



TRANSFORMA-INNOVA

**Discussion of general aspects of the MTE Report**  
**Main comments agreed by the TRANSFORMA-INNOVA Program Consortium**  
**(CATIE, CI, FUNBAM, GIZ, UNDP)**  
**Date 08.05.24**

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**Implementation:**

1. Actual starting date of program-financed consortium actions: The evaluation of progress towards the goals should use the actual starting date of activities with the partners once they received their respective grant agreements to allow them to formally assign their staff. The first grant agreement for a partner organization was effective starting October 15, 2022, followed at later dates for the other partners. Therefore, the start of consortium work should be established as the first quarter of 2023. Using the date of final project approval in October 2021 as starting date of project implementation does not recognize this reality due to delays due to the change of government authorities (see following point) and lengthy administrative procedures and negotiation (around one year after commissioning the project ) that had to be followed by the consortium partners. As a result and following the establishment of the governance structure of the project, the first Annual Operational Plan (AOP) for implementing project activities was for the the year 2023, having been elaborated during 2022. This first AOP was approved by the Steering Committee in November 2022, laying the ground for consortium-wide implementation starting at the beginning of 2023.
2. Change of government delayed project start: The change of government in Costa Rica in May 2022 resulted in a change of personnel or reassignment of tasks for 6 to 12 months. Many of these changes, especially in MINAE/SINAC, left important gaps for significant periods of time, which delayed the formation of multidisciplinary working groups and the adequate recognition of the different central themes of the Program (e.g. the theme of biodiversity). By the second semester of 2023, the thematic working groups had a better representation of the different key public organizations, particularly with respect to the inclusion of biodiversity aspects that are of interest to the environmental ministry MINAE.
3. During the interviews, academic institutions (e.g. UCR, UNA) apparently were not consulted, despite their contributions to certain topics and processes.



4. Considering the fundamental roles of the public institutions for determining the speed and dimension of impacts of the project's contributions, it would have been desirable to also include an assessment of their contributions in the evaluation report. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

### **Indicators**

5. One of the project's most important indicators is not included in the analysis: the leverage of USD 10 million to ensure the implementation of planned activities and the achievement of objectives (outputs and outcomes).
6. A specific section should be included in the evaluation report (or in the products and achievements) of the advances of each consortium partner. For example, the report does not mention the substantial efforts of coordination that were needed for establishing or activating the different working groups, nor for the development of the needed multi-actor technical processes.

### **Assumptions/risks**

7. Fact-checking of basic assumptions and risks: The approved project envisioned a 'running start' based on a series of implicit assumptions, including the following:
  - (a) *"Collaborators from the public sector would be designated and authorized to collaborate from day 1"*. This was not always the case as mentioned under point 4;
  - (b) *"Funding for the implementation of the work packages under the responsibility of consortium partners would be available starting late 2021 / early 2022"*. Administrative procedures, negotiation process and new government on-boarding did not allow that until 1 year later;
  - (c) *"Public authorities would recognize the targets and means offered by the PROGRAM as agreed with the previous government"*. This was not the case for the livestock sector which insisted on more than doubling the original indicator of working with 150 cattle farms to a later accepted number of 308 cattle farms. This required substantial consensus building, but was finally resolved through a co-funding arrangement with FUNDECOOPERACION. Another example comes from the NAMA-Musaceae for which the relevance of including small producers, clearly envisioned in the project proposal which had been approved by the previous government officials, was only approved at the beginning of 2024 after an extended analysis.



- (d) *“The holistic multidimensional focus of the Program (i.e. a focus on mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity) would be fully embraced by the public and private partners from day 1”.* This has not always been the case. Rather, it required additional time-consuming efforts to create a common understanding and approval of this multidimensional approach by the key actors. Examples of successful propositions by the Program are the increasing acceptance of biodiversity goals in the 3 NAMAs, as well as the need to incorporate training on administrative and business skills with the use of tools such as ‘Negotium’. The participatory approach of the consortium has always attempted to be as inclusive as possible, which has required additional time.
- (e) *“The most appropriate and effective Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) within the NAMA-approach are adequately documented and ranked according to their benefits for mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity conservation”.* While this was partially true for the coffee and livestock NAMAs, the focus was limited, in detail and depth, to selected aspects of mitigation and adaptation. The innovative more holistic view presented by the Program required a detailed review and expansion of relevant information for the technical support of training and implementation in the field.
- (f) *“Information about farm selection by the public partners would be made available shortly after the start of the implementation phase”.* This has not always been the case. In some cases, staff of the Program is still waiting for obtaining this information from the public actors who have requested the leadership for selecting key beneficiaries.

### **Others**

8. There are different interpretations of the use of the term "project", which creates confusion. Sometimes it is used to refer to the project design as approved trilaterally (CR, Germany, EU) in the commissioned document, at other times it is used to refer to GIZ or the consortium as the executing entity of the German/European contribution. Only rarely is it used to refer to the cooperation system in which the counterparts (MINAE, MAG, SINAC and INCOPESCA as well as a series of sectoral institutions) lead, participate, contribute and take co-responsibility for achieving the objectives. Therefore, in order to better understand the statements in the evaluation report, the authors of the report should specify who or what they are referring to when they use the term "project".
9. The evaluation focuses almost exclusively on the German (and partly also the European) contribution and thus only evaluates one part of the "cooperation system" established for the implementation of the project. This cooperation system is led by



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the sectoral counterpart MAG in the terrestrial component (with 3 NAMA Technical Groups) and by SINAC/INCOPESCA in the marine coastal component. Unfortunately, an evaluation, which only evaluates a single actor (the entities executing the German and partly European contribution), cannot adequately reflect the complexity of the interactions that occur in the project's cooperation system.

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