project management, this implies that while both outcomes cannot be delivered sequentially, their implementation should ensure that outputs under outcome 1 are used as they are delivered, given the relatively short duration of the Project.

47. The reconstructed TOC further highlights the following two **impact drivers**:

i. **ID1**: Broaden community participation with women and youth participation.

ii. **ID2**: The FAO Pastoralist Knowledge Hub is involved in all the steps of the project and especially in disseminating the monitoring and assessment method.

48. The reconstructed TOC also identifies the following **assumptions**:

i. **A1**: IUCN and FAO engage stakeholders to support Project implementation and ensures that implementation and governance arrangements are clear for partners.

ii. **A2**: FAO and IUCN facilitate comparability of methodologies (criteria, core indictors, etc.) and the exchange of scientific practices across regions and across stakeholders.

iii. **A3**: A framework for mainstreaming/adoption of good practices into planning and implementation of SLM exists and is adopted by all target groups and actors.

iv. **A4**: Interactions and collaboration with funded projects and programs are catalyzing investment and collaboration from multiple sources, and there is information exchange.

v. **A5**: Based on lessons learned, FAO and IUCN provide tools for the development of effective strategies that combat range and grassland degradation and motivate for improved policy and legislation.

3. Key findings and MTE questions

3.1 Relevance - MTE Question 1: How adequate was the project design in supporting the activities and expected outcomes?

Evaluation rating: satisfactory

Main Finding 1. The design of the activities to test the PRAGA methodology for LDA is congruent with the key challenges to be addressed and overall aligned to national/GEF/FAO goals and strategies. Similarly adequate is the emphasis on a participatory approach integrating the perspective of different user groups and the engagement of pastoralist communities and other rangelands users, national and sub-national government entities. The PRAGA methodology is considered of good quality, yet it could be further strengthened. The overall Project design could benefit from a TOC that illustrates how the methodology testing results will lead to expected impact.

49. **The Project design offers potential to empower pastoralists/pastoral institutions and government practitioners. The strategy for testing the PRAGA methodology is simple and realistic. However, both the realism and the simplicity of its formulation were not clearly associated with the understood intention of being innovative.** In all the five pilot countries, stakeholders consider the Project design of the PRAGA methodology to be relevant and realistic in view of the relatively low cost of the activities involved, the participation of the pastoralist communities in contributing their local knowledge, and the interest of national and sub-national administrations in the planned results. As the results matrix in the Prodoc shows, the intervention logic is simple in that it envisages PRAGA methodology testing field activities, and using results to refine and finalize it, to link to national and local decision-making processes, and to share lessons at all relevant levels through documentation and publication of best practices. Although the results matrix does not provide adequate qualitative indicators for stakeholders participation, the involvement of stakeholders by seeking their participation in project design has been an important strength.

50. However, the country level interventions lack an integrated global framework of criteria based on the global domains of indicators, and it becomes difficult to implement the three Project outcomes through the same underlying impact pathways at both global and country level, without first clarifying what the global Project as a whole is trying to achieve. A Project TOC at global level, with global Project impact pathways should have been developed first to provide a global objective and global outcomes, then on this basis, country level contextualized TOCs, similar to Figure 1, could have been developed in a process that involves key country-level stakeholders to ensure the Project is embedded in local expectations and can achieve planned changes.

51. While in the Project design there is a strong link between outcome 1 and 2, the pathway from those outcomes towards impacts and the overall objective is not clearly defined. For example, as a result of the absence of a TOC, the importance of outcome 2 is not adequately reflected in the definition of related outputs. It was defined with the intention to inform and influence decision-making processes, but the Project design did not provide sufficient guidance on how to link Project results to decision-making processes, both at national and sub-national government levels. For example, the design did not include

outputs for strengthening the capacities and ownership of sub-national administrations and pastoralist communities' institutions. Furthermore, it lacked an approach on how an LDA indicators system can be innovative within the existing county-level land use policy processes. National and subnational governments need information to decide where to invest given limited budgets and the difficulties of targeting all degraded rangelands. Decisions on prioritization need to be underpinned by adequate information to make decision processes transparent. Here, LDA indicators could be a useful tool and support such decision-making processes for SLM.

52. **The project design emphasized a participatory approach for implementation and gave due consideration to tapping into the knowledge of grassroots stakeholders, and to the inputs and needs of the other global, national and local stakeholders and the operational partners. However, it did not show how to use pilot activities through PRAGA methodology testing to address the needs and expectations of rangelands users.** The project embraced a participatory approach by bringing on board relevant stakeholders including communities, county and national government agencies and non-state actors in the methodology formulation. It focused on identifying community LD indicators to enrich the PRAGA methodology and make it holistic, participatory and user friendly to land user and decision makers. To this end, it benefited from some relevant international frameworks such as the Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland (LADA) (FAO, 2016a) and LADA tools developed by FAO projects (FAO, 2016b).

53. Although the implementation of the project was planned to be participatory, discussions with community representatives showed that the project design did not benefit from an integrated local pastoralist communities input at the design stage. Their representatives were informed of the Project intentions during the inception workshops. Starting the participatory approach at the stage of inception workshops cannot ensure that the perceptions the project planners had of LDA and SLM priorities are the same as those of the local communities, of women and youth in particular.

54. With regard to community empowerment and meeting the expectations of community members who contribute local knowledge, a large number of interviewed stakeholders in Kenya said that the project design should have taken into consideration linking the testing of the methodology with the piloting of the SLM interventions to demonstrate its value and to build the capacity to use the results in resource management, and to influence policy processes at the county and national levels. Though such pilot SLM activities could strengthen community ownership of Project results, they are outside the scope of its design. Gender-responsive (capacity-building) activities for women's empowerment are also lacking in the design.

55. **The project objective and outcomes are well aligned to national agro-sylvo-pastoral policies and development strategies of pilot countries, and overall aligned to GEF goals and to FAO's global strategies.** The review of the Prodoc and the conducted interviews with key stakeholders of the five project countries confirmed that the Project objective and outcomes are highly relevant to development goals of each pilot country. In Kenya for example, the Project is considered timely by the national government, as it is expected to provide the necessary capacity and policy environment and improve the decisions and investments in rangeland through the PRAGA assessment methodology (IUCN & FAO, 2018). The authorities at national and county levels told the evaluation team

that information is requested by government practitioners for strategic planning, and for designing development projects in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL).

56. In Burkina Faso and Niger, the policy and institutional relevance of the Project are direct given the integration of its activities in the governments' strategies and structures as described in paragraph 18. In Burkina Faso, after the great drought of the 1970s, the country undertook actions to combat desertification, and to intensify and diversify agro-silvo-pastoral activities to curb degradation of its ecosystems. In 2014, it validated the Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management. In Niger, following the request of the country's peasant movement, the government (Ministère de l'Élevage du Niger, 2010) adopted the Ordinance 2010-029 of 20 May 2010 relating to pastoralism, which consecrates the recognition by the state and the territorial communities, of pastoral mobility as a fundamental right of breeders, nomadic and transhumant pastoralists. It aims to strengthen the rural code that secures pastoralism in Niger and constitutes a major legal advance for the empowered pastoral communities.

57. In Kyrgyzstan, where the pastoral resources and pastoralism are central to national culture and national socioeconomic development as shown in paragraphs 25 and 26, the Project is in line with the Pasture Law promulgated in 2009 and amended in 2011 (CIS Legislation, no date). This law is considered as innovative for devolving the governance of pasture resources to local communities. For emphasizing a participatory approach and the engagement of pastoralist communities and other rangelands users, the Project supports the efforts for its enforcement.

58. In Uruguay, the Project is in line with the General Law of Environmental Protection of 2000 (Cepal, no date), which establishes among its principles:

i. the distinction of Uruguay in the context of nations as a natural country, from an economic, cultural and social perspective of sustainable development;

ii. the integration of the environmental dimension to the economic and social;

iii. the recognition of the trans-sectoriality of environmental management, which requires the integration and coordination of the public and private sectors involved;

iv. the protection of the environment as a commitment that concerns society as a whole, so that representative people and organizations have the right and duty to participate in that process.

59. The key Project partners interviewed in Montevideo and Maldonado said that the Project is aligned with their activities and the partners contributed in the elaboration of its work plan. The main partners concerned include government departments (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries [MGAP], Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay [MVOTMA]), Faculty of Agriculture of Faculty of Agronomy of the University of the Republic (UdeLaR), and the CAF. Not only is the Project relevant to Uruguay, it also strengthens the country's relevance to sustainable range management as it addresses the problem of unsustainable cattle management over large grassland areas which has led to land degradation, as highlighted in paragraph 28.

60. With regard to the GEF context, the Project was developed in line with the GEF 5 Land Degradation Focal Area. In this area it is aligned to objective LD-4 "Adaptive Management and Learning: increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in SLM/SFM/

Integrated natural resource management (INRM) by GEF and UNCCD Parties" (GEF, 2011). The Project has three well defined overall impact areas, or components relating to participatory assessment and monitoring system for grasslands and rangelands, using results from the assessment to influence national and international agro-silvo-pastoral decision-making process, and M&E, learning and results dissemination. However, climate change is also one of GEF's focal areas. It is also widely recognized as one of the key challenges of sustainable rangelands and grasslands management (Liniger, et all, 2019). The centrality of the impact of climate change and climate variability on rangelands and grasslands health is not sufficiently recognized in the Project's design nor in the PRAGA Manual. A look at the Results matrix shows that there is no reference to climate change in the formulation of activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators. In particular, there are no outputs or activities aimed at ensuring that local knowledge on LD indicators relating to the impact of climate change on pastoral resources can be tapped and used to inform national climate change related policy processes, or to take into account the socio-economic impact of climate change on pastoralist communities in inclusive development plans. This will be further discussed under the cross-cutting dimensions.

61. Regarding FAO's global framework, the project is in line with FAO SP2, "make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable", and more specifically to respective outcomes 2.2: "Countries developed or improved policies and governance mechanisms to address sustainable production, climate change and environmental degradation in agriculture, fisheries and forestry"; 2.3: "Countries improved implementation of policies and international instruments for sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry"; and 2.4: "Countries made decisions based on evidence for sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry while addressing climate change and environmental degradation".

62. The Project is also in line with SP3 "reduce rural poverty", more specifically with outcome 3.1 "rural poor and rural poor organizations empowered to access productive resources, services and markets". It is also in line output 3.2.1 "policy support and capacity development in the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies, guidelines, and programmes for enhanced decent rural employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and skills development, especially for youth and women".

63. Moreover, it is in line with FAO's Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development launched in 2010. Its three outcomes contribute to developing functional capacities in pilot countries by ensuring that technical know-how is embodied in local and national LDA and SLM decision-making processes. The Project is also in line with the FAO technical guidelines for improving governance of pastoral land.[2]

64. **The PRAGA methodology is considered of good quality for the three focus LDA domains (soil, water and biota). It has some weaknesses, as it does not build on certain existing experiences on the use of criteria and indicators frameworks for sustainable rangeland management and is not premised on facilitating cross-pilot country exchange.** The Project is rooted in the global concern for the degradation of rangelands and grasslands. Its design made an extensive review not only of the status of these ecosystems, but also of the available assessment tools. Among the reviewed tools are those produced by the LADA project. However, the Project design does not seem to

[2] Within the framework of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

have benefited from FAO's 2017 "Guidelines for applying and strengthening the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest and rangelands management in the near east and North Africa region".[3] These guidelines start by defining a "criteria" framework, within which the indicators are described by criteria. Criteria define and characterize the essential elements or conditions against which sustainable management should be assessed, with due consideration paid to the productive, protective and social roles of forests and rangeland ecosystems.

65. The PRAGA conceptual framework places rangelands and grasslands users as the central focus for LD assessment. The PRAGA methodology (FAO & IUCN, no date) is designed to assess rangeland health according to the management objectives of local land users, based on a combination of scientific and local knowledge. The findings of the assessment and monitoring process will also identify SLM best practices that can feed into policy processes. The methodology is linearly broken down into these nine steps:

i. partnership development: local and national ownership of the process;
ii. identifying the landscape for assessment;
iii. baseline review;
iv. large scale assessment and remote sensing;
v. participatory mapping of target landscapes;
vi. participatory indicator selection;
vii. composition and selection of assessment team;
viii. field assessment;
ix. data management post-assessment and validation.

66. Three domains of biophysical indicators were selected: soil, hydrology and biota. Limiting the LDA focus to these three domains for identifying indicators gives a narrow framework for SLM applications. This is supposed to be useful given the urgency for sustainable development solutions felt by the stakeholders. It is however considered particularly narrow given the complexity of LD issues as summarized by the Prodoc itself (paragraph 45) as follows: "LD has several consequences such as reduced land productivity, socio-economic problems, including food insecurity, migration, limited development and damage to ecosystems. Degraded land (…) may no longer provide the range of ecosystem functions and services it once did, leading to a loss of the goods and many other potential environmental, social, economic and non-material benefits that are critical for society and development".

67. It is also worth noting that beyond the above quote from the Prodoc, the PRAGA manual recognizes that many other factors independent of soil, hydrology and biota, are influencing rangelands and grasslands ecosystems health. It proposes the application of the Driving force-Pressure-State-Impact-Response Framework[4] (DPSIR) tool for data

[3] Please see reference list for the link to the guidelines.
[4] According to the DPSIR framework, there is a chain of causal links starting with 'driving forces' (economic sectors, human activities) through 'pressures' (emissions, waste) to 'states' (physical, chemical and biological) and 'impacts' on ecosystems, human health and functions, eventually leading to political 'responses' (prioritisation, target setting, indicators).

analysis (Kristensen, 2004). The use of this tool is appropriate as it has a potential to assess the interactions between resource users and ecosystems given that a multiscale approach better reflects the multiscale nature of decision-making. It allows the examination of driving forces that may be exogenous to particular landscapes. It provides therefore ground for examining the differential impact of ecosystem changes and policy responses on rangelands and their users.

68. However, it would have been beneficial to think ahead on a cross-pilot countries system of key criteria for sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems, against which the candidate LD indicators should be identified. In addition to facilitating cross-pilot country exchange, a criteria framework designed before the start of full-scale LDAs can help fill gaps of information and tackle all important issues, including climate change inclusive development aspects, as well as gender and youth equity responsiveness; etc. The evaluation found that the definition of a criteria framework, in the perspective of the use of the DPSIR tool for data management, is not included in the earlier stages of PRAGA.

69. **While the Project objective and outcomes remained relevant over time, the design needs strengthening, in particular to allow piloting the methodology in different series.** The Project objective remains relevant as there is a global interest in investing more resources in restauration of degraded lands. PRAGA is therefore a learning Project with regards to SLM related investments. It is particularly appealing for inspiring LDA and SLM projects that need to follow similar participatory approaches. In Kenya for example, interest in PRAGA approach has grown and IUCN has got funding for two new projects. At Government level, there is a particular interest in remote-sensed data that provide information on rangelands and livestock production potential.

70. With regard to design, one aspect that needs revisiting is the seasonality and repetitions of field LD assessments. Interviewed specialists in Kenya told the evaluation that assessment was done only once, thus covering only one season in target areas, thus missing the seasonal dynamics. Furthermore, community participants can give different perspectives during different seasons, which was missed out in project assessment design.

3.2 Effectiveness - MTE Question 2: What results have been achieved so far, and what is still outstanding?

Evaluation rating: moderately satisfactory

Main Finding 2. For outcome 1 the Project had considerable success in engaging its national stakeholders and local pastoral communities in the implementation of its LDA activities, including site selection, indicator selection and testing, trainings and workshops and the actual conducting of the assessment, but it did not have an equal success in engaging them in the development of the framework and PRAGA methodology. Despite their importance to the objective, outcomes 2 and 3 have made relatively limited progress to date.

71. Achievement of outcomes is assessed through the impact pathways that emerged from the reconstructed TOC. This exercise is hindered by a lack of systematic delivery reporting of achieved output and outcome using the results matrix indicators, both at global and country level, and M&E system data.

Impact pathway 1: "Improved stakeholders' capacity to influence policy and legal frameworks"

72. The evaluation of Project effectiveness along this pathway is primarily based on the extent to which the Project used results from testing the PRAGA methodology to refine and finalize the field manual and use lessons from site tests to link to national and local decision-making processes. Moreover, it is based on the stakeholders' acquired knowledge and increased capacity to influence these processes.

73. **The Project has been successful in capturing the local knowledge to assess LD and in involving the personnel of partner structures in the Project's LDA work. However, its success with regard to supporting processes for making informed decisions to promote SLM is still limited.** To capture local knowledge for LDA while developing the PRAGA methodology, the Project implemented the following outputs under outcome 1: (i) output 1.1: "A Monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual is developed"; output 1.2: "The Monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual is tested at local level and the global indicators are further adapted while assessing policies"; and output 1.3: "The assessment and monitoring method is refined and finalized based on lessons learned from the district/site tests".

74. Under output 1.1, a draft operational and procedural manual to monitor and assess LD and SLM based on the framework of indicators domains was developed and is still a draft. It has been used for LD field assessments in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger and Kyrgyzstan. A contextualized and improved version in Spanish was produced and used in Uruguay. Under output 1.2, LD assessments were carried in sites that were selected that were selected in each country.

75. The criteria for site selection varied between countries (IUCN & FAO, 2019a). In Burkina Faso, site selection was a participatory process based on heterogeneity, vegetation and patterns of utilization, and on existing government projects. In Niger, site selection was based on existing government projects, and on land use types. In Kenya, site selection was a participatory process that used community mental maps; but the thinking was also guided by community elders in order to agree on the heterogeneity of the landscape and what sites within the landscape would be a good sample to collect data. There were also experts like rangeland experts and GIS experts who guided the process. The idea was to focus on community owned land to address some of the challenges they face. In Kyrgyzstan, the seasonality (winter, spring and summer pastures) and usage of pastures oriented site selection. In Uruguay, site selection was consulted between two participating ministries and was based on a variety of factors including: meat production and the environment, social and management linkages, and representativeness of the landscapes. These were then discussed with local communities to see whether they were in agreement with the project activities and goals. The target sites for Uruguay are pilots for comparison with other sites.

76. The PRAGA methodology testing process was a success in all the five countries, and testing is completed in Kenya, Uruguay and Kyrgyzstan where validation workshops were organized. The Project made an effort to effectively implement activities related to outcome 1 which is its backbone. It built country ownership of the testing methodology and the participatory approach. The draft manual is still pending revision based on feedback and

lessons learned, and the global indicators need to be adapted while assessing policies, before it can be published.

77. In Kenya, the Project was able to capture local knowledge from pastoralist communities. However, the community participants in the Isiolo validation workshop told the evaluation that the Project did not provide a clear explanation of its objectives to them, and further shared their sentiments in these terms: "The methodology was explained narratively; there was need to be more practical (…). The project team mentioned they come to learn from us based on the research they are doing but did not explain further on how the project is tailored to influence policy on rangeland management at national, county and local levels". The communities expected that the methodology would be tested through pilot rehabilitation interventions. At the same time, they said that increased awareness of the threats to the rangelands triggered them to understand the challenges they face to maintain rangeland productivity. This led them to take measure to implement their by-laws.

78. In Uruguay, the country draft manual provided an improved indicators framework using DPSIR criteria which allow to link the indicators of the three domains – soil, water, biota – to environmental, social and economic issues (further discussed in paragraph 91). The assessments were carried out based on indicators that the local producers had prioritized. They had an originality of bringing in same exercises for capturing and sharing knowledge, local producers and participants from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of environment, FAO, Federated Agricultural Cooperatives (*Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas* - CAF) and grasslands experts from Faculty of Agronomy of UdeLaR. With this format for the PRAGA methodology testing exercises, the Project strengthened the capacities of its stakeholders to determine land degradation problems through indicators and the use these to promote SLM. It created a space and launched a dynamic for producers and other stakeholders to be involved in reflections on assessing grassland degradation and identifying related sustainability issues.

79. In Kyrgyzstan, local producers also identified the main indicators of the pasture state. But while the LDA covered three domains in the other four countries, local communities found it easier to define vegetation indicators, though very few soil and water indicators were mentioned. The reason given in the Project country reporting (Camp Alatoo, 2019) is that special knowledge is required to capture soil and water indicators.

80. From the interviews conducted with pastoralists communities representatives in Isiolo, Kenya, and with project stakeholders in Uruguay, the Evaluation was able to capture some examples of local knowledge shared with the Project. In relation to the health of pasturelands, pastoralists in Isiolo mentioned for example that the harder and brownish the cow dung is the worse the health of rangeland is in relation to water and pasture. They also said that warm or cold temperature on a given site indicates the presence/abundance or no of certain pasture species. A presence of those species indicates why livestock may tend to go and stay there. It is also linked to the behavior of livestock because in such sites it relaxes. According to those pastoralists, changes in the landscape that lead to "warm soils" help increase the resilience of livestock. They have also mentioned that they can identify site conditions linked to the problem of insect infestation in certain sites and seasons. Salty water or "sweet water" may also be indicators of site conditions with regard to livestock grazing during the wet season. The presence of dispersed water points allows to avoid overgrazing in certain areas, and thus avoid land degradation.

81. Other aspects of local knowledge are about the link between herding a variety of animals as a forage and livestock management strategy with regard to rangeland health and to livelihoods. In Kenya for example, the mixture of browsers such as camels and goats, and grazers ensures that each species uses different vegetation, thus leading to different pressure on one rangeland resource component, with a potential of mitigating LD. In Uruguay, to achieve a good economic outcome and keep the land and pasture in good health, grazing systems with a good sheep/cattle ratios are established. Once the adequate adjustment for the pastureland carrying capacity is known, it is important to establish the grazing systems to be used and the wool/beef production ratios.

82. While the project achieved considerable success in testing the PRAGA methodology for establishing an LD indicators framework in all the five targeted countries, none of the five countries has a draft LDA indicators framework yet that can be used at broad scale at national or sub-national level. This implies delays in completion of Components 2 and 3 may prevent the project from achieving all the intended results with regard to influencing local, national and international policies.

Impact pathway 2: "Sharing information and learning nationally and across pilot countries"

83. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the Project along this pathway assesses the extent to which the Project uses the learning generated from the testing of the PRAGA methodology, to support a real-time feedback not only for finalizing the PRAGA field manual, but also to benefit national and international decision-making processes for grassland and rangeland assessments and SLM.

84. **In the pilot countries, the PRAGA methodology testing activities contributed to the sharing of LDA information among stakeholders nationally, but in Kyrgyzstan the Project is still lacking an approach to integrate these activities in national/sub-national government structures to strengthen their ownership of the results.** Pathway 2 is the main pathway for achieving expected changes under outcome 2. It starts with output 1.3 by refining and finalizing the PRAGA methodology. Moving up the pathway, output 1.3 becomes an input for output 2.1[5] as rangeland assessment results are linked to national and local decision-making processes.

85. For output 1.3, the Project progress varies between pilot countries. Achievements are stronger in Uruguay where it strongly incorporates elements of DPSIR model in the testing of the PRAGA methodology. The results from the use of DPSIR were validated during workshops in each of the two pilot areas (North and South), with the participation of all key Project stakeholders and partners. The way in which these results are supporting the multisectoral consensus on sustainable rangeland management in the country is encouraging. In Kenya, while a plan has been developed including the need to share PRAGA results and policy outcomes to the two county responsible executives, an approach to systematically integrate the Project's results at the county policy and budget decision-making processes is still lacking.

86. **The LDA results have not yet linked to national and local decision-making processes, yet there are a number of relevant and positive developments underway. Using them**

[5] Output 2.1: "Participatory national grassland and rangeland assessment results are linked to national and local decision-making processes".

to influence local, national and international policies is still hampered by the slow progress in their dissemination. Under output 2.1: "Participatory national grassland and rangeland assessment results are linked to national and local decision-making processes", the Project has achieved mixed results between countries. However no similar brief was released to link to national policies, such as the Livestock Bill results in national validation workshops. For Kyrgyzstan, validation of remote sensing and baseline report took place in December 2019. For Burkina Faso and Niger, PRAGA methodology testing is still to be completed. In each country, the Project identified multiple indicators that can be used to monitor the changes in the rangeland ecosystems and to describe their status. However, even for those countries that have organized validation workshops, the LD indicators frameworks drafts are not yet ready for dissemination. Delays in full execution of components 2 and 3 may prevent the project from achieving all the intended results with regard to influencing local, national and international policies.

87. In spite of the delayed progress in pathway 2, there are certain relevant and positive developments worth mentioning. In Burkina Faso, participants in the Inception workshop identified two potential deliverables: a policy note to be used for advocacy and an investment plan for sustainable land management at local level, integrating information generated by existing plans (IUCN & FAO, 2019b).

88. In Kenya, when the Project started, the counties of Isiolo and Garissa were in advanced processes of developing rangeland policies which could be used to enhance rangeland management practices, while the Garissa County had developed an Environmental management and coordination act and climate change act. At the intercounty level, the Frontier County Development Council was facilitating the development of a Rangeland management policy for the eight northern frontier counties (IUCN & FAO, 2018). In November 2019, the Project released a policy brief "Land degradation and sustainable land management: priorities and potential interventions – Isiolo and Garissa Counties". However no similar brief was released to link to national policies, such as the Livestock Bill, Sessional paper No 12 of 2018 on National livestock Policy and draft Rangeland and Pastoralism Strategy.

89. In Uruguay, the Project was effective in creating opportunities of cross-sectoral dialogue and inter-institutional collaboration, namely by removing the barriers towards the integration of the private sector organizations as implementation partners. CAF's participation in the project as implementation partner is contributing to the effort to influence national policies at high levels. It contributed to the success that was achieved in engaging actors from the public and private sectors, and Faculty of Agronomy of UdeLaR in the analysis of the results from PRAGA methodology testing.

90. The evaluation was also informed that in May 2020, Uruguay will host a regional symposium on sustainable range management, with the participation of national and international experts and as well a refresher course for professionals in that thematic area. Both events will be organized by FAO with the support of some key Project partners. Overall, while the workshops for validation of LDA results that have taken place in Kenya and Uruguay, and this marks a step in the sharing of information in those two countries. In Kyrgyzstan, besides the validation of remote sensing and baseline report that took place as mentioned above, there is no other reported approach to integrate the Project's activities in national/sub-national government structures to strengthen their ownership of the results. However, with the positioning of Camp Alatoo as a key player on rangeland

health management in the country and a main interlocutor between donors and government, there is a likelihood that the Project results will be disseminated and PRAGA will be used as a baseline methodology for upcoming projects (including an FAO Green Climate Fund (GCF) project).

91. In Burkina Faso and Niger, the LDA validation workshops have not yet taken place. With the exception of Uruguay, dissemination activities conducted by the Project have been ad-hoc responses to requests or contributions in conference opportunities, but not in implementation of activities leading to related planned outputs. The evaluation found no evidence that the Project has put in place a knowledge management and dissemination thinking, or steps to disseminate LDA and SLM learning at country and global levels, within its planned timeframe.

Impact pathway 3: "Learning lessons and capturing and disseminating best practices"

92. Along this pathway the evaluation assesses the extent to which the results on the indicator frameworks obtained using the PRAGA methodology were shared within and beyond the pilot countries at relevant international fora.

93. **At international level, the Project has started sharing the LDA and monitoring method. However it has not yet produced and disseminated a global comparable criteria and indicators framework that could assess rangeland degradation, and be applied to a broad scale for rangeland management.** Under output 2.2: "Assessment and monitoring method shared with relevant international mechanisms in order to integrate/align with existing frameworks", the Project started sharing the LDA and monitoring method at international level: PRAGA is used in LDA in Egypt and Jordan. It is also being used in FAO projects in Georgia, Uzbekistan, Armenia and in the new GCF project in Kyrgyzstan. It was also presented in a side event at UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP) 14 in Delhi in September 2019 in a side event that brought together national partners and international experts group to share their experience with PRAGA, among which the World Alliance of Mobile and Indigenous People (WAMIP).

94. Notwithstanding this good start with sharing LDA and monitoring method, there is still a challenge of comparability of indicators across countries. While the rangelands health focus is essential, it is also important to recognize that the rangelands provide a wide variety of ecosystem goods and services besides forage. Hence LD is not only degradation of the natural capital but also of the diverse functions that are fulfilled by that capital, and link to diverse ecosystem services. These functions include:

    i. supporting (soil, nutrient cycling, primary production);
    ii. regulating (hydrological, flooding, erosion, climate);
    iii. provisioning (wild food, income, house construction, genetic resources, firewood, etc.);
    iv. conservation (biodiversity).

    In spite of the effort made in Uruguay to link the indicators of the three domains to social and economic issues, the Project has not yet produced a framework that is applicable to assess rangeland degradation and can be applied to a broad scale for rangeland management.

95. The tested PRAGA methodology guide does not provide a specific criteria and indicators framework as global Project reference for the participatory identification of indicators for LD and for SLM. Lack of such a framework causes variation in the quality of results between countries when identifying LD indicators. An opportunity was missed to capture community knowledge on the indicators related to the provisioning functions that link to ecosystems goods and services and therefore key to sustainable management. Other steps are therefore needed to provide a global comparable criteria and indicators framework to decision-makers and rangeland managers that could assist them in managing trade-offs for rangelands use.

96. For example, while examining the effectiveness of outcome 1 in Uruguay with the project team and its partners, a question arose whether it would not have been better for comparability in national, regional and international contexts, to work more explicitly on "criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of grasslands" based on PRAGA that incorporates DPSIR, instead of limiting the focus on the level of indicators. During a field visit to Maldonado, interviewed farmers belonging to CAF outlined six criteria for sustainable rangelands and grasslands management, incorporating those focused by PRAGA:

i. maintenance of the integrity of the natural field;
ii. protection of soil resources, water resources and biota;
iii. protection and improvement of ecological systems;
iv. maintenance and improvement for grassland and grassland users of sustainable development options;
v. strengthening of producer institutions;
vi. ensuring good governance by public institutions, the private sector and users.

97. **The Project adequately uses institutional project supervision and project review systems, yet the Project has not setup an M&E system and plan. There are mixed achievements with regard to capturing and aggregating information.** Through output 3.1, the Project should set-up and implement monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and herewith provide information on progress towards its outcomes and output targets. This requires developing an M&E system[6] and its implementation plan, beyond the provisional one provided in the Results matrix. The document review and interviews revealed that the Project adequately uses institutional project supervision and project review systems, for both IUCN and FAO, like monitoring mission reports and BTORs as well as periodic reports on the Project progress. For the periodic reports, the information circuit is pyramid-shaped, consisting in accounts of activity implementation from the countries back to the aggregation levels by IUCN Nairobi (for Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger) and by FAO Rome (for Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay).

[6] The M&E system is used to improve the quality of the design and implementation of a project, and to evaluate its effectiveness, efficiency and impact. As a management tool, it supports the preparation of key decisions regarding the project strategy, their discussion with stakeholders, and the responsibility and other aspects regarding their implementation; and, it provide inputs to the periodic reporting and to the preparation of the annual M&E plan.

98. At the same time, the Evaluation found that the Project M&E is not articulated on the Project logical framework, and the formats for transmitting country reports are disparate and not based on country or global annual M&E Plans. The Project lacks a clear approach for capturing, aggregating and disseminating information generated by the Project, for peer-learning at national level and across pilot countries about "what works and why". With regard to capturing and aggregating information, Uruguay is an exception, as all activities carried out within the framework of the project have been systematically documented, representing an accumulated information that can be processed for dissemination in the future. More will be discussed under the section "factors affecting performance".

99. **The Project is not yet realizing its potential to systematically capture and disseminate lessons and best practices. In particular, there is no approach to learning on the change processes that influence decision-making on rangelands management and SLM.** Output 3.3, which is under the responsibility of FAO, is expected to collect best practices and lessons learned and publish them in a dedicated report; and, disseminate them inter alia through the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub, the knowledge management platform for the Great Green Wall and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat.

100. The design has not provided operational guidance on approaches and plans for documenting good practices and lessons learned. Lesson learning processes are not built into country implementation processes, and there is no provision of an outline on the requirements for scaling up of results that could guide the capturing of good practices.

101. The Project has made some progress in documenting and publishing best practices and lessons learned on the overall project, but it remains limited thus far. In Uruguay, FAO and the implementing partner developed an approach of learning with the Project's stakeholders with a certain originality. They organized feedback sessions on what is working well in rangeland management, instead of working with the Project implementation approach of the three domains (soil, water and biota).

Likelihood of impact using Review of outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) and based on the reconstructed theory of change

102. The earlier briefly mentioned ROtI tool (see paragraph 37) was used to assess whether the Project and its key stakeholders are doing what is needed to ensure that the necessary conditions are progressively in place for the intended changes to take place, and therefore, whether the project is likely to deliver its intended impacts.

103. **The ROtI analysis indicates that the Project progress towards achieving impacts is mixed, with some positive results in Uruguay and Kenya. The two impact drivers (ID) may not be achieved before Project completion, and may thus limit further achievements of the intermediate states.** The two IDs are not likely to be reached in all countries at Project completion: ID_1 is about broadening the community participation approach with women and youth participation, and ID_2 is about using the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat as bridges between pastoralists and policymakers to incorporate issues in policy discussions. In Uruguay, the project team told the evaluation that an important ID in the country context is "wide-based participation and commitment of institutional actors including Producers organizations, in the policy processes". This is already widely achieved as producers associations supported by the Project are actively participating in policy processes regarding rangeland management.

104. **Pastoralists associations and producers' organizations may not be sufficiently strengthened and enabled to technically contribute and influence national policies and programmes on rangeland, pastoral production in the timeframe of the Project, with the exception of Uruguay. In Kenya, there are strong signs of early scaling out.** Strengthening pastoralists' organizations, organizations, movements and networks is critical to enable them to raise awareness on pastoral issues among decision-makers. In this regard, the following lower level Intermediate states (IS) are important: IS_1 about strengthening pastoralists and producers' organizations to enable them to technically contribute and influence national policies and programmes on rangeland management, and IS_2 about the scaling up of participatory LDA and SLM activities. There is little likelihood to reach IS_1 in Burkina Faso, Niger, Kenya and Kyrgyzstan in the Project timeframe, as no Project-supported process in this regard has started. However, it is largely reached in Uruguay, where strong pastureland owners were already organized in producers cooperatives. The implementation partner in the country, CAF, is one of the federations of such cooperatives.

105. As for IS_2, scaling-out and scaling-up processes should be linked. If change spreads geographically, there is greater likelihood of influencing those at higher government decision-making levels, and if these levels are successfully influenced, then there is more likelihood for the geographical spread of the best practices. In the case of Kenya, there are strong signs of early scaling out by the Project partners to other non-targeted administrative entities.

106. **In the remaining time before its completion, the Project may not fully contribute to improving policies and legal frameworks, as well as their enforcement in pilot countries, nor share all the lessons learned with the interested parties within the global arena. However, in Uruguay the Project is contributing to the effort to influence national policies and in Kenya, the non-finalized methodology was presented internationally and integrated in two other projects.** The following level of ISs concerns improving and enforcing policy and legal frameworks (IS_3) and presenting and sharing lessons learned within the global arena and to all interested parties (IS_4). With regard to IS_3, there is no reported involvement of the Project on the use of its earlier results to feed into decision-making processes, and there are no documented cases of (i) involving the project knowledge inputs, (ii) facilitating the elaboration of policy; or (ii) action programme documents on rangeland management or SLM. However, in Uruguay CAF's participation in the project is contributing to the effort to influence national policies at high levels. It took advantage of the presidential elections of 2019 to present to all candidates a document called "Proposals to the Next Government" (CAF, no date), where the importance of the country's rangelands was highlighted, and an appeal is made to apply good practices for their preservation. In Kenya, while the adoption of the PRAGA methodology to inform SLM interventions and investments in ASAL Counties governments is subject to integrating it systematically in their planning and budgeting processes, the methodology is being incorporated in other projects (GEF and GCF projects).

107. As for IS_4, the project has made some progress in documenting and publishing best practices and lessons learned on the overall project, but it remains limited thus far. In Kenya, the sharing of the non-refined and non-finalized LDA and LD monitoring method has started at international level: as already indicated above, PRAGA is used in Egypt and Jordan and was presented at UNCCD in Delhi. At the same time, there is little likelihood that the

sharing of this knowledge will be significant before the planned Project completion date, and that it will lead to expected changes and planned impacts.

108. **The transition between outcomes and achieving the intermediate states and having impacts mainly relies on the realization of Assumptions 3 to 4 of the reconstructed TOC.** Assumption 2 has not yet been realized as the FAO and IUCN partnership does not demonstrate that it has sufficiently facilitated the comparability of the sets of identified criteria and indicators and the exchange of scientific practices between the participating countries and the regions where they are located. Assumption 3 has not yet been realized as the pilot countries have not yet finalized frameworks for mainstreaming good practices into planning and implementation of SLM.

109. For assumption 4, there are early signs of its realization in Kenya and Uruguay. In Kenya, information from the Project regarding project design is used to design new projects. In Uruguay, the Project has allowed to leverage CAF's and the Faculty of Agronomy of UdeLaR's own resources for investing in LDA and SLM. As for assumption 5, the likelihood of its realization before Project completion is low, as FAO and IUCN are not yet sufficiently prepared to publish lessons learnt and best practices that are needed for the development of effective strategies, policies and legislation that combat range and grassland degradation. However, this likelihood can be improved if the two institutions use Uruguay's experience in the use of the DPSIR framework for structuring LDA indicators, to develop guidelines on sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems that can be used as tool for decision-making.

3.3 Efficiency - MTE Question 3: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently?

Evaluation rating: moderately satisfactory

Main Finding 3. In terms of concrete deliverables, outputs under outcome 1 are being achieved at reasonable costs, while most outputs under outcomes 2 and 3 are delayed, thus reducing delivery efficiency for the two outcomes. The main cause of this low efficiency is the delay in Project start. The Project made a commendable effort to mitigate the impact of the delay by accelerating the implementation of outcome 1. The project has a good scope of (international) co-financiers, while it has one government co-financier. The fragmentation of Project implementation roles and responsibilities weakened the performance.

110. **With regard to the progress made in the implementation and completion of its activities, the Project is experiencing delays in respect of the proposed timeframes in the Prodoc. Delays are particularly significant for the delivery of activities related to outcomes 2 and 3, while the project managed to catch-up the implementation of outcome 1.** Overall, the Project was affected by a one-year delay in actual start of its activities. The impact of the delay was further exacerbated for Burkina Faso and Niger by the insecurity in the selected PRAGA methodology testing sites, and for Kyrgyzstan by governance issues. After the start in each country, the Project made a commendable effort to mitigate the impact of the delay by accelerating the implementation of outcome 1, which is the precursor to other outcomes.

111. With regard to outcome 2, for most countries implementation progress is not following the planned timeline because it is tributary to the delivery of output 1.3, which has not

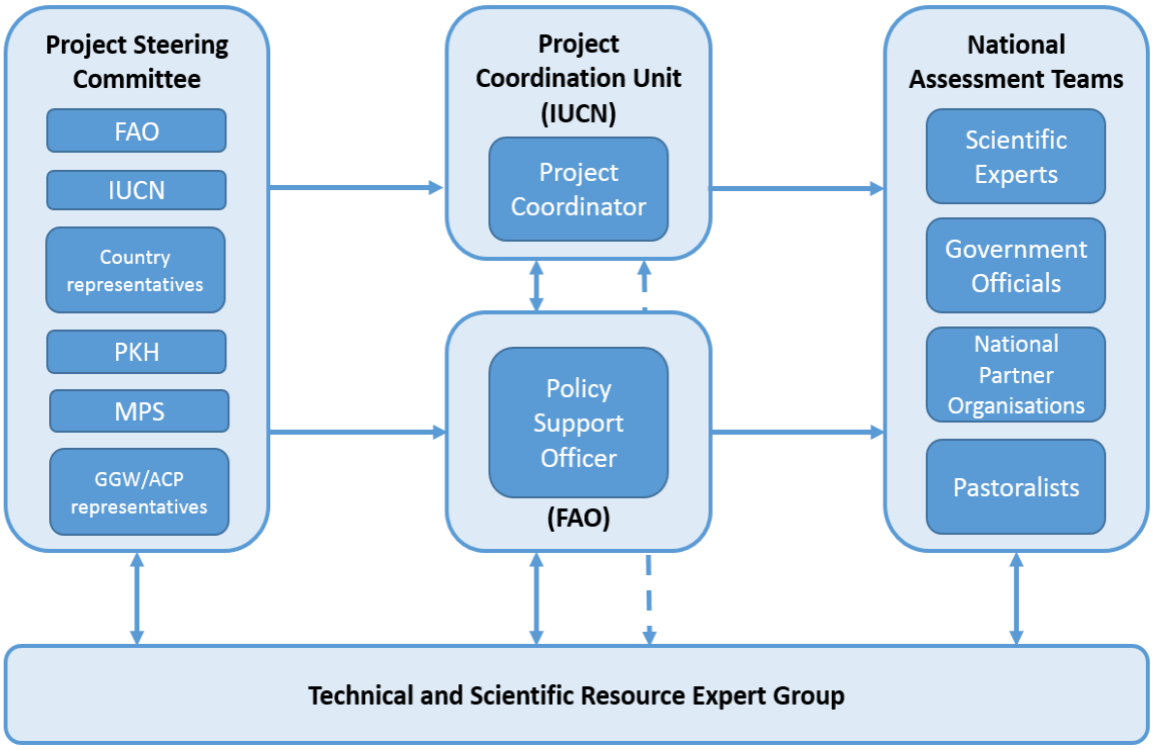
completed yet in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Burkina Faso and Niger, and a LD indicator framework is still to be established in all five countries (see e.g. paragraph 74 and 78). Notwithstanding the delays, in Uruguay the Project managed to undertake activities under output 2.1, linking its results with decision-making processes of key government partners. In Kenya and Burkina Faso, as described in paragraph 83 and 84, there are some initial developments that are relevant and have potential.

112. In Kyrgyzstan, there is a risk of not achieving this output due to weak government partner involvement and participation in the implementation of the Project. As for outcome 3, as mentioned in paragraph 95, the Project is not yet realizing its potential to systematically capture project information, or lessons and best practices.

113. **While the Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) adopted for Project implementation is appealing and appropriate, there are gaps in the roles of the various project partners at country level execution, and the level of engagement of the various FAO country offices is mixed. This has affected implementation efficiency.** As previously discussed in paragraph 35, the Project is implemented under an OPIM modality through an Operational Partners Agreement (OPA) between the FAO and IUCN. The management and implementation arrangements provided by the Prodoc state that FAO is the GEF Agency and responsible for overall oversight and compliance of the Project. It provides supervision, guidance and technical support through its Forestry Department and the Agricultural Plant Production and Protection Division. IUCN is the primary Project operational partner responsible for the day-to-day technical and financial implementation of outputs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1 and is lead executing agency for Burkina Faso, Niger and Kenya. FAO is lead executing agency for Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay and is also the financial and operational executing agency for outputs 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3.

114. The Project's organizational structure as it appears in the Prodoc is presented in Figure 2. The Project has a Project Coordination Unit hosted by IUCN/GDI in Nairobi, Kenya, a project steering committee, a technical and scientific resource experts group, a FAO project task force, and national government partners and other partners at country level.

Figure 2: Project organizational structure



Source: project document

115. These arrangements are appropriate for an effective and efficient implementation of the Project. Arguably the FAO-IUCN partnership rests on the comparative advantages of each institution. FAO has a considerable experience in global grassland and rangeland management and assessment. It is an interlocutor with governments on pastoralism and range management, and a provider of normative advice, technical analysis, capacity building, and policy support expertise in these areas. As for IUCN, in addition to the experience in grassland and rangeland management and assessment, it has a unique structure which can bring together states, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations for the benefit of this project.

116. In spite of the appropriateness of the management arrangements and the comparative advantages of the two partners, there are issues that have affected implementation efficiency. FAO has not sufficiently used its convening power in cases where a higher government political engagement was needed, like in Kyrgyzstan. With the exception of Uruguay where there was a full involvement in the implementation of the Project, FAO has not proactively mobilized its experience in grassland and rangeland management to complement that of IUCN. Furthermore, IUCN's experience in the same areas has not been adequately used in Kirghizstan and Uruguay

117. Despite these issues, the partnership between FAO and IUCN has allowed embedding the Project in its Global Dryland Initiative (GDI), and working with local pastoralist communities, research institutions and government partners at country level to implement outcome 1 and FAO HQs is ensuring the monitoring of the Project, while FAOR in Uruguay is ensuring execution of Project activities in the country, and FAOR in Kyrgyzstan is playing a relay role between the Project and FAO HQs.

118. With regard to implementation, the partnership did not adequately leverage the respective comparative advantages of both institutions in each country. For example, IUCN does not play any role in the Project execution in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay. In fact, with regard to Uruguay, IUCN originally led the execution, but in the 2019 budget, FAO became the now leading implementer. Similarly, FAO has not significantly contributed its experience in managing grassland and rangeland management projects with landscape approaches in Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Niger – where IUCN is operational partner. At global level, both FAO and IUCN have not carried forward the implementation of outputs 1.3 and 2.1. They have not yet taken full advantage of pastoral networks such as the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, and civil society and private sector organizations, or to coordinate with other initiatives such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative, for the implementation of outputs 2.2 and 3.3.

119. **Overall the Project is cost-effective with regard to the progress made in testing the PRAGA methodology. No overall conclusion can be drawn yet as the other activities are still to be implemented or completed. The project has a good scope of (international) co-financiers, while it has one government co-financier.** The project is making good use of GEF funding and follows FAO procedures for project implementation. Overall it is cost-effective when one considers the progress made in implementing outcome 1, without cost overrun.

120. With regard to co-financing, the Project managed to attract funding from a large scope of international co-financiers, which are illustrated in Appendix 2. Commendable is also the arranged co-financing from another relevant FAO project, namely the European Union-Agricultural Commodities Programme (ACP) project in Burkina Faso and Niger[7] as well as the additional in-cash co-financing from FAO[8] At national level, the Project only received co-financing from Uruguay. The resources granted by Uruguay have been used efficiently and the team there was able to spend less for the same activities. It was suggested that the contribution from the Government would be in an approximate ratio of 2:1, which was confirmed in interviews with the project coordination that has been fulfilled, and amounts to USD 370 940 (instead of USD 1 200 000), with the following sources: Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP): USD 326 650; Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay (MVOTMA): USD 43 290; and Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria (INIA): 1 000. Contributions from MVOTMA and INIA were not included at design, and therefore new.

121. **FAO financial procedures and financial reports are submitted in a timely manner.** The Prodoc provided a good account of how financial management of and reporting on GEF resources will be carried out. This follows FAO's rules and procedures, in accordance with

[7] "Action against desertification in support of the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative and south-south cooperation in ACP countries" and the "Global Drylands Assessment".
[8] FAO has provided additional in-cash co-financing to the project through its regular programme resources as follow: USD 50 000 in cash co-finance to Uruguay and Kenya to support recruitment of consultants to do policy studies; USD 50 000 given to IUCN through an LoA for regional meetings in Niger and Burkina Faso and support to getting allocation at the Governors' round-table meeting to share PRAGA Kenya experience; USD 20 000 in-cash for an international consultant who technically backstopped the project when the project coordinator was away on maternity leave.

the agreement between FAO and the GEF Trustee. The Project has not encountered any particular funds management problem.

3.4 Sustainability - MTE Question 4: To what extent are steps being taken to ensure the sustainability of the intervention?

Evaluation rating: moderately likely

Main Finding 4. Prospects for sustainability of the Project results are mixed: they are good in countries where the government is involved in implementation, where there is a strong ownership of the LDA indicators identification process, and where the methodology is already being promoted for new initiatives; and they are hindered in all the five pilot countries by weak delivery of important outputs under outcomes 2 and 3, the still weak dissemination of learning from Project results, and the lack of exit strategies and sustainability plans.

122. Assessing sustainability of the Project results before its completion is difficult as the sustainability enhancing output 2.1 and 3.3 have not yet been delivered. Although the pivotal outcome 1 is quasi achieved, it is unclear how each one of the five pilot countries will ensure post-project follow-up to fully achieve outcome 2, given that the closure of the Project is very near. This being said, there is prospect that the achieved results under outcome 1 will continue after its completion, but this likelihood is disparate across countries.

123. **Institutional sustainability is likely in four project countries, yet dissemination of lessons is overall still weak and exit strategies and sustainability plans have not yet been prepared.** Overall, the prospects for sustainability of the Project results are mixed. Institutional sustainability is likely in Burkina Faso, Niger and Uruguay, where the government partners have a shared responsibility in the implementation of Project activities. In Uruguay, the likelihood is further increased by the plans of the Faculty of Agronomy of UdeLaR to include training its students in LDA and SLM methods in its curriculum. In Kyrgyzstan, sustainability is hindered by a marginal role played by government partners in Project activities. However, prospects for stronger national ownership and institutional sustainability may improve in Kenya and Kirghizstan if the Project and its government partners in those two countries swiftly adopt appropriate modalities to further involve the subnational governments in its implementation.

124. However, in all the five countries sustainability is hindered by still weak delivery of important outputs under outcomes 2 and 3, the weak dissemination of learning from Project results and the lack of global criteria and indicators framework for rangeland and grassland management. Furthermore, having experienced a considerable late start of its activities, the Project ought to have co-developed with its partners in each country an exit strategy and a sustainability plan. The evaluation did not find indication that these will be developed before its completion. However, as if the Project is given an extension, it will be able to fully achieve output 2.1 and 3.3, and to prepare with national partners exit strategies and sustainability plans.

125. **Some of the countries started to use the PRAGA methodology in the design of new initiatives or envisage to promote it at a regional scale, which lays the basis for sustainability of project results.** While the methodology was successfully tested in all the five pilot countries, there is room for improvement. As demonstrated in Uruguay, the

likelihood of using the methodology in the future is linked to the usability at local level, the extent to which pastoralists' communities can be made aware of the rangelands threats and a wider scale to design LDA projects. The methodology generated significant interest in Kenya where the government is planning to incorporate it into National Rangeland Strategy (under development), and IUCN has incorporated it into a GCF-funded project "Towards ending drought emergencies: Ecosystem based adaptation in Kenya's arid and semi-aid rangelands (TWENDE)" and a GEF-funded project "Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya" (GEF funded project).

126. However, sustainability requires to look beyond projectization. The uptake of the methodology to inform SLM interventions and investments is subject to its systematic entrenchment into the planning and budgeting process at different levels. Currently in Kenya, the process of mainstreaming the methodology into the planning and budgeting process at county level is at the nascent stage and will require sustained effort from the project proponents. The Project needs to engage county leadership in order to enhance the ownership of the process and ensure resource allocation for the utilization of PRAGA as a decision making tool for SLM interventions. If the usage of PRAGA remains at the pilot stage, and is not scaled up, the intended outcome of sustainable rangeland management at scale will not be achieved. In Kenya, the importance of cross-counties utilization of PRAGA and the formulation of SLM strategies should be emphasized in the policy influencing sphere and need to be entrenched into regional economic block activities like those of the Frontier Counties Development Council (FCDC).

127. In Uruguay the successful testing of the PRAGA methodology is likely to have sustainable impact. Through the integration of DPSIR in the methodology, the Project was able to identify LD and SLM indicators beyond the soil-water-biota domains and extend interest to territorial, demographic, socioeconomic, livestock and resource depletion dynamics. This widens the range of its users and allows to bring together different agencies, institutions, expertise and resources, thus providing a strong foundation for sustainability. Partner public agencies (MGAP, MVOTMA, UdeLaR) and private/cooperative sector (CAF) have full ownership of the methodology, so that sustainability of the project results at the national level is guaranteed. Furthermore, the country plans to promote its use at regional level, by presenting it in a regional symposium hosted by Uruguay in 2020.

128. **There is a good likelihood that the targeted stakeholders will take ownership of the PRAGA methodology testing results. This likelihood is enhanced by the fact that the Project collaborates with a wide range of governmental agencies and stakeholders from other sectors, among other factors.** In most pilot countries, the level of ownership by the government partners at national level is high. Equally high is the ownership at sub-national level in countries with decentralized governance like Kenya and Uruguay. Country ownership is enhanced by the fact that the Project collaborates with a wide range of governmental agencies and stakeholders from other sectors, and with different levels of government in countries with decentralized governance. In Kyrgyzstan however, ownership needs improvement; the request of information on Project results by the Government partner for its policy and planning needs is lacking at both national and sub-national government levels.

129. Although it is not clear how Project results will be linked to decision-making and policy processes in the future, there is good likelihood that a certain absorption of SLM best

practices will take place at sub-national government and local levels. In Kenya for example, increased awareness on the threats to rangelands triggered communities to understand the challenges they face to maintain rangeland productivity, which led them to take measures and implement by-laws.

130. **Most of the risks identified by the Prodoc have not materialized, a part from the challenge of Project coordination. There was a force majeure insecurity risk which affected the Project in Niger and Burkina Faso, but it was adequately managed.** The Prodoc provided a good risk planning. It has identified and described the risks that may occur during the implementation of the project, specifying among other things the likelihood of occurrence, the potential impact and the mitigation measures. The identified risks related to:

i. political-institutional: divergent priorities of projects partners; low political will to put into practice new science, capacities and innovations;

ii. climate contingency risk: climate change impacts on land resources and pastoral management systems;

iii. social risks: reluctance to participate in the project activities by pastoralists;

iv. coordination challenges due to complex project design.

131. Risks, 1, 2, and 4 did not materialize. Risk 3 - climate change - has not been addressed as a structural issue, but rather as a short-term aspect of project implementation. This is incongruent with the very objective of the Project, and the response should have been included in the architecture of the PRAGA methodology, as a follow-up to what was indicated as one of the mitigation actions, that climate change will be taken into account while developing the participatory assessment tool and its content.

132. For risk 5, the impact and probability of occurrence were both rated as moderately high. The Prodoc mentioned that coordination challenges could significantly delay project activities and negatively impact expected results. This risk materialized and the delay of Project start was considerable, this affected the delivery of many outputs under outcomes 2 and 3.

133. In retrospect, it does not appear that the Prodoc went far enough in the assessment of risk 5. With regard to the FAO-IUCN partnership for example, no strong evidence was provided on how their respective well-established comparative advantages would ensure a smooth implementation of the Project, and what the role of the FAOR would be in each country.

134. The prolonged situation of insecurity in Burkina Faso and Niger was a force majeure. This was an important threat in the PRAGA methodology testing sites. It was swiftly and well managed by the Project. Other sites were selected and work continued.

3.5 Factors affecting performance - MTE Question 5: What are the main factors that have affected or are likely to affect effectiveness, that could prevent future progress towards the eventual achievement of the project's intended longer-term impact?

Evaluation rating: moderately unsatisfactory

Main Finding 5. The PRAGA methodology could be more rigorous and more comprehensive in order to provide not only locally relevant but also globally comparable indicators. An M&E system could have helped collect the necessary data and information to support learning. The fragmented responsibilities and roles affected project performance. Collaborations with universities and local consultants has allowed to tap in local knowledge and to comprehend better LD processes and pastoralists' perception of LD. The project suffered from serious delays, but is able to adapt to new situations.

135. **The testing of PRAGA methodology could be more rigorous and more comprehensive in order to provide not only locally relevant but also globally comparable indicators.** One interviewed country-level Project team leader told the evaluation, "we are trying to develop the methodology, but we are not clear how to interpret the results". Many other interviewees in similar Project positions also said that the PRAGA methodology needs a clear and more integrated framework allowing to identify indicators in a way that allow cross-pilot country exchange.

136. The Prodoc presents LD as an environmental issue of global importance, as it undermines ecosystem service provision and economic returns from rangelands and grasslands. In its presentation of lessons learned from past related work, the Prodoc mentions that "LD assessment should be considered part of the broader assessment of natural resources, which in turn should be seen as the basis for land use planning, rural development and SLM". The apparent reduction of scope unwittingly reduces LD to a local issue.

137. To address the problems related to LD and SLM, requires an understanding of the linkages between land use, policy, and the provision of ecosystem services based on the perspectives of local stakeholders. The PRAGA methodology should therefore become more comprehensive and follow the integrated approach implied by the Project's objective. The identification of LD and SLM indicators needs to be guided by a framework of global criteria (i.e. pillars of sustainability) and indicators that can help transmit efficiently messages to decision- and policymakers on both LD and SLM policy drivers. In the context of the Project, there should have been a joint five pilot countries exercise to determine global LD and SLM criteria in relation to rangelands and grasslands, in order to guide the local community level work of identifying corresponding indicators sets through PRAGA methodology. The results should allow not only to have indicators that provide information on the state of rangelands and grasslands, but also to identify policy drivers that can help reverse the LD trends and sustain the production potential. The improved methodology in Uruguay goes in this direction.

138. Based on this analysis, the evaluation concludes that while the indicators in the current methodology are locally relevant, they are not readily globally comparable.

139. **The PRAGA methodology procedural and operational manual and the developed indicators have not yet been disseminated; while they are important tools for the stakeholders, they are not yet available for use.** The PRAGA procedural and operational manual is still at a draft stage and has not yet been refined and finalized for dissemination and wider use. Although its testing in three countries is completed, it is still ongoing in two others.

140. Like the manual, the LD indicators are not yet disseminated to stakeholders although validation workshops have already been organized in three of the five pilot countries. It is therefore difficult to assess to what extent they are accepted by the stakeholders based on actual use experience.

141. **As mentioned under effectiveness, the project lacks an adequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that is able to collect the necessary, timely, accurate and comparable data and information can support learning systematically. Responsibilities are not always clear and fragmented.** At Project level, the share of responsibility for M&E, knowledge management and dissemination between FAO and IUCN is unclear. Consequently, the coordination between both institutions to deliver outcome 3 is unclear. IUCN feels its role is reduced by the fact that it is not part of the task force set up by FAO to guide overall project direction. The Implementation arrangements described in the Prodoc are not specific on how this responsibility should be shared.

142. At the operational country level, the Project did not set a monitoring and evaluation plan under output 3.1. The Project monitoring is based on annual operations plan and execution of LOAs with implementation/operational partners. There is insufficient focus on milestones with specific targets, particularly in relation to outcomes 2 and 3.

143. At Project and country level, the Logframe should be a basis for setting the annual M&E plan and for progress reporting. At country level, the reporting focused on providing narrative descriptions of activities, without an adequate use of the Logframe indicators to capture the attainment expected quantity and quality of the outputs and early impact. Reporting is particularly lacking on the indicators under output 2.1, related to the linking of project results to national and local decision-making processes. Well-designed M&E plans, are also useful to capture the Project's best practices and lessons learned throughout the implementation of the project (output 3.3).

144. **The Project provides information to agencies and organizations that design projects of LDA and SLM. The collaboration between the Project and universities in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger and with a national consultant in Uruguay allowed access to local knowledge on LD.** The Prodoc represents a considerable effort in providing a review window to existing knowledge that is available on LD, LDA and SLM at global level. The presentation of this information has allowed user agencies and organizations in Kenya, Egypt and Jordan to design and implement LDA projects. According to the Project teams met in Kenya and Uruguay, and to those interviewed by telephone in Burkina Faso and Niger, collaborations with universities through consultancies to implement outcome 1 has allowed the Project to tap in local knowledge and to comprehend better LD processes and pastoralists' perception of LD.

145. In Uruguay, the employment of a local consultant to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the Project in the country has allowed for valuable inputs for the

improvement of the draft PRAGA methodology manual with DPSIR approach. It also allowed to operationalize a combined PRAGA and DPSIR methodological framework, which has been fluidly communicated with the national stakeholders, but with very little or no exchange of experiences with the 4 other pilot countries.

146. **As mentioned under efficiency, the fragmentation of Project implementation roles and responsibilities over the execution of outcomes 2 and 3 weakened the performance.** The fragmentation of Project implementation roles and responsibilities between FAO and IUCN and the wide variance in implication of FAORs in implementation of activities at country level have become factors of inefficiency in delivery, particularly in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Kenya. This occurred because the two partners did not follow strictly the institutional and management arrangements for the implementation of the Project as described in the Prodoc. While FAO fully plays its role in Uruguay, it does to a lesser extent in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Kyrgyzstan. IUCN fully plays its role in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger, but for Burkina Faso and Niger, there is some inefficiency for reporting with the project coordination based in Nairobi. Its role is insignificant for Uruguay and Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, the disjointed implementation of project components between IUCN and FAO reduces the potential to influence rangeland management policy at both national and sub-national levels. The involvement of the FAOR in the project implementation could have enhanced synergy in policy influencing at the national and county level.

147. For example in Uruguay, where FAO is responsible for both implementation and execution, FAO used its convening and coordinating authority to link the collaborations of the Project's stakeholders. Its facilitation role allowed a confluence of the information from a variety of stakeholders from the rangelands holders, government agencies, Faculty of Agronomy of UdeLaR, producers' cooperatives and the private sector, and resulted in excellent implementation of certain outputs.

148. Other weaknesses in the coordination and implementation that affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project, include the unclear contribution of IUCN for the implementation in Uruguay and Kyrgyzstan, the weak involvement of the Project government partners in Kyrgyzstan and the not always understood roles of the project stakeholders and the progress of the project in the five countries among the key project stakeholders of the project steering committee.

149. The prolonged situation of insecurity in Burkina Faso and Niger was a force majeure. This was an important threat in the PRAGA methodology testing sites. In a global project that includes fragile countries, the project needs to be flexible and ready to adapt, and invest a lot in planning and logistics. Adaptations in Burkina Faso and Niger were swiftly made and well managed by the Project. Other sites were selected in Burkina Faso and work continued. However, such adaptation can be more easily made if they are informed by contextualized country level assumptions in the theories of change.

3.6 Cross-cutting dimensions - MTE Question 6a: To what extent were gender equality considerations reflected in the project design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men? To what extent has the project ensured the inclusion of local herders, women groups, youth and indigenous people? MTE Question 6b: To what extent have climate change issues been taken into account?

Evaluation rating: moderately unsatisfactory

Main Finding 6. While the Project was successful in engaging local pastoralist groups, the design and implementation of the Project has not sufficiently taken into account inclusiveness, gender issues in particular, at the strategic level. Similarly the participation of youth is relatively weak and there is no attention to climate change aspects in the PRAGA methodology field guide.

150. **Gender equality and the inclusion of women and youth were not sufficiently integrated in the project design and implementation, and no gender analysis in the contexts of LD in rangelands was conducted.** Gender aspects have no visibility in the Project outcomes and outputs. However, the uses of rangelands and grasslands are diverse and there may be overlapping users competing for the same resource bases. Men and women, young and old, use these resources in different ways. Their access to and use of the resources is often linked to gender norms, values, roles and responsibilities. In this regard, women who participated in the Isiolo validation workshop told the evaluation team that women play an important role in resource management in relation to their responsibilities in taking care of the milking herds, adding that their perspective needs to be integrated in LDA assessments. For example, the PRAGA methodology could have factored in indicators related to issues in the landscapes around the homestead/settlement areas utilized by the milking herds.

151. The evaluation did not find any independent gender analysis in the context of LD in the rangelands and grasslands that was conducted to inform the design of the Project. Although gender is mentioned several times in the project document, the gender dimension was not incorporated within the project's design in terms of outputs to address women related issues in the testing of the methodology. In the logical framework, the indicators are not gender-responsive, making the gender evaluability a challenge.

152. The evaluation also observed a lack of data on specific gender-sensitive indicators that highlight differences in LD impact on women's wellbeing, or on the factors that create differential access to and control over rangeland resources or related ecosystem services. It was further observed that there is no Project supported process of engaging planners and decision-makers at national and sub-national levels to monitor disaggregated data over the impact of LD on women's wellbeing. At this stage of implementation, the Project needs to use gender expertise to include sex-disaggregated targets in the logical framework, and to advise on how to make LD monitoring systems based on indicators already collected under outcome 1 can allow to measure the socio-economic implications of LD on women in pastoral communities

153. At implementation level, and in the PRAGA methodology, there is limited evidence of the gender inclusiveness principle with regard to LD and SLM. This led to a large variance in women participation. For example, while there were efforts in Kenya to facilitate women participation, albeit in small numbers in Project's events, in Burkina Faso, only 1 woman participated in the local inception workshop which gathered 29 participants. In Uruguay, women participate as men in collective and other decision-making spaces, and they face no limitation as far as access to rangeland resources is concerned. Yet, their participation was also barely 30 percent. In Kyrgyzstan, only some women participated in the Project Inception meeting.

154. To enhance the gender responsiveness and achieve expected impact, the Project needs to go beyond involving them in workshops and discussion forums, where men dominate the process. In addition to gender-balanced representation to ensure women participation, the Project should proactively capture specific local LD knowledge from women in pastoralist communities. Derived indicators can then be used to inform policy processes so that decisionmakers can align rangeland management goals with gender equality priorities in national and subnational SLM plans and strategies.

155. **Indigenous people.** The Prodoc affirmed that the project should take into account the needs and priorities of indigenous communities and build upon their knowledge, cultural systems and institutions. For the implementation of output 3.3, it plans to work on related issues through networks that include the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous People (WAMIP). However, so far, the collaboration between the Project and WAMIP was limited to their participation in the sub-event of the UNCCD COP 14 in 2019 (see paragraph 87). The sub-theme of indigenous people does not appear in the discourse of the Project teams nor of their partners, and the evaluation did not observe any special issues in this regard in any of the two visited countries, Kenya and Uruguay.

156. In Kenya, the concept of indigenous peoples is not recognized, but the government acknowledges the existence of marginalized communities. These communities include hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, who have to a large extent kept their distinct identity and culture (IFAD, 2012). The pastoralist groups are found on the arid and semi-arid lands and have good involvement in the Project.

157. **Youth.** There is mention of the involvement of the youth in the testing of the PRAGA methodology, however, overall, the participation of youth in the consultations supported by the project is relatively weak. In Uruguay, the stakeholders met underlined the problem of the aging of the rangeland owners and the reduced appeal for rural activities in general to youth. They mentioned that the outmigration of youth is becoming an important challenge for the continuation of rural activities.

158. **The Project lacks a clear focus on climate change and the respective identification of indicators for the LD monitoring framework. This is a missed opportunity as local knowledge might have provided key information on indicators for adaptive SLM and LDA.** The Prodoc highlighted that degradation in drylands is widespread and that climate change is likely to make matters worse. It provided information on LD threats due to climate change in most pilot countries. For Burkina Faso, the Prodoc reports that the socio-economic, climatic and geographical conditions make it most vulnerable to climate change, in particular to water scarcity and droughts. In Niger, climate change factors such as high temperatures, drought, rainfall variability and flash floods lead directly to land

degradation. In Kenya, increasing droughts and flooding as a result of climate change are exacerbating LD. In Kyrgyzstan, the Prodoc mentions that climate change has contributed to land degradation through events such as landslides, avalanches and mudflows and also rising natural disasters, and this results in rapid loss of topsoil, reducing soil fertility and leading to LD.

159. This shows that in order to successfully apply the PRAGA methodology and support decision-making on adaptive SLM, the ability to assess and track climate change impact on rangelands is crucial. More specifically, monitoring of the rangelands environmental, socio-economic, and human system responses to climate change is necessary and local knowledge can be used to identify relevant indictors.

160. In spite of this, there is no comparable attention to climate change aspects in the PRAGA methodology field guide. The draft manual did not consider and factor in the need to have climate change related LD and SLM indicators in the future. There is only reference to climate change adaptation in the validation workshop section in these terms:

> The envisioning exercise with the participants to understand what they want done and asking what the current or planned development plans are. Land use planning is essential to guide future land use for climate change adaptation, sustainable land management practices and choose investments that address land degradation.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance – adequacy of the project implementation participatory approach and of PRAGA implementation model.

161. **The Project's participatory approach for the implementation of the PRAGA methodology was an important strength and appreciated by the project stakeholders. The methodology is relevant in view of the low cost of its use and the participation of the pastoralist communities. However, the design did not include activities to develop the capacities of partner institutions, or those of other relevant stakeholders for SLM. The gender dimension in the design of outcomes and outputs is lacking and the participation of women and youth is weak.** The project's participatory approach for the implementation of the PRAGA methodology was an important strength and appreciated by the project stakeholders. The broad-based multi-actor and multi-sector participatory approach has potential to bring together different expertise and resources and potentially provide a foundation for sustainability. However, the design did not include activities to develop the capacities of these institutions, or those of other relevant stakeholders for sustainable land management (SLM). The gender dimension in the design of outcomes and outputs is lacking and the participation of women and youth is weak.

162. Overall, the activities to test the PRAGA methodology for land degradation assessments (LDA) are relevant and congruent with the key challenges to be addressed. However, the overall Project design did not provide a clear pathway of change that illustrates how the testing results will lead to the expected project impact of SLM, which is formulated as "diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangeland and grasslands preserved". The Project design focused on identifying the indicators of three domains (soil, water, and biota) without placing them in a framework of LDA criteria which may easily relate to SLM issues. The lack of a project-wide comparable indicators framework, which should contain additional criteria in the social, economic and governance dimensions in order to capture holistically the rangeland health dynamics and the link to various ecosystem services, limits the results and usage of the current PRAGA methodology manual and the influence on decision-making processes to the local contexts. In this regard, the case of Uruguay is an exception. Here the Project used the DPSIR framework to structure issues in terms of principles and criteria, and facilitate the use of the identified indicators. This approach stimulated critical thinking about human-environment interactions in relation to the country's rangelands and was key to identify key information gaps for decision-making and SLM. For the Project level reflection on principles and criteria in Uruguay, please refer to PRAGA project's documents in Uruguay (Pérez Rocha, 2018a and 2018b).

Conclusion 2. Relevance – appropriateness of the Project design in regard to its objective.

163. **The choice of components and respective outcomes was appropriate. However, the Project design did not provide tailored theory of changes (TOCs) that underpin the Project at global level and the pilot country levels with their different contexts.** The evaluation concluded that the choice of components and respective outcomes is appropriate. The design presented a simplified results chain describing key linkages from outputs to three articulate outcomes, as well as the related deliverables. However, it did

not provide tailored theory of changes (TOCs) that underpin the Project at global level and the pilot country levels with their different contexts. The interactions with project stakeholders during the evaluation showed that the TOC is a useful tool for discussion-based analysis and learning that engages project stakeholders in the identification of issues, assumptions and necessary (intermediate) changes to achieve impact. It also assists in the identification and planning of synergies between project activities and components, clarifying the role of the various project (implementing or operational) partners and the capturing of lessons.

164. While the simplicity of the design provided flexibility for implementation across the five pilot countries with wide differences in national and local contexts, it has not been associated with the stimulation of innovations, such as integrating local knowledge in the search of solutions for the adaption of pastoral systems to climate change, an issue of global interest. In fact, there was insufficient attention to climate change aspects in the formulation of project activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators.

Conclusion 3. Effectiveness – results achieved so far: outcome 1.

165. **There is good progress towards achieving outcome 1. However, the planned adaptation of global indicators and using them to assess policies has not taken place yet, thus restricting the scale at which the testing results can be used.** There is good progress toward achieving outcome 1, and three countries (Kenya, Uruguay, and Kyrgyzstan) have completed field testing of the PRAGA methodology. The main achievements include the development of a monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual and testing it at local level. However, the planned adaptation of global indicators and using them to assess policies has not taken place, thus restricting the scale at which the testing results can be used. Refining and finalizing the LDA method based on lessons learned has not yet been achieved, which hinders the achievement of outcomes 2 and of key outputs of outcome 3. Notwithstanding these weaknesses, outcome 1 has potential to contribute to the intermediate state[9] "Pastoralists associations and producers' organizations are strengthened and enabled to technically contribute and influence national policies and programmes on rangeland, pastoral production". In Uruguay, for example, the strong implementation partnership with CAF directly contributes to this intermediate state.

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness – results achieved so far: outcome 2.

166. **There are some efforts to use early Project results in policy process concerning rangeland management in Uruguay, Kenya and Burkina Faso. Yet, the intended linking of the LDA results to national decision-making processes lacks a clear and systematic approach, resulting in a lack of visibility and clarity for both national and local government where relevant.** Overall, the progress towards achieving outcome 2 is mixed, as related deliverables under outcome 1 are still ongoing though close to completion in most countries. This delay is linked to the overall delay in the Project start, and in delays specific to the start in Burkina Faso, Niger and Kyrgyzstan (further discussed under efficiency). Notwithstanding the delays, there are some efforts to use early Project results in policy process concerning rangeland management in Uruguay, Kenya and Burkina Faso. Yet, the intended linking of the LDA results to national decision-making processes

[9] Please see the reconstructed theory of change for this project, p. 14.

lacks a clear and systematic approach, resulting in a lack of visibility and clarity for both local government where relevant (e.g. ASAL counties in Kenya) and national governments. There are significant challenges in achieving the intermediate state[10] "Participatory LD and SLM activities scaled up" which is tied to the achievement of outcomes 2. However, the impact of this is mitigated in Burkina Faso and Niger by the direct involvement of government agencies in the implementation of the Project activities, and in Uruguay by the political influencing position of the CAF in regard to the government.

Conclusion 5. Effectiveness – results achieved so far: outcome 3.

167. **The planned monitoring system for the systematic provision of information on progress towards the project outcomes has not been set-up. M&E at country level is not based on annual M&E plans articulated by the results matrix indicators, and the formats for transmitting reports are disparate. The Project is not yet realizing its potential to systematically capture and disseminate lessons and best practices.** Beyond its mid-point, the Project implementation shows mixed results with regard to outcome 3, in particular in relation to output 3.3. The planned monitoring system for the systematic provision of information on progress towards the project outcomes has not been set-up. Although there are good institutional project supervision and progress review tools for both IUCN and FAO, with classic key elements including reports on missions and BTORs and periodic progress reports, the Project lacks a clear approach for aggregating and disseminating of knowledge it generates. For periodic reports, the information circuit is pyramid-shaped, consisting in accounts of activity implementation from the countries back to the aggregation levels by IUCN Nairobi (for Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger) and by FAO Rome (for Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay). From a functional point of view, monitoring and evaluation at country level is not based on an M&E plan articulated by the results matrix indicators, and the formats for transmitting reports are disparate. Only in Uruguay the project activities have been systematically documented, representing an accumulated information that can be processed for dissemination in the future. With a slow progress in achieving outcome 3, there are challenges in contributing to the intermediate states[11] "Improved policy and legal frameworks, as well as their enforcement", and "Results are presented within the global arena, lessons learned are shared, and all interested parties are included in baseline activities".

Conclusion 6. Efficiency.

168. **The Project efficiency faced challenges due to late start and fragmented management and implementation arrangements. These challenges slowed the progress in achieving two of the three Project outcomes. The Project has a good scope of co-financiers and follows FAO financial procedures.** The Project efficiency faced challenges due to diverse factors, including its late start and challenges regarding its management and implementation arrangements. With regard to the delays, one of the consequences is the slow progress in achieving outcomes 2 and 3. The impact of the delays was further exacerbated for Burkina Faso and Niger by the insecurity in the selected sites, and for Kyrgyzstan by governance issues. Even if the Project made commendable efforts to accelerate the implementation of outcome 1, at almost the end of the Project, it is unlikely that all the essential Project outcomes will be fully achieved. This concerns mainly outputs

[10] Idem.
[11] Idem.

1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 3.3. With regard to implementation, the operational partnership between FAO and IUCN did not adequately leverage the respective comparative advantages of both institutions, as far as achievements in Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Niger are concerned. The fragmentation of roles and responsibilities has become a factor of inefficiency in delivery. A comparison can be drawn with Uruguay where FAO is responsible for both implementation and execution, and where the Project has made far more progress than in any of the other 4 pilot countries; in the country level implementation of the Project, and in the implementation of certain outputs. The roles of the various project stakeholders are not always deemed clear and the level of engagement of the various FAO country offices is mixed. Financial procedures are in order and the Project managed to attract a good variety of co-financiers, including international organizations, Government, a FAO division and another FAO project. Only one national partner committed funding, Uruguay.

Conclusion 7. Sustainability.

169. **Prospects for putting in place the necessary conditions for scaling up and sustainability of results are mixed among the countries. Country ownership is considered likely where the government is involved in implementation, like in Burkina Faso and Niger, and where the methodology is being used in new initiatives, as it is the case in Kenya. In Uruguay the foundations for sustaining the Project's results have been laid through partnership with the private sector, and plans have been made to promote scaling-up.** One of the consequences of the delayed Project start is the weak focus on putting in place the necessary conditions for scaling up and the sustainability of project results. The latter relies particularly on the achievement of outputs 1.3, 2.1, and 3.3. It is also premised on other enabling conditions that are not sufficiently included in the project design but both FAO (HQ and country offices) and IUCN could influence, which include national and sub-national government institutional capacities, policy frameworks, guidelines for sustainable rangeland management, sustainable financing, exit strategies and sustainability plans, as well as enhanced engagement with relevant partners, other project interventions and pastoralists' organizations, movements and networks at country, regional and global level. Moreover, it will depend on the foundations for sustaining the Project's results which have been laid in Uruguay through the establishment of a strong implementation partnership with CAF, and the widening of the range of methodology users. The likelihood is further increased by the involvement of academia. In Kenya, IUCN incorporated the methodology in two GCF-funded projects.

4.2 Recommendations

170. A number of recommendations have emerged from this MTE. They relate to the criteria relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The related details are presented on the next page.

Table 1: Recommendations table

REC #	Rationale for recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing for action
1	**Relevance**			
1.1	Although the tested PRAGA methodology offers some insights in LD indicators, the case of Uruguay where it has been enhanced by the use of DPSIR shows wider value in a broader perspective of LD assessment (conclusion 1).	Use DPSIR not only for data analysis after collection but also for framing a system of "criteria and indicators" for the participatory assessment of LD and SLM in grassland and pastoral areas.	FAO/IUCN/ PIU/PSC	June 2020
1.2	The project design would benefit from a TOC. TOCs ensure that project teams and partners can determine project success by identifying what changes are needed to achieve impacts. They are on-going processes of discussion-based analysis and learning. Although the Project is near completion, an overall TOC and country level TOCs are needed to help capture the learnings. These learnings included the benefits of the partnership with the private sector in Uruguay (Conclusion 1 and 2).	To facilitate learning from project experiences and the final evaluation, develop an overall Project TOC and country level TOCs that better explain the causality chain to achieve the results and contribute to the objective of SLM. The theory of change should identify intermediate states, impact drivers and assumptions that are not necessarily under the control of the project. It should also integrate an enhanced gender and youth inclusiveness approach, and engagement of the private sector.	FAO/IUCN/ key partners	June 2020
2	**Effectiveness**			
2.1	The Project almost finalized field activities related to outcome 1 in Kenya, Uruguay and Kyrgyzstan, while the activities in Burkina Faso and Niger started in 2019. (Conclusions 3, 4, 5, 6).	Take steps to enhance and complete the PRAGA methodology, by providing a framework with globally comparable indicators and criteria in the social, economic and governance dimensions in order to capture holistically the rangeland health dynamics and the link to various ecosystem services.	FAO/IUCN	June 2020
2.2	The evaluation foresees a challenge to achieve outputs 2.1, 2.2, and 3.3 in the remaining period. A clear and systematic approach for outcome 2 and 3 is missing. (Conclusions 3, 4, 5, 6).	Establish a clear and systematic approach to: i. enhance engagement with partner governments, the private sector, relevant SLM partner of other FAO interventions, as well as pastoralists' organizations, movements and networks at country and regional level, in order to facilitate and enhance the linking of LD	FAO/IUCN	June 2020

REC #	Rationale for recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing for action
		assessment results to national decision-making processes; ii. report on progress towards outcomes, disseminate the LD assessment methods, and to aggregate and disseminate best practices and lessons learned.		
2.3	Although gender is mentioned several times in the Prodoc, the gender dimension was not incorporated within the Project's design in terms of outcomes and outputs to address women related issues in LD and SLM. Gender aspects have no visibility in the nine stages of the PRAGA methodology. Similarly, youth issues are not incorporated in the design and climate change is not sufficiently recognized. (Conclusion 1)	Improve the targeting strategy for the engagement of women and youth. Gender sensitive indicators need to be captured in the logframe and the PRAGA methodology and should be contextualized to the need of both men and women. The same should be done for climate change and the respective identification of indicators for the LD monitoring framework. At implementation level, the Project should capture specific local LD knowledge from women in pastoralist communities, and use derived indicators to inform policy and decision making processes regarding national and subnational SLM plans and strategies. For the above improvements, the Project needs to use a gender expert to include sex-disaggregated targets in the logical framework, and to advice on how to make LDA indicators include those that measure the socio-economic implications of LD on women in pastoral communities.	FAO/IUCN	July 2020
3	**Efficiency**			
3.1	The roles of the various project stakeholders are not always deemed clear and their involvement in the project is mixed. The fragmentation of roles and responsibilities has become a factor of inefficiency in delivery. (Conclusion 6).	More dialogue and interaction are required between the various project partners to coordinate project implementation, facilitate relationship building, and clarify the progress of the project and the expected roles and inputs of each project stakeholder.	All partners	June 2020
3.2	Involving the FAORs in global and regional projects and giving them clear roles in terms of country level Project management and operation can improve the Project's governance and allow for more effective and efficient results, sustainability and scaling up. (Conclusion 6 and 7).	The two partners, FAO and IUCN, should duly follow the institutional and management arrangements for the implementation of the Project as described in the Prodoc. The role of the FAORs in project implementation must be clarified and the responsibility strengthened to ensure effective and efficient results, like in the case of Uruguay, where FAO's convening power is considered as a comparative advantage by the Project's partners,	FAO/IUCN	June 2020

REC #	Rationale for recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing for action
		which puts it in good position for policy dialogue on range management issues, partnership engagement, sustainability and the collection of lessons learned.		
3.3	Given the high relevance of the Project's objective and outcomes for all the pilot countries, and the strong ownership of the early outcome 1 results that has built among the Project's stakeholders, and particularly the expectations of the pastoralist communities, to continue and complete the work. (Conclusion 6)	A one-year no cost extension is necessary, to allow the Project to complete all activities related to outcomes 2 and 3, and in addition, to outcome 1 for Kyrgyzstan, Niger and Burkina Faso.	IUCN/FAO/ GEF	June 2020
4	**Sustainability & scaling-up**			
4.1	At midterm, the Project has not focused yet on the sustainability of its activities due to the considerable delay in its actual start and slow progress of the project. (Conclusion 7).	In Kenya and Kyrgyzstan, adopt and implement appropriate modalities to further involve the subnational governments in the implementation. Prepare and submit to key project partners an exit strategy that will show how key results will be sustained after project completion. The plan should indicate a coordinated approach and clear responsibilities and outputs for each project partner. To support sustainability and scaling up of project results, collaboration with government agencies and FAOR/country programme needs to be enhanced and strategic linkages with other SLM interventions, sector fora and multi-stakeholder/knowledge platforms, as well as regional pastoral networks (for example Central Asia Pastoral Alliance, Pastoramericas, Reseau Billital MArrobe and Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoral Network) need to be further explored.	FAO/IUCN/ government partners and other key partners.	July 2020

5. Lessons learned

171. This MTE presents below the key lessons that have emerged from the findings.

172. **For multi-country projects, differentiating between global and national level outcomes is important.** For multi-country projects, there is a need to develop clear global objectives and outcomes pursued, and to guide the determination of contextualized country outcomes. It is also essential to provide guidance on processes that ensure and facilitate the exchange of information and lessons between participating countries. At country level, interventions that involve both national and subnational government should ensure that appropriate ownership and decision-making processes exist at relevant levels.

173. **Project design needs to be based on a TOC that shows how changes towards impacts will occur and what mechanisms will ensure sustainability.** Prodoc should provide TOCs on which project designs are based, and these TOCs should be revised at inception. Making sure that stakeholders are familiar with the project TOC can result in increasing country ownership. To this end, contextualization of the TOC should be done in the inception workshops. The TOC should also serve to setup a dynamic risk assessment plan that enables following up the realization of the key assumptions for achieving outcomes and for moving from outcomes to impacts.

174. **For project-wide comparability, LDA and SLM indicators should be organized in criteria framework.** Indicators are needed for informing decision decision-making processes and SLM strategies and plans. However, they are more useful if they are not only identified in a participatory process, but also organized into sets that represent the different dimensions of sustainability, by integrating social, economic, and ecological aspects.

175. **Gender and youth needs and perspectives, as well as climate change must be integrated in the LDA methodologies.** Women in pastoralist communities, due to their household responsibilities, often have a leading role in caring for the milking herds and the pasturelands near the homesteads, which gives them resource use skills based on local knowledge. The architecture of LDA methodologies should allow to address inclusiveness issues relating to gender and age, and the resulting criteria and indicators frameworks should guide decision-makers on how to address these issues. The lack of attention to climate change is a missed opportunity, as local knowledge might have provided key information on indicators to consider in LDA and for adaptive SLM.

176. **Effective coordination of roles and responsibilities of project operational partners and stakeholders is an important factor to consider for the successful implementation of a multi-country project**. The implementation of multi-country projects may involve, in addition to execution of activities to deliver outputs, facilitation of national partners' involvement, providing strategic and technical support, policy dialogue for the national appropriation of project results, and contribution to global exchange and other processes. The determination of which partner should be in charge of country-level implementation should ensure that none of these roles and responsibilities will not be put at risk.

177. **It is important to involve the pastoralists' cooperatives and the private sector in the architecture of partnerships relating to LDA and SLM**. For successful implementation of participatory projects for sustainable management of rangelands and grasslands, there are important benefits in giving the pastoralists' cooperatives and their unions, and the private sector opportunities to contribute to the processes to be supported. Their participation should start during the design phase in order to lay foundations for building their ownership of the expected results.

References

Altesor, A., Ayala, W., & Paruelo, J.M. 2011. Bases ecológicas y tecnológicas para el manejo de pastizales. Proyecto FPTA-175, Descripción de la heterogeneidad florística y seguimiento de la productividad primaria y secundaria del campo natural. (also available at: www.inia.uy/Publicaciones/Documentos%20compartidos/18429020511100111.pdf)

Amwata, D.A., D.M. Nyariki, and N.R.K. Musimba. 2015. Factors influencing agropastoral and pastoral households' vulnerability to food insecurity in the drylands of Kenya: A case study of Kajiado and Makueni Counties. Journal of International Development. (also available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3123).

Camp Alatoo Public Foundation, Kyrgyzstan. 2019. Interim Report on the project: "Facilitation services for implementing project activities under GCP/GLO/530/GFF" (July 2019 - August 2019).

Cepal. No date. *Declarase de interes general, de conformidad con lo establecido en el articulo 47 de la constitucion de la republica, que refiere a la proteccion del medio ambiente, Ley No. 17.283.* (also available at: https://observatoriop10.cepal.org/sites/default/files/documents/ley17283.pdf)

Climate Information Services (CIS) Legislation. No date. Law of the Kyrgyzstan Republic of January 26, 2009, No. 30. About Pastures (as amended on 30-07-2019). Accepted by Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic on December 18, 2008 (also available at: https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=26302).

Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF). No date. *Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas* [online]. Montevideo. [Cited 20 February 2020]. http://www.caf.org.uy/site/?p=5928

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC)/ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2008. *Atlas on regional integration in West Africa, Climate and Climate Change*. 24 pp.

FAO. 2006. Country pasture/forage resource profiles–Uruguay.

FAO. 2016a. *Land degradation assessment in drylands, manual for local level assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management*. *Part 2 field methodology and tools.* 181 pp.

FAO. 2016b. *Land degradation assessment in drylands, manual for local level assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management. Part 1 planning and methodological approach, analysis and reporting.* 151 pp.

FAO. 2017. *Guidelines for applying and strengthening the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest and rangelands management in the near east and North Africa region* (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6955e.pdf).

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) & the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). 2019. *Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment (PRAGA) methodology Field guide* (first edition).

Garcia Suarez, F., Perez Quesada, G., & Molina Ricetto, C. 2018. *Rangeland cattle production in Uruguay: single-output versus multi-output efficiency measures*. Universidad de la República. Facultad de Agronomia, Ciencias Sociales, Uruguay. (also available at: https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/277178)

GEF and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations University (UNU). 2011. *Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Land Management in the High Pamir and Pamir- Alai Mountains*.

GEF. 2011. GEF-5 Strategy for Land Degradation. GEF Familiarization Seminar, January 18-20, 2011 (also available at: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Focal.Area_.LDFA_.pdf).

Global Environment Facility (GEF). 2009. *The ROtI Handbook: Towards Enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects. Methodological Paper* #2. (also available at: http://gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/ieo-documents/ops4-m02-roti.pdf).

IFAD. 2012. *Country Technical Note on Indigenous Peoples' Issues*. The Republic of Kenya. (also available at: https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224460/Kenya.pdf/7f70d9b6-5e5c-4628-942c-7ae749a2f262).

Institut International pour l'Environnement et le Développement (IIED) & SOS Sahel UK. 2010. *Éléments de bilan du soutien public à l'élevage au Niger depuis Maputo*. (also available at: http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/note_apess_niger_mise_en_page.pdf).

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). No date. *Pasture Users' Unions (PPUS) Improve Rural Farmers' Livelihoods in Kyrgyzstan*.

International Land Coalition at IFAD. 2014. Rangelands: *Plotting progress: integrated planning in the rangelands of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda*. (also available at: https://www.landcoalition.org/en/resources/plotting-progress-integrated-planning-rangelands-kenya-ethiopia-and-uganda).

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) & FAO. 2018. *Proceedings of the Local Inception Workshop for "participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems project*. Local inception meeting held on 10th-11th July, 2018 at Bomen Hotel, ISIOLO.

IUCN & FAO. 2019a. *Report of the Experts Meeting for the 'Participatory Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management in Grasslands and Pastoral Systems' project*. 10th to 11th September - Radisson Blu Hotel, New Delhi India.

IUCN & FAO. 2019b. Rapport de l'atelier de lancement au niveau local du PRAGA - Burkina Faso.

Kihiu, E.N. 2016. *Pastoral Practices, Economics, and Institutions of Sustainable Rangeland Management in Kenya*. Doctoral thesis, Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-University, Bonn. (also available at: https://hss.ulb.uni-bonn.de/2016/4315/4315.pdf).

Kristensen, P. 2004. The DPSIR Framework. (also available at: https://wwz.ifremer.fr/dce/content/download/69291/913220/.../DPSIR.pdf)

Liniger, HP. and Mekdaschi Studer, R. 2019. *Sustainable rangeland management in Sub-Saharan Africa – Guidelines to good practice*. TerrAfrica; World Bank, Washington D.C.; World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT); World Bank Group (WBG), Washington DC, USA and Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern, Switzerland. (also available at: https://www.wocat.net/library/media/174/).

Ministère de l'Élevage du Niger. 2010. *Ordonnance relative au pastoralisme 2010-029*. (also available at: http://www.elevage.gouv.ne/IMG/pdf/ordonnance_relative_au_pastoralisme_.pdf).

Ministère de l'Élevage, des Pêches et des Industries Animales. 2010. Revue du Secteur de l'Elevage au Niger. Rapport Provisoire. (Also available at https://reca-niger.org/IMG/pdf/Niger_Revue_national.pdf)

Ministère de l'environnement, de l'économie verte et du changement climatique (MEEVCC). 2016. *Quatrième rapport sur l'état de l'environnement au Burkina Faso*. Burkina Faso.

Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques & Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable. 2013. *Guide méthodologique pour l'aménagement, la sécurisation et la valorisation des espaces pastoraux et des pistes à bétail*.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. 2016. *Land Degradation Assessment in Kenya*. Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Sustainable Land Management Project (KASLMP). (also available at: https://www.coursehero.com/file/51352019/LADA-Land-Degradation-Assessment-in-Kenya-March-2016pdf/).

Ozer, P., Hountondjf, Y., Niang, A., Karimoune, S., Laminou Manzo, O., & Salmon, M. 2010. *Désertification au Sahel : historique et perspectives*. (also available at: https://popups.uliege.be/0770-7576/index.php?id=942&file=1).

Pérez Rocha, J. 2018a. *Propuesta metodológica para la definición de indicadores para monitoreo e información sobre los procesos relacionados a la degradación de tierras de pastizales.* Montevideo.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2018b. *Avances hacia la construcción de un sistema de monitoreo e información sobre los procesos relacionados a la degradación de tierras de pastizal – Memoria de la reunión técnica de trabajo entre equipos de MVOTMA y MGAP.* Montevideo.

Scalise, E. & Undeland, A. 2016. Kyrgyz Republic: Women and Community Pasture Management.

Shigaeva, J., Wolfgramm, B., & Dear, C. 2013. *Sustainable Land Management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: A Research Review*. (also available at: https://boris.unibe.ch/46607/1/web-UCA-MSRI-BP2-Sustainable%20Land%20Management.pdf).

Soriano, A. 1991. Rio de la Plata Grasslands. In: R. T. Coupland editor Natural grasslands. Introduction and Western Hemisphere. pp. 367-407. Elsevier. Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The Northern Rangelands Trust. No date. Kenya Programme 2016–2020 Green Growth and Employment Thematic Programme — Improving Community Resilience and Rangeland Management Development Engagement Document.

Wakhungu, J., J. Wesongah, G. Tura, G. Msalya, D. Grace, F. Unger, and S. Alonso. 2014. *Pastoralism in Kenya and Tanzania: Challenges and opportunities in animal health and food security*. In Poster prepared for the 6th all Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture. Nairobi: ILRI (also available at: www.slideshare.net/ILRI/pastoralism-kenya-tanzania).

Bibliography

Asuaga, A. y Berterretche, M. 2019. Uso sostenible del campo natural. Montevideo (UY): INIA. 228 pp.

Camp Alatoo. 2019. Key stakeholder meeting to present project methodology and deliver annual workplan: Project "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems". Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Coronel, F.; D. Schossler y M. Rachetti. 2019. Memoria del taller Participativo de la zona sur (Versión preliminar). Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Uruguay. 40 pp.

FAO and GEF. 2016. Project document - GCP /GLO/530/GFF Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems. FAO Internal document. Rome.

FAO. 2012. Concept Note - Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral areas systems (FSP). GCP/GLO/530/GFF. FAO Internal document. Rome.

FAO. 2012. Short Project Proposal - Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral areas systems (FSP). GCP/GLO/530/GFF. FAO Internal document. Rome.

FAO. 2016-2019. FAO-GEF project "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grasslands and pastoral systems." Project Progress Six months Reports: February-August 2017; July-December 2017; January-June 2018; July-December 2018; January-June 2019. FAO Internal document. Rome.

FAO. 2018. FAO-GEF Project Implementation Reviews – GCP /GLO/530/GFF "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems". Periods covered: 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018; 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. FAO Internal document. Rome.

GEF Evaluation Office. 2009. *Towards Enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects. The ROtI Handbook.* Methodological paper 2. 46 pp.

GEF. 2014. GEF-6 Programming directions. 215 pp.

GEF. 2018. GEF 7 Programming Directions Overview. Expanded Constituency Workshop. 53 pp.

Giménez, A.; J. Castaño y L. Olivera. 2008. Cambio Climáticon Uruguay y La Región. Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agrícolas. Unidad de Agroclima. 23 pp.

IUCN and FAO. 2018. National Inception Workshop for "participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems" project. Nairobi: 25-26th January, 2018.

IUCN and FAO. 2019. Rapport de l'atelier de lancement local du PRAGA, Burkina Faso.

IUCN and FAO. 2019. Report of the Experts Meeting for the 'Participatory Assessment of Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management in Grasslands and Pastoral Systems' project, New Delhi, India.

IUCN and FAO. No date. Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment (PRAGA) methodology. Field guide (first edition). 46 pp.

IUCN. 2019. PRAGA Policy Brief - Isiolo and Garissa Counties.

Onyango, V. 2019. Back-to-Office Reports: Niger (May 2018); Kenya (July 2016; November 2019); Kyrgyzstan (October 2015; November 2019); Uruguay (November 2016; December 2019).

Perez Rocha, G. 2018. Back-to-Office Report: Mission to Rome April-May 2018.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2018. Análisis de prioridades e identificación de indicadores para monitoreo e información sobre los procesos relacionados a la degradación de tierras de pastizales. Memoria de taller de capacitación y orientación realizado con la mesa de ganadería sobre campo natural. Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Uruguay. 33 pp.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2018. Avances hacia la construcción de un sistema de monitoreo e información sobre los procesos relacionados a la degradación de tierras de pastizal". Memoria de la reunión técnica de trabajo entre equipos de MVOTMA y MGAP. Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF.Uruguay. 12 pp.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2018. Memoria del taller de capacitación y orientación para la construcción de una línea de base nacional y a escala de los paisajes objetivo. Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Montevideo, Uruguay. 20 pp.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2018. Propuesta metodológica para la definición de indicadores para monitoreo e información sobre los procesos relacionados a la degradación de tierras de pastizales. Versión Preliminar para Comentarios de la Mesa de Ganadería sobre Campo Natural. Documento elaborado en el marco de la Consultoría en Seguimiento y Evaluación en Sistemas Pastoriles. Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Uruguay. 44 pp.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2019. Memoria de la reunión técnica para la construcción de una línea de base a escala de los paisajes objetivo y construcción del mapa de actores para los talleres participativos. Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Montevideo, Uruguay. 44 pp.

Pérez Rocha, J. 2019. Narrative Progress Report Form. Trust Fund Programme. Project GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Reporting period: January- July 2019. Montevideo, Uruguay. 10 pp.

Pérez Rocha, J.; A. Alvarez; A. Panizza y M. Martínez. 2019. Reporte: aproximación a una línea de base sobre el estado del campo natural en el uruguay. Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Montevideo Uruguay. 103 pp.

Roba, G. y J. Davies. 2018. Participatory rangeland management planning. A Field Guide. IUCN. 23 pp.

Schossler, D.; F. Coronel y M. Rachetti. 2019. Memoria del Taller Participativo de la Zona Norte (Version Preliminar). Proyecto GCP/GLO/530/GFF. Uruguay. 41 pp.

Appendix 1. Global Environment Facility (GEF) evaluation criteria rating table and rating scheme

GEF evaluation criteria rating table

The MTE team is required to rate the various MTE criteria listed above for the purposes of the reporting to GEF and FAO on progress to date. Ratings need to be well substantiated with evidence gathered from the MTE, and a summary description of the associated achievements to justify the rating should be presented in *MTE Ratings & Achievements Summary Table* (Table A1 below).

The MTE team should compare their (independently derived) ratings with those of the most recent GEF project implementation review (PIR) and describe any significant discrepancies.

Most criteria will be rated on a 6-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Likely (L) down to Highly Unlikely (HU). Explanations on how to rate the criteria of effectiveness, sustainability and factors affecting performance, are given in the corresponding sections covering these criteria below.

Table 2: MTE ratings & achievements summary table

GEF criteria/sub criteria	Rating	Summary Comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	S	In the GEF context, the Project is in line with the GEF 5 Land Degradation Focal Area (objective LD-4 "Adaptive Management and Learning: increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in SLM/SFM/INRM by GEF and UNCCD Parties). In FAO's framework, it is line with outcomes 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of strategic objective 2. However climate change, being one of GEF's focal areas, has not been sufficiently treated.
A2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities	HS	The project objective and outcomes are aligned with national agro-sylvo-pastoral policies and development strategies of the five pilot countries. For Kenya, it is expected to provide the necessary capacity and policy environment for improving the decisions and investments in rangeland. For Burkina Faso, it is in line with its vision on investing in SLM in its "Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management". For Niger, it is in line with Ordinance of 2010 relating to pastoralism. For Kyrgyzstan, it is in line with the Pasture Law promulgated in 2009. For Uruguay, it is in line with the General Law of Environmental Protection of 2000.
A3. Complementarity with existing interventions	S	The Project is complementary to other initiatives such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, or those within the IUCN Global Dryland Initiative (GDI). Collaborations could be further enhanced.
A4. Overall strategic relevance	S	Relevant from A1 through to A4.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	For outcome 1, the Project had considerable success in engaging its national stakeholders and local pastoral communities in the implementation of its LDA activities, including site selection,

GEF criteria/sub criteria	Rating	Summary Comments
		indicator selection and testing, trainings and workshops and the actual conducting of the assessment, but it did not have an equal success in engaging them in the development of the framework and PRAGA methodology. Despite their importance to the objective, outcomes 2 and 3 have made relatively limited progress to date.
B1.1 Delivery of outputs	MS	The Project has not fully delivered on output 1.3 of outcome 1. There are a number of early positive developments under outcome 2, but the level of progress is not commensurate with expectable achievements at a stage beyond mid-point of its planned duration, Delivery is limited for output 3.1 and output 3.3. output 3.2 is this evaluation.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	MS	Same as above.
- outcome 1	MS	PRAGA methodology procedural and operational manual developed and its testing at local level completed in 3 of the 5 country and progressing well in the 2 others, but refining and finalizing the method based on lessons learnt not achieved yet.
- outcome 2	MS	The LDA results have not yet linked to national and local decision-making processes, yet there are a number of relevant and positive developments underway. In Kenya and Uruguay there are some efforts to use early Project results in policy process concerning rangeland management. Despite the weak progress for outcome 2, In Burkina Faso, participants in the inception workshop identified two potential deliverables.
- outcome 3	MU	Project does not have an M&E articulated on the Project logical framework and lacks an M&E plan. There are mixed achievements with regard to capturing and aggregating information. The documenting and presenting of best practices and lessons learned on the overall project remains limited thus far.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	MS	Delayed start taken into account, delivery is lower than expectable at this stage close to Project completion.
B1.3 Likelihood of Impact	Not rated at MTE	
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MS	The Project suffered serious delays to start; but after the start there were good efforts in the five countries to deliver on outcome 1. outcome 1 is being achieved at reasonable costs, while most outputs under outcomes 2 and 3 are behind schedule. Overall fragmented project responsibilities and low level of engagement of FAORs in 3 of the 5 pilot countries. Good scope of international co-financiers versus one national financial partner. Project is following FAO financial procedures.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood to sustainability	ML	There is political support of the project in four pilot countries and PRAGA methodology has been tested with success. Components 2 and 3 have outputs that condition sustainability; these are not likely to be completed before end of the Project.

GEF criteria/sub criteria	Rating	Summary Comments
D2. Financial sustainability	L	There are no financial risks; the Project has almost completed the most important component (outcome 1), and has resources for the remaining activities.
D3. Socio-political sustainability	ML	There are no socio-political risks in most countries; only implementation in Niger has been affected by insecurity; but the risk was successfully managed by the Project. In Kyrgyzstan the government ownership is relatively weak.
D4. Institutional and governance risks	MU	While the Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) adopted for Project implementation is appealing, there are gaps in the roles of various project stakeholders as far as country level execution is concerned, and the level of engagement of the various FAO country offices is mixed. The FAO and IUCN operational partnership could not avoid the long delay of Project start, and the delayed delivery of many outputs under outcomes 2 and 3.
D5. Environmental risks	L	There is no risk to environment that is due to project activities.
D6. Catalysis and replication	MS	The Project results have not yet linked to national and local decision-making processes, and consequently they are not yet influencing the local, national and international policies as planned. However, in Kenya, Uruguay and Burkina Faso there are some (potential) efforts to use early Project results in policy process concerning rangeland management.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MS	The operational partners did not show the capacity to start at expected dates and there was an overall one-year delay, and additional delays in three of the five countries. The fragmented responsibility over certain Project components between FAO and IUCN and the weak engagement of FAORs in most pilot countries contributed to the delays.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	The PRAGA methodology could be more rigorous and more comprehensive. The PRAGA methodology procedural and operational manual and the developed indicators have not yet been disseminated. An M&E system could have helped collect the necessary data and information to support learning.
E2.1 Project oversight (FAO, PSC. PTF, etc.)	MU	FAO made an effort to maintain an oversight over the Project; but its oversight was uneven for the five pilot countries, amongst others due to the weak role of FAORs in three out of five countries. There was no evidence of the contribution of the PSC to providing guidance to the Project.
E3. Quality of project execution	MU	Overall the Project's outcome 1 was well executed, and is quasi completed in three out of five countries. But two other important outcomes are unlikely to be completed before the closure.
E3.1 Project management arrangements and delivery (Project management unit,, financial management, etc.)	MU	As shown under D4, there are gaps in roles of various project stakeholders as far as country level execution is concerned, and the level of engagement of the various FAO country offices is mixed. As for delivery, overall the performance was good with outcome 1, and weak with the two other outcomes. At country level, delivery on outcome 1 was best in Uruguay due to full engagement of FAOR.
E4. Co-financing	S	Project has a good scope of international co-financiers, yet only one national financial partner.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder involvement	MS	In all the fivw countries the Project worked with the planned partners (pastoralist communities, producers' cooperatives and federations, government agencies at national and sub-national

GEF criteria/sub criteria	Rating	Summary Comments
		levels, universities). While government agencies were involved in the implementation of Project activities in Burkina Faso, Niger and Uruguay, it was not the case in Kyrgyzstan and Kenya. The Project did not sufficiently establish partnership with women's and youth organizations, nor with private sector organizations to enhance sustainability, except in Uruguay.
E6. Communication and knowledge management	MU	The delayed achievements in outcomes 2 and 3 have weakened delivery on communication and knowledge management. The project has made some progress in documenting and presenting best practices and lessons learned on the overall project, but it remains limited thus-far.
E7. Overall quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	MU	The Project adequately uses institutional project supervision and project review systems, yet the Project does not have an M&E articulated on the Project on the logical framework and lacks an M&E plan. There are mixed achievements with regard to capturing and aggregating information.
E7.1 M&E Design	MU	The Project has not considered an M&E design at global or country level. Only in Uruguay the project activities have been systematically documented, representing an accumulated information that can be processed for dissemination in the future.
E7.2 M&E Plan Implementation (including financial and human resources)	U	The Project does not provide a M&E plan.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MU	There are a number of weaknesses in implementation including problems in the coordination of FAO and IUCN operational partnership, weak engagement of FAORs in the implementation of the Project in most pilot countries, delayed delivery of many outputs under outcomes 2 and 3 and lack of an M&E system and M&E plan.
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MU	Gender equality and the inclusion of women and youth were not adequately integrated in the project design. During implementation the participation of women and youth was weak.
F2. Human rights issues	HS	The Project focuses on a thematic area which in many countries concerns resource users who include marginalized groups (pastoralists) and promotes a participatory approach.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	MS	The Project implemented activities that impact the environment or social relation. It focused on collecting local knowledge. There was insufficient attention to climate change.
Overall project rating for cross-cutting concerns	MU	Inclusiveness aspects not yet sufficiently focused in design and implementation, particularly for women and youth. Focus on a thematic area of interest to (marginalized) pastoralist groups. There was no harm to environment and no negative social impact, yet insufficient attention to climate change.

Rating scheme

Additional explanation on how to assess ratings, e.g. whether highly satisfactory or moderately satisfactory, for specific criteria is given below. See further information on GEF rating scales is given in Annex 2: Rating Scales in the "Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations for Full-sized Project", April 2017.

Overall outcome ratings

MTEs should use mid-term targets as given in the project's logframe to assess delivery of outcomes. If no mid-term indicator targets are available then the MTE should base outcome ratings on assessment of delivery of results to date, work plans.

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

Factors affecting performance
(assess each element separately, M&E is treated differently – see below)

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of **design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder involvement/communication and knowledge management** exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of **design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder involvement/communication and knowledge management** meets expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of **design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder involvement/communication and knowledge management** more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of **design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder involvement/communication and knowledge management** somewhat lower than expected.

Rating	Description
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of implementation substantially lower than expected.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of **design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder involvement/communication and knowledge management**.
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of **design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder involvement/communication and knowledge management.**

Monitoring and evaluation design or implementation ratings (Overall M&E design, design and implementation assessed separately)

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of **M&E design or M&E implementation** exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of **M&E design or M&E implementation** meets expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of **M&E design or M&E implementation** more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of **M&E design or M&E implementation** somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of **M&E design or M&E implementation** substantially lower than expected.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in **M&E design or M&E implementation.**
Unable to Assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of **M&E design or M&E 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 2. Co-financing Table

Name of the Co-financer	Co-financer type[12]	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Co-financing at project mid-term (in USD)		
		In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind	Cash	Total
Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP)	National Government of Uruguay	1 200 000		1 200 000	326 650		326 650
Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay (MVOTMA)	National Government of Uruguay	-			43 290		43 290
Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria (INIA)	National Government of Uruguay	-			1 000		1 000
IUCN - Building Drought Resilience through Land and Water Management in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas, Kenya and Uganda	International organization		1 100 000	1 100 000		1 100 000	1 100 000
IUCN - Enhancing the Value of Ecosystem Services in Pastoral Systems	International organization	100 000		100 000	100 000		100,000
FAO-FOA through EU-ACP project in Burkina Faso and Niger[13]	GEF-agency	1 000 000	1 000 000	2 000 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	2 000 000
FAO	GEF-agency		300 000	300 000		420 000	420 000
Pastoral Knowledge Hub	International organization	562 270		562 270	562 270		562 270
Mountain Partnership Secretariat	International organization	500 000		500 000	500 000		500 000
Grand Total (in USD)				5 762 270			5 053 210

[12] Examples of categories include: local, provincial or national government; semi-government autonomous institutions; private sector; multilateral or bilateral organizations; educational and research institutions; non-profit organizations; civil society organizations; foundations; beneficiaries; GEF agencies; and others.

[13] "Action against desertification in support of the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative and south-south cooperation in ACP countries" and the "Global Drylands Assessment".

Appendix 3. Results matrix for assessing degree of achievement of project outcomes

As part of the assessment of the delivery of project outcomes, the MTE should assess progress made towards the mid-term project targets using the matrix below. Where mid-term targets are not given in the project logframe, assessment can be made against end-of-project targets. Assessment of progress should be color-coded using a 'traffic light system' with a rating assigned on progress for each outcome using the standard GEF 6-point progress towards results rating scale. Recommendations should be made on the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red).

Table 3: Progress towards results matrix (achievement of outcomes against mid-term targets)

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
objective:	No indicator provided in the Log frame.	-		No indicator provided in the Log frame.	No indicator provided in the Log frame.		MS	No indicator provided in the Log frame. Rating is based on the average performance of the three outcomes.
outcome 1:	Indicator 1.1: Standardized procedural and operational manual available.	There are no standardized procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands.		The draft operational and procedural manual is tested through district level consultations.	The procedural and operational manual is revised based on feedback and lessons learned, and then published.		MS	Draft manual successfully tested, validation workshops held in 3 countries, but feedback not yet integrated in the

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
	Indicator 1.2: Number of international and national consultations organized to discuss, test and revise the assessment and monitoring procedures.	Little common understanding and views on the global indicators by domain of assessment to be defined for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands.			A second international consultation is organised with key relevant scientists, technicians, decision makers and key representatives from pastoral communities to present and discuss the final framework of global indicators and the finalised assessment and monitoring method.		MS	draft manual. Second international consultation awaiting testing completion in all the five countries.

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
	Indicator 1.3: Level of involvement of local pastoral communities in defining and testing the domains of indicators, specific indicators and the assessment and monitoring operational and procedural framework.	The design of assessment and monitoring systems has been crafted by scientists, academics and extension workers with little to no space for input from the land-users.		District/site consultations are organised in the five targeted pilot sites for selecting the sampling sites, identifying specific indicators per global indicator domains, presenting the assessment work, validating the indicators selected by the communities, testing the proposed data collection technique(s) for each indicator, and for feedback exchanges.			S	The level of involvement of local pastoralists in the identification of indicators was high in all the five pilot countries.

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
outcome 2	Indicator 2.1: Number of action plans for mainstreaming SLM best practices.	No action plans for mainstreaming SLM best practices available.		Key policy mainstreaming entry points are identified during the local assessment steps. SLM best practices identified during the field survey are compiled and discussed and an action plan to insert the assessment findings into the current strategies, policies and plans is developed for each pilot site.	A validation national workshop is organised in each country to present and discuss the action plan and identify SLM best practices and measures that are best fit to influence policy making regarding pastoral areas.		MS	Validation workshops were held in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay. No action plans yet available for mainstreaming SLM.
	Indicator 2.2: Recognition of the assessment and monitoring method in at least two relevant international for a.	There is no standardize procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands.			The new standardized assessment and monitoring method for LD and SLM in grasslands and rangelands is recognized by at least 2 international for a.		MS	PRAGA is used in LDA in Egypt and Jordan. It was presented in UNCCD COP 14 in Delhi. However, the draft for the new standardize assessment and monitoring method for LD and SLM not available yet.

Project strategy	Indicator	Baseline level	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
outcome 3	Indicator 3.1: Fulfilment of planned M&E activities including establishing baseline values for all project indicators, yearly updating of indicators, a mid-term evaluation/review and a final project evaluation.	n/a.		50% percent progress in achieving project outcomes.	Project outcomes achieved and showing sustainability.		MS	MTE achieved; No indicators nor baseline in the Logframe for the Project objective; No M&E system was established on the basis of Logframe indicators. Annual M&E plans are not established based on M&E System.

Indicator assessment key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved

Appendix 4. Stakeholders interviewed during the MTE

Name	Surname	Title/role
FAO Rome Headquarters		
Geneviève	Braun	Programme officer DPID and GEF Focal point
Vivian	Onyango	Agricultural officer AGPM and Project focal point
Abram	Jared Bicksler	Agricultural officer AGPM and Project budget holder
Moctar	Sacande	Project Coordinator FOA and Project Lead technical officer/Focal point for the Great Green Wall
Fritjof	Boerstler	Technical officer CBC and Funding Liaison Officer
Rosalaura	Romeo	Forestry Officer FOA and Focal point for the Mountain Partnership Secretariat
Gregorio	Velasco Gil	Regional Project Coordinator AGAG and focal point for the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub
Kenya		
Jonathan	Davies	Coordinator, Global Drylands Initiative (GDI)
John	Njogu	Natural Resource Scientist
Edin	Boru	Chairman
Maalin	Hassan Ado	Member
Rukia	Ali	Member
Ernst	Mbogo	Deputy Director Range Management Division
Fredrick	Aloo	Principle livestock production officer, State Department of Livestock
Habon	Aden Maalim	CEC Environment and Natural Resources
Farah	Keinan	WRUA member and Chief of Balambala
Zeinab	Shalle Bare	WRUA member and women representative
Shaani	Badhane	WRUA member
OmarOlat		WRUA member
Yussuf	Abdille	KALRO-BRC
Claire	Ogali	Programme Officer, GDI
Bora	Masumbuko	Senior Programme Officer
Achiba	Gargule	National Consultant
Mahamoud	Haji	CEC Finance and Economic Planning
Charles-Eric	Bebay	FAO Representative ad interim
Philip	Kisoyan	Natural Resource Officer
Michael	Gitonga	Water and Land Specialist
Guyo	Malicha Roba	Country Technical Analyst
Hassan	Guyo Roba	Special Advisor, African Rift Valley
Mohamed	Hussein	Ecosystem Conservator
Ali	Hussein	Livestock Officer
Okal	Joel	Livestock Officer
Abdi	H. Daud	CEC: Water, sanitation, energy, environment, natural resources and climate change
Lawrence	Mwongela	CEC: Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

Elyas	Hassan	Researcher
Halkano	Hache	Livestock Production Officer
Abdi	Somo	Gum and resin specialist and trader
Bernard	Wafula	Livestock Officer
Uruguay		
Dr. Vicente	Plaza	FAO – Representación Montevideo
Dra. Jimena	Pérez Rocha	FAO – Consultor Líder de Proyecto GCP /GLO/530/GFF
Ing. Agr. Marcos	Martínez	Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP), Dirección de Recursos Naturales, Coordinación Campo Natural
Ing. Agr. Virginia	San Martín	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF), Productora
Ing. Agr. Fernando	Coronel	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF), Investigador – Productor, Mejorador Genético Ovinos
Ing. Agr. Santiago	Medina	Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay (MVOTMA), División Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas
Ing. Luis	Frachia	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF), Gerente General
Federico	Riani	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF), Unidad Comercial
Dr. Daniel	Formoso	University of the Republic (UdelaR) – Facultad de Agronomía, Secretariado Uruguayo de la Lana (SUL), Consultor - Técnico Independiente
Prof. Ramiro	Zanoniani	UdelaR – Facultad de Agronomía, Ecofisiología de Pastos, Manejo de Sistemas Pastoriles
Prof. Pablo	Boggiano	UdelaR – Facultad de Agronomía – Producción animal, Plantas Forrajeras
Burkina Faso and Niger		
Somda,	Jacques	IUCN, Burkina Faso
Ouedraogo,	Hamadou	Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso
Bambara,	Ghislain	Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso
Boureima	Amadou	Ministère de l'Élevage, Niger
Kyrgyzstan		
Alibakieva,	Cholpon	FAO Representation, Kyrgyzstan
Isakov,	Azamat	CAMP Alatoo Public Foundation

Appendix 5. MTE matrix (evaluation questions and sub-questions)

Main question/sub-question	Method	Interviewee/source
I. Relevance: EQ1: How adequate was the project design in supporting the activities and expected outcomes?		
1.1 To what extent is the project design realistic and able to empower pastoralists/pastoral institutions and government practitioners?	Review the Project document and country context documents on pastoralism and pastoral institutions; interviews	Key Project partners and pastoralist associations
1.2 Did the project benefit from and integrate available knowledge from relevant international frameworks with tools and methods to assess LD and SLM as well as similar projects in the countries?	Review project documents and progress reports; Interviews.	Project team
1.3 To what extent are the project objectives aligned to national and regional agro-sylvo-pastoral policies and development strategies, GEF goals and FAO CPF in recipient countries, as well as other relevant projects undertaken by the government or other development partners?	Review project objectives in light of national and regional frameworks, Review GEF goals and Review how the Project fits in FAO's CPF in each country.	FAO Representation; Documents
1.4 Was the project design participatory in the sense that it took into consideration the inputs and needs of the targeted global, national and local stakeholders and the operational partners?	Review preparatory documents for information on the design process; interviews	Project staff; pastoralist institution
1.5 How was the internal coherence of the project in terms of synergies and complementarity between objectives, components, activities and outputs? Did it have a theory of change?	Review the project design in the Prodoc and assess the TOC; interviews	Project team
1.6 Did the project objective and design remain relevant over time?	Review project reports and supervision mission reports; interviews	Project team
II. Effectiveness. EQ2: What results have been achieved so far, and what is still outstanding?		
2.1 To what extent has local knowledge been captured in the (development of the) PRAGA methodology?	Review of project reports; assess progress on Logframe indicators; Interviews.	Interview with project staff; Documents (project reports; FAO supervision reports); Pastoralist institutions; pastoral communities.
2.2 To what extent has the project managed to engage national stakeholders and local pastoral communities in the entire development of the framework and PRAGA methodology (e.g. site selection, indicator selection and testing, trainings and workshops and the actual conducting of the assessment?	Interviews; review the Progress reports Field visits; Supervision reports	Key partners; pastoral communities, Project staff

Main question/sub-question	Method	Interviewee/source
2.3 To what extent are the capacities of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grassland and rangelands strengthened to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM?	Interviews; review the Progress reports; supervision mission reports.	Interviews with key national stakeholders and community representatives
2.4 To what extent has the project been able to influence local, national and international policies? And to what extent has the project been able to initiate regional activities? (for the Sahelian countries and dissemination with neighboring countries in Uruguay)	Review the evidence on policy influencing, progress reports draft policies and other framework documents, Progress and supervision reports; interviews;	Project staff, Relevant government partners; documents
2.5 To what extent has the PRAGA methodology and framework of global comparable indicators been disseminated at global level, at relevant international fora?	Interviews, review evidence (reports, websites), expert judgement; Review of the procedural and operational manual to conduct the assessment through a framework of comparable indicators assessment CRITERIA.	Reports, Project staff.
2.6 To what extent has the project established the planned M&E activities?	Review M&E Plan and how it is implemented; interviews	Reports; M&E staff
2.7 To what extent is the project collecting lessons and best practices, based on this project?	Interviews; Reviews reports and documentation on lessons learned and best practices	Project staff; reports
III. Efficiency. EQ3: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently?		
3.1 To what extent are the project activities following the planned timeline?	Interviews; Expert judgement; Compare the schedule with the outputs obtained (review reports)	Interviews with project staff and operational partners
3.2 To what extent were the management/implementing arrangements appropriate to deliver the project in an efficient manner?	Interviews; Expert judgement.	Interviews with project staff and key partners.
3.3 To what extent has the project made the best use of the GEF-funding and co-financing?	Interviews; Expert judgement; review reports (project and supervision); expert judgement.	Project staff; reports
3.4 To what extent has the project made the best use of knowledge inputs?	Reports; expert judgement	Project staff
IV. Sustainability of project outcomes. EQ4: To what extent are steps being taken to ensure the sustainability of the intervention? (e.g. ownership among stakeholders, integration in new projects/programmes)?		

Main question/sub-question	Method	Interviewee/source
4.1 What is the likelihood that project results will continue after project completion?	Interviews; expert judgement.	Interviews with Project staff and key stakeholders.
4.2 What is the likelihood that the targeted stakeholders will take ownership of the implemented methodology and other project activities?	Interviews	Interview with project staff and stakeholders including pastoralist groups.
4.3 What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and benefits (consider financial, socio-economic, institutional and governance, and environmental)?	Interviews; expert judgement	Project staff; key partners
V. Factors affecting progress. EQ5: What are the main factors that have affected or are likely to affect effectiveness, that could prevent future progress towards and the eventual achievement of the project's intended longer-term impact?		
5.1 To what extent is the choice and range of partners included in project implementation, and their capacities, appropriate?	Interviews; Project documents; expert assessment.	Interview with Project staff.
5.2 What have been the challenges related to the financial management of the project?	Interviews	Interviews with Project staff; Project reports; PSC meeting reports; FAO supervision reports.
5.3 To what extent is the PRAGA methodology rigorous and comprehensive?	Interviews; expert judgement	Interviews with Project staff; key stakeholders Project reports; FAO supervision reports.
5.4 To what extent are the developed indicators, the standardized procedural and operational manual available, accepted and used by the targeted stakeholders?	Interviews; Review of Project documents	Project reports; FAO supervision reports.
5.5 What has been the effect of their involvement/non-involvement on the project results?	Interviews	Interviews with Project staff and key stakeholders; Project reports
5.6 To what extent are the M&E activities (e.g. indicators, guidelines) able to collect the necessary, timely, accurate and comparable data and information?	Interviews	Interviews with Project staff and key stakeholders; Project reports
VI. Cross-cutting dimensions.: Gender and minority groups **EQ6: To what extent were gender equality considerations reflected in the project design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men? To what extent has the project ensured the inclusion of local herders, women groups, youth and indigenous people?**		
6.1 Did the project conduct an analysis on gender roles, responsibilities and challenges, with regard to impact of rangeland and grassland degradation?	Review of project relevant documents and project reports.	Interview with project staff+ local communities and women groups;
6.2 To what extent have climate change issues and the management of natural resource been taken into account?	Review the Prodoc and Project reports.; Interviews	Interviews with project staff + local communities;

Appendix 6. MTE itinerary including field missions (agenda)

Kenya Mission

Weekday/date	Hour	Activity	Stakeholder(s)/Organization
Monday 18.11.2019	08.30-10.00	Interview	Dr. Jonathan Davies Coordinator, Global Drylands Initiative (GDI)/Global Ecosystem Management Programme, IUCN.
	10.30-11.30	Interview	John Njogu Natural Resource Scientist; Kenya Department of Resource Survey and Remote sensing.
	11.35-12.30	Interview	Ernst Mbogo Deputy Director Range Management Division/Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.
	Afternoon	Travel to Isiolo, with: Vivian Onyango, Claire Ogali, and Achiba Gargule.	
	19.00-20.00	Group Interview	Representatives of Isiolo pastoralists groups: (i) Dedha Committee Kinna, Isiolo: Edin Boru (Chairman); Maalin Hassan Ado (Member) and (ii) Ward Planning Committee, Garba Tula, Isiolo: Rukia Ali (Member).
Tuesday 19.11.2019	09.00-16.45	Attend the Validation Workshop	
	17.40-18.15	Interview	Frederick Onyango Aloo, Principal Livestock Production Officer, State Department of Livestock/Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.
		Groups Interviews	Garissa and Isiolo Counties officials: - Mohammed Hussein, Ecosystem conservator/Kenya Forest Service, Garissa; - Joel Okal, Livestock officer, Garissa County - Abdi H. Daoud, CEC Water, Sanitation, energy, environment, natural ressources and climate change, Isiolo County ; - Lawrence Mwongela, CEC: Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Isiolo County - Elyas Hassan, Researcher, KEFRI, Garissa - Halkano Hache, Livestock Production officer, Garba Tula, Isiolo County - Abdi Somo, Gum and resin specialist and trader, Gums and resins association of Kenya - Bernard Wafula, Livestock officer, Isiolo County.
	18.30-19.30	Group interview	Habon Aden Maalim CEC Environment and Natural Resources, Garissa County ; Yusuf Abdille, KALRO_BRC/KALRO Garissa
	18.30-19.30	Group interview on gender aspects	Pastoralists members of Korweyne WRUA/Garissa County: Farah Keinan (member); Zeinab Shalle Bare (member and women representative); Shaani Badhane (member); Omar Olat (member)
	19.45-21.00	Interviews	- Claire Ogali, Programme officer, GDI/IUCN ; - Bora Masumbuko, Senior Programme officer, IUCN; - Achiba Gargule, National consultant, FAO
Wednesday 20.11.2019	09.00-10.30	Interview	Mahamoud Haji CEC Finance and Economic Planning/Isiolo County
	11.00-17.00	Return to Nairobi	

Weekday/date	Hour	Activity	Stakeholder(s)/Organization
Thursday 21.11.2019	09.30-10.30	Interview	Philip Kisoyan, Natural Resource Office, FAO Office, Nairobi, Kenya
	10.30-11.35	Interview	Michael Gitonga, Water and Land Specialist, FAO Office, Nairobi, Kenya
	11.40-12.00	Courtesy call	Charles Eric Bebay, FAO Representative ad interim, Nairobi, Kenya
	14.00-15.00	Interview	Guyo Malicha Roba, Country Technical Analyst, IFAD
Friday 22.11.2019	11.00-12.00	Debriefing	Participants: - IUCN: Claire Ogali; Bora Masumbuko; Jonathan Davis; - FAO Rome (via Skype): Renate Roels; Vivian Onyango.
Saturday 23.11.2019	09.30-10.45	Interview	Dr. Hassan Guyo Roba, Special advisor, African Rift Valley/Christensen Funds.

Uruguay Mission

Weekday/date	Hour	Activity	Stakeholder(s)/Organization
Monday 02.12.2019	14.00-14.30	Courtesy call	Vicente Plaza, FAO Representative, Montevideo
	14.30-15.15	Interview	Jimena Perez Rocha FAO Consultant, Project GCP/ GLO/530/GEF
	15.35-17.00	Interview	Marcos Martinez, Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) Dirección de Recursos Naturales Coordinación Campo Natural
Tuesday 03.12.2019	07.30-10.00	Travel to Maldonado.	
	10.00-12.00	Interview	- Virginia San Martin, Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF) - Fernando Coronel, Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF) Investigador – Productor, Mejorador Genético Ovinos
	15.00-16.30	Interview	Santiago Medina Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment of Uruguay (MVOTMA), Division Sistema Nacional de Areas Protegidas.
	17.00-19.00	Travel back to Montevideo	
Wednesday 04.12.2019	09.00-10.00	Interview	- Luis Frachia, Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF), Gerente General; - Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF) Unidad Comercial.
	10.20-12.00	Interview	Daniel Formoso, University of the Republic (UdelaR) – Facultad de Agronomía Secretariado Uruguayo de la Lana (SUL) Consultor - Técnico Independiente
	Afternoon	Preparation of the Debriefing	
Thursday 05.12.2019	10.00-11.30	Interview (Skype)	- Prof. Ramiro Zanoniani, UdelaR – Facultad de Agronomía, Ecofisiología de Pastos, Manejo de Sistemas Pastoriles ;

Weekday/date	Hour	Activity	Stakeholder(s)/Organization
			- Prof. Pablo Boggiano, UdelaR – Facultad de Agronomía, Producción animal, Plantas Forrajeras
	15.00-16.00	Debriefing	- FAO Representative - Project coordinator.

Appendix 7. Summary of progress towards project objective and outcomes

Outcomes/objective	Assumptions (according to the reconstructed TOC)	Progress
Outcome 1: A participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands is developed and tested.	IUCN and FAO engage stakeholders to support Project implementation & ensures that implementation and governance arrangements are clear for partners.	The Project made a good progress towards achieving outcome 1. Kenya, Uruguay, and Kyrgyzstan have completed field testing of the PRAGA methodology, and Burkina Faso and Niger are will complete before Project closure. This progress is due to the realization of the Assumption on engagement of stakeholders, particularly local communities.
Outcome 2: National and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring procedural and operational manual and the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments.		The progress made towards achieving outcome 2 is limited, as a result mainly of the delay in its start, and lack of a clear and systematic approach.
Outcome 3: Project's outcome and output targets are monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned and best practices are captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations.		Many key outputs of outcome 3 remain undelivered. In particular, the planned monitoring system for the systematic provision of information on progress towards the project outcomes has not been set-up.
Objective: "strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands, to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands".	- FAO and IUCN facilitates comparability of methodologies (Criteria, core indictors, etc.) and the exchange of scientific practices across regions and across stakeholders; - A framework for mainstreaming/adoption of good practices into planning and implementation of SLM exists and is adopted by all target groups and actors; - Interactions and collaboration with funded projects and programs are catalyzing investment and collaboration from multiple sources, and there is information exchange.	Overall, the Project is not on-track to achieve its objective. Key outputs under outcomes 2 and 3 are delayed, thus reducing delivery efficiency for the two outcomes. The non-realization of many key assumptions hinders the achievement of impacts. Achieving these relies mainly on FAO and IUCN's success in facilitating the comparability of the sets of identified criteria and indicators and the exchange of scientific practices between the participating countries and the regions where they are located, Also, the likelihood for interactions of collaborations with funded projects and programs to catalyze investment and collaborations from multiple sources remains low.

Outcomes/objective	Assumptions (according to the reconstructed TOC)	Progress
	- Based on lessons learned, FAO and IUCN provides tools for the development of effective strategies that combat range and grassland degradation and motivate for improved policy and legislation.	

Office of Evaluation
E-mail: evaluation@fao.org
Web address: www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

CB0467EN/07.20