

Terminal evaluation
of the project
"Participatory assessment
of land degradation
and sustainable land
management in grassland
and pastoral systems"

**Project Evaluation Series
02/2022**

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“Participatory assessment of land
degradation and sustainable land
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**Project code: GCP/GLO/530/GFF
GEF ID: 5724**

Required citation:

FAO 2022. *Terminal evaluation of the project "Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems"*. Project Evaluation Series, 02/2022. Rome.

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ISBN 978-92-5-135753-8

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Abstract

The terminal evaluation of the GEF-funded “Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems” project was implemented in 2017–2021 in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Niger and Uruguay. The terminal evaluation is based on a review of project documentation, remote interviews with key stakeholders and site visits (Kyrgyzstan).

The project successfully developed and tested a participatory rangeland and grassland assessment methodology (PRAGA), providing a practical tool for collecting data and information on rangeland and grassland health, thereby contributing to enabling informed decision-making for sustainable rangeland and grassland management – thus aligning with the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). PRAGA proved effective for bringing together scientists and local stakeholders, and combining scientific and local knowledge, although the use of satellite imagery remains a constraint. The project was successful in engaging a range of stakeholders, but the level of ownership varied among the countries, and was usually stronger when linked to existing processes. Capacities were strengthened *vis-à-vis* assessing land degradation and available sustainable land management options, but the application of these skills remains to be seen. The uptake and institutionalization of the PRAGA methodology by national and local stakeholders in the project countries is uneven and its further use will generally depend on further donor support. It is too early to assess whether PRAGA will become a significant contribution to international decision-making, for example *vis-à-vis* UNCCD. The project faced significant delays due to a range of external and internal factors but, with an extension of the completion date, the project was largely able to produce its intended outputs. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) plan to further apply PRAGA elements in other interventions, but the uptake in FAO could be limited by the lack of clear institutional anchoring of rangeland management. FAO and IUCN carried out well their roles as implementing and executing agencies, and successfully mobilized qualified experts and national partners.

The terminal evaluation provides five recommendations for FAO and IUCN: i) develop strategies to facilitate the use by national stakeholders of remote sensing and geographic information system (GIS); ii) strengthen the gender dimension; iii) refine and promote PRAGA as a tool for the monitoring of national Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) commitments; iv) integrate more PRAGA assessments in interventions that invest in tangible rangeland management improvements; and v) establish an institutional home in FAO for rangeland and grassland management.

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Acknowledgements

The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) would like to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation, managed by Mr Anshuman Bhargava from OED. The evaluation was conducted by Mr Kris B. Prasada Rao (lead evaluator) and supported by national consultants Mr Kanat Sultanaliyev (Kyrgyzstan) and Dr Moussa Massaoudou (the Niger, Burkina Faso). Ms Borka Karbic, OED, provided invaluable administrative support throughout this evaluation.

The evaluation was carried out with the invaluable assistance of the FAO staff at the Plant Production and Protection Division, and Country Offices in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Niger and Uruguay, and IUCN staff at the Global Drylands Initiative and Regional Offices in Burkina Faso and Kenya.

Their insight, knowledge, advice and comments made this review possible.

The evaluation benefited from the inputs of many other stakeholders, including government officers, farmers' organizations, and the staff of research centres and private sector. Their contributions were critical to the team's work and are deeply appreciated.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CAF	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas, Uruguay
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic information system
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LD	Land degradation
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MPS	Mountain Partnership Secretariat
OPIM	Operational Partner Implementation Modality
PKH	Pastoral Knowledge Hub
PRAGA	Participatory rangeland and grassland assessment
PTF	Project Task Force
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLM	Sustainable land management
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive summary

Introduction

1. The terminal evaluation aims to provide accountability for the results achieved to resource partners, management of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and national governments as outlined in the guidelines of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the project document. The evaluation draws lessons from the implementation processes to inform future projects and decisions by the FAO-GEF coordination unit, operational partners and project teams. Given the nature of the project, it also covers future scalability of the participatory rangeland and grassland assessment (PRAGA) methodology. The object of the terminal evaluation is the Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems (the project), implemented in 2017–2021. The evaluation questions covered the relevance, effectiveness (results), efficiency, sustainability, factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues. The terminal evaluation comprised a review of project documentations and remote interviews with key stakeholders at global and national level, and a sample of local stakeholders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the terminal evaluation team mainly worked from home. It was only to visit field locations in Kyrgyzstan (done by a national consultant).

Main findings

2. Relevance (rating: Satisfactory). The project was fully aligned with, and responded well to, GEF and FAO's strategic priorities (Finding 1). It responded to international goals, in particular to the objectives of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 (Life on Land), but also to other SDGs. However, despite the relevance, the project did not link to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Finding 2).
3. Sustainable rangeland and grassland management is a priority for the selected pilot countries, and better assessment of the status of pastures is an important input for them (Finding 3). Through a methodology that combines scientific data and local knowledge, the project addressed a global, national and local gap *vis-à-vis* obtaining data and information on rangeland and grassland status for informed decision-making for sustainable rangeland and grassland management (Finding 4).
4. The project was complementary to existing interventions, but the linkages and potential for synergy were not fully banked upon. Without a direct link to tangible on-the-ground investments in improving pasture productivity, the incentive for participation was limited (Finding 5).
5. The project design and results framework were generally clear and concise. However, Outcome 2 was overambitious compared to the scope of the related activities and outputs at both national and global levels. Outcome 3 was mainly related to project management rather than the delivery of project results (Finding 6). The timeline was overoptimistic and the budget too constrained to fully test the potential of the PRAGA methodology (Finding 7). The planned management and implementation setup was not sufficiently clear and not fully banking on the capacities of FAO and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at country level (Finding 8).
6. Effectiveness (rating: Satisfactory). Outcome 1 (a participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands is developed and tested) was achieved, and a participatory rangeland assessment and monitoring methodology was developed, tested and refined (Finding 9). The PRAGA methodology was very well received by stakeholders

at local, national and international level, who found it of high quality, appropriate and applicable (Finding 10). However, the application of the PRAGA methodology has a few challenges, mainly in relation to the use of remote sensing and the identification of globally relevant and comparable indicators (Finding 11).

7. Outcome 2 (national and international agrosylvopastoral decision-making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring manuals and from the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessment) was partly achieved. that the intended policy outputs were delivered or are in the process of being delivered, but the actual use of the PRAGA assessments in the decision-making process in project countries remains uneven (Finding 12). The PRAGA methodology was promoted internationally and generated interest, but it is too early to assess whether it will become a significant contribution to international decision-making processes (Finding 13).
8. The project objective (to strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess land degradation (LD) and make informed decisions to promote sustainable land management (SLM) in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands) was partly achieved. Local and national capacities in the five countries were strengthened *vis-à-vis* assessing LD and available SLM options, but the application of these skills remains to be seen (Finding 14). Given the scope and nature of the project, it was neither expected nor positioned to deliver direct impacts (Finding 15).
9. GEF support was instrumental for the development and testing of the PRAGA tool (Finding 16).
10. Efficiency (rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory). The project faced significant delays due to a range of both external and internal factors. However, with an extension of the completion date, the project was largely able to produce its intended outputs (Finding 17). Good technical expertise and qualified implementing partners were successfully mobilized (Finding 18). The results including a few additional activities were delivered within the budget frame (Finding 19). Funds were generally made available in a timely manner (Finding 20).
11. Sustainability (rating: Moderately Likely). The uptake and institutionalization of the PRAGA methodology by national and local stakeholders in the project countries is uneven, and its use would generally depend on further donor support (Finding 21). FAO and IUCN plan to further apply the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, in specific interventions. However, the uptake in FAO could be limited by the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangeland management (Finding 22). Broader uptake of the PRAGA methodology depends on the level of attention to and investment in rangeland management, but, at the same time, PRAGA assessment findings have the potential to contribute towards an increased international prioritization of sustainable rangeland management (Finding 23).
12. Factors affecting performance (rating: Moderately Satisfactory). Considering the size and nature of the project, the design of the monitoring system was largely adequate (Finding 24), and the monitoring and reporting generally sufficient (Finding 25). The mid-term review recommendations were adequately addressed (Finding 26).
13. After initial unclarities were solved, FAO successfully carried out its role as project implementing agency, providing appropriate guidance in a timely manner to IUCN and national partners. However, Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM)-related processes created delays, and the FAO Country Offices, except for Hungary, were not mobilized for project oversight and support (Finding 27). The Project Task Force (PTF) significantly contributed to the carrying out of FAO's tasks as implementing agency, but the decision-making was not sufficiently inclusive in

relation to the decision to transfer the project execution in Kyrgyzstan from IUCN to FAO (Finding 28).

14. Both FAO and IUCN carried out well their roles as executing agencies, both at national and international level (Finding 29). They successfully mobilized relevant and qualified technical experts and national partners to carry out rangelands assessments and stakeholder mobilization (Finding 30). FAO and IUCN cooperated and coordinated well at global level, but there was generally limited interagency cooperation at country level (Finding 31).
15. The GEF budget was almost fully executed. Overall, the spending deviations from the budget were small (Finding 32). The level of co-financing was somewhat lower than expected, but this did not affect the achievement of results. While some of the anticipated funding did not materialize, other co-financing was mobilized from additional sources (Finding 33).
16. The project was successful in engaging a range of stakeholders. However, the level of stakeholder ownership varied among the countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could be linked to existing processes (Finding 34).
17. The project's experiences and lessons, as well as the PRAGA methodology were promoted both at national and international level with publications and presentations at events (Finding 35). There was limited peer learning and sharing of experiences among the five project countries (Finding 36).
18. Gender and other equity dimensions (rating: Moderately Satisfactory). Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but this was not done in an entirely systematic manner. The participation of women was significantly lower than that of men. This was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding (Finding 37).
19. Environmental and social safeguards (rating: Satisfactory). Given the nature of the project, which did not involve investments on the ground, it did not have any negative environmental or social impacts. It is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts (Finding 38).

Box 1. Summary for GEF online portal

Stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are major strengths of the participatory PRAGA methodology. This aspect was widely seen by stakeholders as a key feature of the PRAGA methodology. Qualified national technical experts and national partners (government, academia, producer associations and/or NGOs) were successfully mobilized to carry out rangelands assessments and participate in project implementation. However, ownership among government decision makers remained uneven and varied among the countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could be linked to existing processes.

Gender. The PRAGA methodology emphasizes the need to ensure the participation of women, youth and different social groups across ethnicities. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth in the project, but this was not done in an entirely systematic manner. Women's participation in activities was monitored and efforts were made to include women and youth in project activities, but the country assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions. The participation of local women in the project was significantly lower than that of men. This was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding.

Knowledge management. The PRAGA methodology as well as the project's experiences and lessons were promoted at national and international level with publications and presentations at events. At global level, the primary knowledge product is the PRAGA manual, which also contains an annex on lessons learned. Two global publications communicating the PRAGA experience were produced. Moreover, a case study on Kyrgyzstan was prepared as a contribution to the online Global Rangelands Atlas. At national level, PRAGA assessment reports were produced to communicate assessment findings and they were validated in local and national workshops. Policy briefs and policy action plans were prepared to inform decision-making and planning at national and local levels. An online PRAGA portal was also established, but it is only to a limited extent populated with the written products produced.

Box 2. Overall ratings for GEF online portal

Progress towards achieving the project's development objective(s). The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities in the five countries, thus contributing to the overall objective: *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.* Moreover, the project achieved its primary result, that is the delivery of a proven participatory model for rangeland assessment.

Rating: Satisfactory

Overall progress on implementation. The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed. The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus it needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs.

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

Overall risk. The PRAGA methodology will be applied by FAO and IUCN. Both of them have mobilized and are mobilizing funding for projects that use elements of PRAGA. The future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depends on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and the Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organizations.

Rating: Moderately Low

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance. With a focus on land degradation, the project responded directly to global, national and local priorities vis-à-vis ensuring that rangelands are managed sustainably. However, opportunities to link to the global biodiversity and climate change agendas were largely missed.

Conclusion 2. Relevance. The emphasis on multi-stakeholder participation was a key strength of the project, but without a clear link to tangible investments to improve rangeland management, some opportunities to promote participation and ownership and influence policy and planning were missed.

Conclusion 3. Effectiveness. The project successfully developed an implementable and participatory rangeland assessment tool of good quality, although the use of remote sensing and indicator selection remain a challenge.

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness. The project enhanced national and local capacities to assess rangeland health and the understanding of available options for improved rangeland management, but the influence on policy and planning and the adoption of PRAGA is uneven.

Conclusion 5. Efficiency. The project was significantly affected by delays, but the intended outputs were largely delivered within the budget, as were some additional activities.

Conclusion 6. Sustainability. The uptake of PRAGA remains uneven and would require further support from FAO and IUCN – they both have plans for further application of PRAGA, but the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangelands in FAO appears to be a limitation.

Conclusion 7. Factors affecting performance. The project was largely well implemented and executed, albeit with some shortcomings, for example in relation to the unclarity of roles and limited synergy between the two agencies at country level.

Conclusion 8. Cross-cutting issues. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but not in an entirely systematic manner.

Conclusion 9. Cross-cutting issues. The project did not have any negative environmental or social impact, but it is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. To FAO and IUCN. Develop strategies to facilitate the use of remote sensing and GIS in PRAGA assessments by national stakeholders: i) explore opportunities to simplify the PRAGA tool vis-à-vis the application of remote sensing and GIS; ii) develop and test models to include systematic and targeted remote sensing and GIS capacity development in future applications of PRAGA.

Recommendation 2. To FAO and IUCN. Strengthen the gender dimension in PRAGA.: i) strengthen the PRAGA tool with a more in-dept discussion on the gender, youth and inclusion dimension, and tangible tools to address gender issues and ensure inclusion and participation.

Recommendation 3. To FAO and IUCN. Refine and promote the PRAGA methodology as a tool for the monitoring of national commitments under the CBD and UNFCCC conventions: i) develop a set of simple rangeland indicators that feed into national CBD and UNFCCC monitoring and reporting; and ii) test PRAGA as a tool for the gathering of information for CBD and UNFCCC reporting, ideally as an integrated tool that simultaneously feeds the reporting of all three Rio Conventions. (For FAO, IUCN)

Recommendation 4. To FAO and IUCN. Integrate more comprehensively PRAGA assessments in programmes and projects that invest in tangible rangeland management improvements: i) identify all ongoing and planned FAO and IUCN policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management PRAGA could be integrated into; ii) identify ongoing and planned policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management by other development partners PRAGA could be integrated into in the five pilot countries; and iii) develop and implement a project, which offers to add and finance a PRAGA

assessment component in relevant ongoing or planned rangeland interventions implemented by FAO, IUCN or even other development partners.

Recommendation 5. To FAO. Establish a clear institutional home to engage in sustainable rangeland and grassland management in an integrated, holistic and coordinated manner: i) appoint or recruit an expert to coordinate rangeland-related work within FAO; ii) establish a dedicated rangeland management team or unit in FAO; and iii) carry out in-house awareness raising and capacity development for relevant FAO staff on the importance of rangelands *vis-à-vis* land degradation, biodiversity, climate change, and human and economic development. (For FAO)

GEF rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project was fully aligned to both GEF and FAO priorities <i>vis-à-vis</i> the promotion of SLM.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities as well as beneficiary needs	S	The project responded directly to address LD and SLM objectives of UNCCD, to SDG 15, and to priorities and gaps in the pilot countries. However, a clear link to UNFCCC and CBD was not made, despite its relevance.
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MS	The project complemented SLM interventions and drew from other assessment methodologies, but opportunities for synergy were not fully banked upon, e.g. <i>vis-à-vis</i> incentives for local participation.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	S	The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	S	
- Outcome 1	HS	The PRAGA methodology was developed, tested and revised, and it is rated very positively by stakeholders.
- Outcome 2	MS	The contribution to national and local decision-making processes varied. Tangible contribution was achieved at local level in some countries, but national level influence was generally limited. The PRAGA methodology was made visible internationally but has not influenced international processes.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	S	
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	UA	Given the nature of the project, there were no direct impacts. Indirect impacts will depend on the uptake of the PRAGA methodology as a decision-making tool.
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MU	The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Staff and expert resources were used well, and the cost-effectiveness was good and included the delivery of additional activities within budget.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	FAO and IUCN have and are mobilizing funding for projects that use PRAGA or elements of it. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and the Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organizations.
D1.2. Socio-political risks	MU	The level of political interest in PRAGA varies among the five countries. The political risk for replication of the methodology through donor-funded projects is low. However, obtaining political ownership, using assessment results as well as the PRAGA methodology will require concerted efforts. Insecurity is a major risk in Burkina Faso and the Niger, and it is also a risk in certain parts of the livestock production areas of Kenya. Moreover, it could make it difficult or impossible to carry out PRAGA assessments.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	The conduciveness of the institutional and governance landscape is high in Burkina Faso and the Niger, fairly high in Uruguay, but quite low in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Both FAO and IUCN are committed to using PRAGA in the future. However, institutional fragmentation of rangeland work in FAO is a limiting factor.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	There is no environmental risk. On the contrary, increased environmental degradation is likely to enhance the interest in PRAGA as a tool for pursuing SLM.
D2. Catalysis and replication	S	FAO and IUCN are already replicating PRAGA, or elements hereof. Replication by other organizations cannot be judged yet. At country level, the project did have a catalytic effect, since it has influenced local plans in some countries, enhanced capacities, and generated interest and appreciation among stakeholders.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MU	The Project start was significantly delayed. This was due to a combination of external factors, over which FAO and IUCN had no control, and internal factors. The internal factors were mainly related to administrative issues of the two agencies, but also due to the fact that the project design did not adequately clarify roles, responsibilities and modes of operation at the national level.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	S	FAO headquarters provided effective administrative guidance and approval processes and disbursements were mostly smooth and timely. OPIM-related processes created challenges that contributed to delays. The FAO Country Office in Uruguay was proactively engaged in the project support, but in the other countries, FAO Country Office engagement was limited.
E2.2 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	PTF decision-making process worked well internally in FAO. The decision to transfer execution in Kyrgyzstan from FAO to IUCN based on the lack of an IUCN Country Office was not sufficiently inclusive and does not appear to be fully justified, considering that FAO headquarters handled implementation with little involvement of the FAO Country Office.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments
E3. Quality of project execution For DEX projects: Project Management Unit/BH; For OPIM projects: Executing Agency	S	Project implementation was successfully accelerated after the initial delays and the outputs delivered were of good quality. Stakeholders were satisfied with the facilitation, coordination, and technical support. FAO and IUCN were well coordinated at global level, but the collaboration at country level was generally limited and opportunities for synergies at country level were therefore not banked upon.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	The GEF budget was fully executed and deviations from the budget were minor. Co-financing was somewhat below expectations.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are key strengths of the PRAGA methodology. The project was generally successful in including relevant stakeholders in the implementation. However, ownership among government stakeholders remained uneven and varied among the countries.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	The project's experiences and lessons as well as the PRAGA methodology were promoted both at national and international level with publications and presentations at events. However, efforts to promote cross-country peer learning among the five project countries were relatively limited.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	
E7.1 M&E design	MS	Monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring was reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	MS	Overall, the monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	The PRAGA methodology emphasizes the need to ensure participation of women, youth, and different social groups across ethnicities. Women's participation in activities was monitored. Some efforts to include women and youth in project activities were made. The assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions.
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	The project and the PRAGA methodology supported the right to participation and access to information. Indigenous peoples' were not a focus of the project, but their rights are referred to in the PRAGA manual, as is the need to ensure the inclusion of different ethnic and social groups.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to indirectly contribute to improved environmental sustainability.
Overall project rating	S	

Note: See Appendix 3 for rating scheme.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. The terminal evaluation aims to provide accountability for the results achieved to resource partners, Management of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and national governments as outlined in the Global Environment Facility (GEF) guidelines and the project document. The evaluation draws lessons from the implementation processes to inform future projects and decisions by the coordination unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and GEF, operational partners and project teams. Given the nature of the project, it also covers future scalability of the participatory rangeland and grassland assessment (PRAGA) methodology.

1.2 Intended users

2. The main audience and intended users of the evaluation are:
 - i. FAO country offices, national project teams, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and members of the Project Task Force (PTF) at FAO headquarters, the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub (PKH) and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS), which will use the evaluation findings and lessons to finalize, and if necessary, optimize project activities, plan for sustainability of the results achieved and improve formulation and implementation of similar projects;
 - ii. the GEF, which could use the findings to inform strategic investment decisions in the future for similar projects on land degradation (LD) and sustainable land management (SLM);
 - iii. other stakeholders involved in project implementation could use the evaluation findings and conclusions to optimize their involvement in the project and for future planning;
 - iv. other resource partners, organizations and institutions interested in supporting and/or implementing the PRAGA methodology as well as informing agrosylvopastoral decision-making.
3. During the inception phase of the terminal evaluation, a stakeholder analysis was carried out to identify the different stakeholder groups at global, regional, national and local levels. This analysis guided the selection of interviewees.

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

4. **Scope.** The object of the terminal evaluation is the Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems (the project), implemented from 1 February 2017 until 19 November 2021. In November 2021, the project was further extended to May 2022.¹ The project tested and refined a participatory rangeland and grassland assessment (PRAGA) methodology. The target audience of the project were the intended users of the PRAGA methodology, including FAO, IUCN, national and local government agencies dealing with rangelands and grasslands, academia, pastoralists' organizations and pastoralists in the five project countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Niger, Uruguay) with one to two project sites in each country). The long-term aim of the project was for the PRAGA methodology to be adopted and further replicated beyond the direct stakeholders after the project.

¹ IUCN's contract was extended till 31 December 2021. The extension period is not covered by the evaluation.

5. **Objective.** The terminal evaluation explores the GEF evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, factors affecting performance and delivery of project results, as well as cross-cutting dimensions. Findings, lessons and recommendations for the improvement of future projects have been generated. The terms of reference (TOR) specified a set of evaluation questions, which were further adjusted and refined during the inception phase (see Box 3).

Box 3. Evaluation questions by GEF criteria

<p>Relevance</p>	<p>1.1 Were the project objectives relevant to the subnational, national and global efforts aimed at preserving grasslands and rangelands?</p> <p>1.1.1. What is the added value of the tool? Is the tool addressing a significant gap and meeting a demand?</p> <p>1.2 Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected results?</p> <p>1.2.1 Were any corrective actions taken to improve the project design, including the development of a theory of change or the review of the results framework for the project?</p> <p>1.2.2 Were specific features related to the OPIM project component taken into consideration during project preparation and design (e.g. operational procedures, capacity of the Operational Partner(s), in-country presence in the five countries)?</p>
<p>Effectiveness - Achievement of project results</p>	<p>2.1 To what extent has the project achieved its outcomes and were there any unintended results?</p> <p>2.1.1 To what extent have the targets in project results framework been achieved?</p> <p>2.1.2 Has the participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas been comprehensively tested and developed?</p> <p>2.1.3 To what extent have national agrosylvopastoral decision makers benefited from the assessment and monitoring procedural/operational manual and the participatory assessments in the pilot countries?</p> <p>2.1.4 To what extent does the global indicator framework capture the rangeland health dynamics, traditional community knowledge and the link to various ecosystem services?</p> <p>2.1.5 What benefits did communities obtain from participating?</p> <p>2.1.6 What were the costs for communities participation?</p> <p>2.1.7 How have the lessons learned and best practices been captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations?</p> <p>2.1.8 To what extent can progress towards long-term impact in the regions of the pilot countries be attributed to the project?</p>
<p>Efficiency, project implementation and execution</p>	<p>3.1 To what extent were the project implementation management arrangements conducive and adequate for project delivery?</p> <p>3.1.1 How has FAO's and IUCN's existing technical expertise been utilized in the design and implementation of the project?</p> <p>3.1.2 How has coordination and collaboration between key stakeholders (including FAO headquarters and country offices, IUCN Nairobi and offices in BF and NG, PKS, MPS and national partners) contributed to project results?</p> <p>3.1.3 Were there any complementarities or duplication with other similar tools or activities in the pilot countries?</p> <p>3.1.4 To what extent has the project set up an M&E system capturing results (e.g. at the outcome level) and used it to make timely decisions as well as foster learning during project implementation?</p> <p>3.1.5 To what extent has cross-country learning between the five project countries taken place?</p>

	<p>3.1.6 To what extent has the project adapted to COVID-19 to ensure continued project delivery?</p> <p>3.1.7 In what ways did the institutional set up of the project, including the OPIM executing modality, contribute to efficiency?</p> <p>3.2 To what extent has the project been implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner?</p> <p>3.2.1 To what extent was project implementation timely, and to what extent were adequate corrective measures taken to avoid negative consequences of delays, including delays in the implementation of Components 2 and 3?</p> <p>3.2.2 Level of budget execution.</p> <p>3.2.3 Timeliness of disbursements of funds from the GEF to FAO and onwards to IUCN and other implementing partners.</p> <p>3.2.4 To what extent has the anticipated level of cash and in-kind co-financing been leveraged?</p>
Sustainability	<p>4.1 What is the likelihood that the methodology will be used by governments (mainly at local and subnational level) and policymakers to inform decision-making?</p> <p>4.1.1 Do stakeholders at national and local level have the required skills to use the participatory assessment and monitoring method without external technical and/or financial support?</p> <p>4.1.2 Has the participatory assessment and monitoring method been taken up and integrated in decision-making processes by national and local governments in the project countries?</p> <p>4.1.3 Is the participatory assessment and monitoring method used/promoted in other FAO and IUCN interventions – current and planned – including interventions managed by other parts of FAO and IUCN?</p> <p>4.1.4 Have other development partner organizations adopted the participatory assessment and monitoring method in their programming?</p> <p>4.2 To what extent did the OPIM modality contribute to ensuring ownership and sustainability of project results?</p> <p>4.2.1 Did the delegation of project result implementation to the Operational Partner contribute to strengthening regional, subregional and/or national entities' abilities?</p> <p>4.2.2 What was the value added of the involvement of the Operational Partner?</p> <p>4.3 What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of project results?</p> <p>4.3.1 Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term impact?</p>
Factors affecting performance:	
M&E	See: 3.1.4 (efficiency)
Quality of implementation	See: 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.1.7 (efficiency)
Quality of execution	See: 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 3.1.6, 3.2.1 (efficiency) 4.2.1, 4.2.2 (sustainability)
Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing	See: 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4 (efficiency)

Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	5.1 Were other actors, such as other public sector institutions, civil society, indigenous population, youth groups or the private sector, involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on project results? 5.1.1 To what extent did the tool and project outputs allow for the development of the abilities of relevant stakeholders? 5.1.2 Did the project engage all relevant key stakeholders at the different level of engagement?
Knowledge management, communication and public awareness	See: 2.1.5, 2.1.9 (effectiveness) 3.1.5 (efficiency) 4.1.3, 4.1.4 (sustainability)
Gender	6.1 To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? 6.1.1 Were any corrective actions undertaken based on the recommendations of the MTR on gender mainstreaming?
Minority Groups/Indigenous Peoples	N/A
GEF additionality	6.2 To what extent can the results of the project be attributed to the GEF contribution?
ESS risks	6.3 To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?

1.4 Methodology

6. The terminal evaluation adheres to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) evaluation guidelines and GEF terminal evaluation requirements. The terminal evaluation is based on a combination of methods used to gather information in order to triangulate information and thereby ensure its solidity and overcome the limitations of each method. Information, data and perspectives for each evaluation question were gathered through a combination of direct consultations with representatives of all stakeholder groups to capture different views and perspectives, as well as a review of secondary sources (e.g. project documentation). The terminal evaluation team, in cooperation with FAO, IUCN and implementing partners identified key stakeholders at global, national and local level to be interviewed. Appendix 1 provides a full list of the people interviewed and the bibliography presents a complete list of the documents and secondary data sources reviewed.
7. Stakeholders in all five countries were consulted. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, in-person interviews and community/site visits were only carried out in Kyrgyzstan, whereas consultations with global stakeholders in other countries were carried out as remote interviews. Originally, it was envisaged that community and site visits would also be carried out in Burkina Faso and the Niger but due to security concerns, this was not possible. Representatives of all major stakeholder groups were consulted:
- i. FAO: Project Steering Committee (PSC) members, IUCN project coordination unit staff and the FAO Policy Support Officer, FAO Project Task Force members, FAO Country Office staff (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Uruguay), co-funding programmes hosted by FAO.
 - ii. IUCN: Global Drylands Initiative staff, Regional Office staff in Burkina Faso and Kenya.
 - iii. Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group members.

- iv. National Assessment Team Members: technical experts and national implementing partner organizations (pastoralist organizations, non-governmental organizations – NGOs – academic institutions).
 - v. Partner governments: national ministry and agency officials and staff, local government officials and staff.
 - vi. Livestock producers and community representatives in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay.
8. In addition to the interviews, key stakeholders from group i) and ii) were also provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft terminal evaluation report.

1.5 Limitations

9. The following limitations apply to the terminal evaluation:
- i. Security issues made it impossible to visit project sites in Burkina Faso and the Niger. Instead, representatives of local stakeholders were consulted remotely.
 - ii. Restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for the lead evaluator to visit any of the project countries. Instead, global stakeholders and representatives of national and local stakeholders were interviewed remotely.
 - iii. Due to time and resource constraints, it was not possible to interview all stakeholders at national and especially local level. All key stakeholders at global level were interviewed.
 - iv. It is premature to fully assess the level of adoption of the PRAGA methodology and the extent to which the method will contribute to the improvement of policies and management plans, as well as to SLM and tangible socio-economic and environmental improvements. Hence, the terminal evaluation focuses on the likelihood that the project makes a significant contribution.

2. Background and context of the project

Table 1. Basic project information

FAO Project Symbol	GLO/GCP/530/GFF
GEF Project ID Number	5724
Recipient countries	Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Niger, Uruguay
GEF Implementing Agency	FAO
Executing Partner	IUCN: Burkina Faso, Kenya, the Niger FAO: Kyrgyzstan, Uruguay
GEF Focal Area	Land degradation
GEF Strategic Objective	LD-4: Increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in Sustainable Land Management
Approval date	21 October 2016
Project start	01 February 2017
Initial date of project completion	30 April 2020
Revised project completion date	31 May 2022
Date of terminal evaluation	6 December 2021

10. **Context.** Grasslands and rangelands cover a substantial part of the global land areas. Livestock is the main source of livelihood for millions of poor people in these areas, therefore grasslands/rangelands are of great economic and social importance. They are also of major environmental importance as they play an important role as a habitat for water retention and for the conservation of fauna and flora. However, land degradation and loss of soil fertility is a major global threat to the productivity, functionality and biodiversity of these ecosystems, and they eventually contribute to the increase in poverty and food insecurity, which in turn can contribute to outbreaks of conflicts over scarce land and water resources, as well as migration. LD is driven by several factors, including inadequate policies and unsustainable agropastoral practices.
11. The project aimed at addressing three major challenges to ensuring sustainable rangeland and grassland management: i) absence of a global comprehensive assessment and monitoring system for assessing LD and sustainable land management while capturing local herders' knowledge, good practices and innovations; ii) lack of indicators for assessment and monitoring systems that integrate biophysical and socio-economic dimensions into one framework to provide a holistic picture of the state of ecosystems, underlying drivers or causes of degradation and trends; and iii) lack of participatory approaches that accommodate inputs from, and use by, the land users to analyse and interpret results from assessments.
12. The project started in 2016 in response to dialogue and advocacy by FAO, IUCN, the GEF Secretariat and other entities in the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on the need for better participatory methods for data collection and analysis to inform and improve rangeland and grassland management decision-making.
13. **Project objective and components.** The project's objective was "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 had three components: i) participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands (the PRAGA methodology); ii) inform international and national

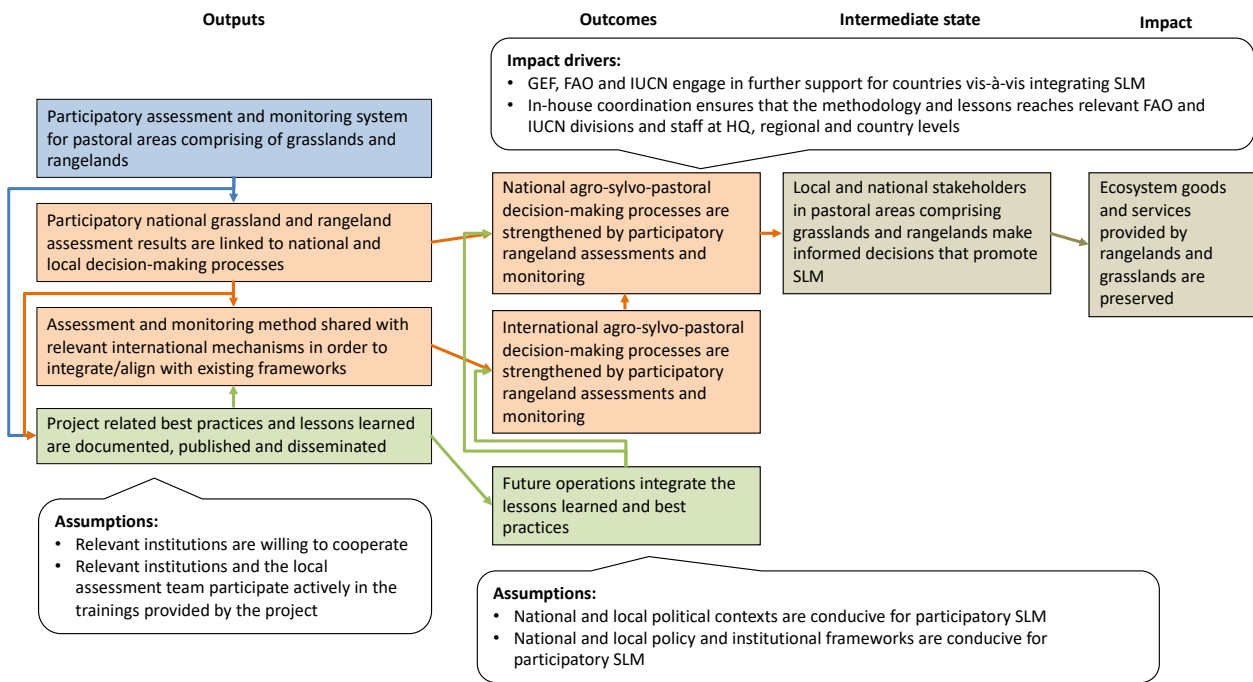
agropastoral decision-making processes; and iii) knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

14. **Project countries.** The project piloted the PRAGA methodology in Burkina Faso (Boudry and Mogtedo communes), Kenya (Isiolo and Garissa counties), Kyrgyzstan (Ak-Talaa, At-Bashy, Suusmayr and Jayl districts), the Niger (Gorouol commune), and Uruguay (Basaltic Cuesta and East Hills ecoregions). The target audience were key stakeholders for grassland and rangeland SLM and decision-making at national and local level: government authorities, academia, pastoralists and livestock producers, as well as their organizations.
15. **Human and financial resources.** FAO and IUCN appointed one part-time staff member each at global level for day-to-day management and coordination of the project, with technical and administrative support from staff at global and country level. At country level, the lead government agencies appointed project focal points for national coordination, and partner organizations and individual consultants were contracted to lead the PRAGA assessments. The GEF provided a grant of USD 2.6 million. Cash co-funding of USD 4.6 million and in-kind co-funding of USD 3.4 million was provided by FAO, IUCN, the Government of Uruguay and CAMP Alatoo Public Foundation (Kyrgyzstan) (see Appendix 4).
16. **Key partners.** The main project partners were IUCN (executing agency), national and local government entities in the five countries, academia, pastoralist/livestock producer organizations, civil society as well as participating pastoralists and livestock producers.
17. **Changes made to the project.** No changes were made to the project design or budget, but the project completion date was extended from 30 April 2020 to 19 November 2021, as per recommendation from the mid-term review (MTR) to ensure full completion of project activities, due to delayed project start-up, in particular caused by the change of government in Kyrgyzstan and security concerns in Burkina Faso and the Niger.

2.1 Theory of change

18. The project design did not contain a theory of change (TOC). The MTR proposed the development of a theory of change and presented a draft TOC, but the PRAGA team and Steering Committee found that the proposed TOC went beyond the scope and objectives of the project, and thus did not adopt it. The terminal evaluation elaborated a new TOC based on the project results framework with the aim to better reflect the research and methodology focus of the project (see Figure 1), which was presented in the inception report and agreed upon by FAO and IUCN. The underlying rationale of the reconstructed TOC is that if a system for participatory assessment and monitoring of pastoral grasslands and rangelands is developed, the assessment results are linked to national, local and international decision-making, the lessons and best practices are documented and disseminated, and finally the lessons and best practices are integrated in future operations; then national and international agrosylvopastoral decision-making processes are improved and SLM promoted, and ecosystem goods and services from rangelands and grasslands are preserved.
19. The underlying assumptions that would need to be in place for the intended results chain to occur are that: i) relevant institutions are willing to cooperate; ii) relevant institutions and the local assessment team participate actively in the trainings provided by the project; iii) political contexts are conducive for participatory SLM; iv) policy and institutional frameworks are conducive for participatory SLM; and v) in-house coordination ensures that the methodology and lessons reach relevant FAO and IUCN divisions and staff at headquarters, regional and country level.

Figure 1. Reconstructed theory of change



Blue – Component 1

Orange – Component 2

Green – Component 3;

Brown – Higher level results the project was intended to contribute to indirectly

Source: Evaluation team.

3. Key findings by evaluation questions

3.1 Relevance

Finding 1. The project was fully aligned with, and responded well to, GEF and FAO's strategic priorities.

20. Alignment with GEF objectives. The project responded directly to the GEF's Strategic Objective LD-4: Increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in Sustainable Land Management by GEF and UNCCD Parties, and in particular to Outcome 4.2: Improved GEF portfolio monitoring using new and adapted tools and methodologies, and Output 4.2: GEF-financed projects contribute to SLM knowledge base.
21. Alignment with FAO objectives. The project directly addressed FAO's Strategic Objective 2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner. In particular, it contributed to Output 1.2: Innovative approaches for ecosystem evaluation, management and restoration are identified, assessed, disseminated and their adoption by stakeholders is facilitated. Moreover, the project contributed to Strategic Objective 3: Reducing Rural poverty, Output 3.1: Empower the rural poor gaining access to resources and services, contributing in particular to an improved access to natural resources by rural poor and the sustainable management of those resources. It also contributed to FAO's Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development and technical guidelines for improving governance of pastoral land.

Finding 2. The project responded to international goals, in particular to the objectives of UNCCD and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 15 (Life on Land), but also to other SDGs. However, despite the relevance, the project did not link to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

22. Alignment with the Rio Conventions. With a focus on assessing the status of rangelands and grasslands in order to contribute to SLM and prevent LD, the project explicitly supports the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the related National Action Plans (NAPs). The PRAGA methodology is aligned with the three core UNCCD indicators and the remote sensing part was guided by the UNCCD's good practice guidelines.
23. No direct link was made in project design or implementation to the other Rio Conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. However, there is a strong biodiversity conservation element in the sustainable management of natural pastures and in the biophysical indicators used for rangeland assessment. Furthermore, there is a link to both greenhouse gas emissions from vegetation loss due to LD and livestock metabolism, carbon sequestration in healthy and rehabilitated pastures, as well as the impact of climate change on rangelands and livestock production, and the resilience of livestock producers' livelihoods to climate shocks (floods, drought). The amount of donor funding for CBD and in particular UNFCCC-related initiatives is much higher than for UNCCD-related work, and countries are also facing challenges in building up systems and capacities to monitor their progress on their national commitments to these conventions. The rangeland assessments carried out in the five project countries included data collection and indicators related to biodiversity and weather. Interviewed stakeholders see a potential in the application of PRAGA with a climate change/UNFCCC and biodiversity/CBD lens to increase the financing of rangeland assessment as well as the attention given to rangelands.
24. Alignment with SDGs. By testing and developing a methodology to obtain data and assess the status of rangelands and grasslands to enable informed decision-making for SLM, the project

directly responded to SDG 15 (Life on Land): Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. In particular, it contributed to target 15.3 (by 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world). Moreover, the project also contributed to targets 15.5 (take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species); and 15.9 (by 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts). In addition, the project also contributed towards targets under other SDGs, including: 2.4 (by 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality); and 12.2 (by 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources). Moreover, the participatory nature of the methodology contributed to target 16.7 (ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels).

Finding 3. Sustainable rangeland and grassland management is a priority for the selected pilot countries, and better assessment of the status of pastures is an important input for them.

25. Rangelands and grasslands are very important in each of the five participating countries, covering a large proportion of their area. Livestock production is an important element of their economies, supporting the livelihoods of predominantly rural populations in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and the Niger, including some of the poorest people living in arid, semi-arid and mountainous (Kyrgyzstan) lands, whereas meat and milk are among the main export products of Uruguay.
26. As described in detail in the project design document (ProDoc) and further confirmed by interviews and the mid-term review, the project was well aligned with national objectives and policies for economic development, poverty reduction, agriculture, livestock production, natural resource management and environmental protection. The project's contribution is a methodology tested in the countries, which can be used to inform decision-making related to the implementation of the policies at national and local levels. Key policies the project contributed to include: Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management (2014, Burkina Faso); National Land Policy (2009, Kenya); Community Lands Act (2016, Kenya); Pasture Law (2009/2011, Kyrgyzstan); Ordinance 2010–029 relating to pastoralism (2010, Niger); General Law of Environmental Protection (2000, Uruguay); and the Soil Conservation Law (2009, Uruguay).
27. The five project countries were selected based on the following criteria: i) ensuring PRAGA could be tested in different geographical regions, in different types of rangelands and with different types of livestock producers; ii) focusing on countries where rangelands and livestock production are important for livelihoods and the economy; and iii) being able to build on the presence of existing FAO or IUCN engagements and partnerships. Burkina Faso and the Niger were selected, since IUCN could build on existing relationships with national institutions and FAO already implemented Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative (GGWSSI) there, but also due to the potential to look at cross-border transhumance. Kenya was selected since IUCN had already piloted the participatory rangelands management approach in Kenya. Kyrgyzstan was selected due to FAO's engagement in Central Asia and the active engagement of MPS in the country. Initially, the project was to be implemented in Argentina, but Argentina stepped out and Uruguay was selected instead, due to a strong government interest and the government's close working relationship with FAO. However, while the project tapped into existing rangeland monitoring systems, capacities and demand in Burkina Faso and the Niger, this was not a criterion for country selection.

Finding 4. Through a methodology that combines scientific data and local knowledge, the project addressed a global, national and local gap *vis-à-vis* obtaining data and information on rangeland and grassland status for informed decision-making for sustainable rangeland and grassland management.

28. When the project was designed, existing tools for rangeland and grassland assessment had some shortcomings. The available scientific methods for rangeland assessment were robust, but not easy to use and costly. Assessment methods were generally better suited for private ranches than communal areas. Moreover, the reliance on scientific data with little stakeholder input made it difficult to communicate the results to decision makers and livestock producers and pastoralists managing the rangelands. Several of the interviewed researchers and government representatives have experienced challenges and constraints in communicating rangeland data and findings to stakeholders, both due to the assessment methodologies applied and to institutional constraints *vis-à-vis* engaging with local stakeholders. Remote sensing tools can measure plant cover, but not the species composition and fodder quality, and thus they need to be combined with ground data. The Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland (LADA) methodology was available for a more participatory assessment, but its application was time-consuming, so it was mainly suited for small areas and did not capture all aspects of pasture health. Moreover, LADA is not specifically tailored for grasslands.
29. The PRAGA methodology addresses these challenges by combining scientific methods, remote sensing, local knowledge, and stakeholder participation in the interpretation of data. Thereby, the PRAGA methodology brings together scientists, government staff as well as representatives and communities, it promotes dialogue and the assessment findings are more easily understood, agreed upon and applied in the planning by governments – both at national and local level – and livestock producers. PRAGA is also less expensive than other methods. Burkina Faso and the Niger already carry out annual rangeland assessments, but stakeholders report that PRAGA complements the national assessment methodology well, considers socio-economic aspects in the baseline (even though all assessment indicators are bio-physical), produces results that are more easily understood by local stakeholders and is more cost-effective. Kyrgyzstan carries out rangeland assessments on an irregular basis, but the methodology is unclear and data is only provided at overall national level. Stakeholders interviewed in all five countries appreciated the participatory nature and relative simplicity of the PRAGA methodology.

Finding 5. The project was complementary to existing interventions, but the linkages and potential for synergy were not fully banked upon. Without a direct link to tangible on-the-ground investments in improving pasture productivity, the incentive for participation was limited.

30. The PRAGA methodology draws upon and further refines the Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland methodology. An extensive review of existing tools had been done for the development of the draft PRAGA methodology, but the mid-term review found that FAO's "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" had not been drawn upon, which was found to be a missed opportunity. In Uruguay, the team drew upon the integrated environmental assessment toolkits used for the preparation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Environment Outlook Report, tools the stakeholders were familiar with.
31. The ProDoc indicated that at country level, the project would be implemented in close collaboration with a number of existing projects but, in practice, this was not fully the case. The project was complementary to the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative in the Sahel, and to the FAO-hosted Pastoral Knowledge Hub and Mountain Partnership Secretariat for Kyrgyzstan, but the link mainly concerned information sharing and recommendations. No link was

made to FAO livestock projects in Kenya, even though the same counties were targeted. The execution of the project by IUCN was carried out under the Global Drylands Initiative.

32. Project objective and available resources were entirely focused on methodology testing and development, and, understandably, the project did not invest in tangible on-the-ground activities to improve pastures. However, this also meant that local stakeholders, in particular livestock producers and pastoralists were expected to spend time engaging in the project without any direct benefits. This did not significantly limit the participation, but looking at the larger picture, mobilizing communities to engage in projects with no clear benefit may contribute to creating project fatigue, which could negatively affect future projects in the same communities. Some interviewees indicated that communities had asked about what they would gain from participating in the project. A direct link to projects with tangible on-the-ground investments in improved rangeland management and productivity could have linked the project to direct benefits for livestock producers, and thus further promote ownership and participation. Moreover, a direct link to inform and guide rangeland restoration and management investments could have further shown the value of the PRAGA methodology to local stakeholders. This issue could have been overcome without requiring funding for pilot investments, if the project at the local level had been implemented as a component of larger rangeland restoration projects instead of as a standalone project. In Kyrgyzstan, CAMP Alatau carried out the assessment in communities, where they were already engaged in SLM activities, creating a clear link between the assessment and community rangeland management.

Finding 6. The project design and results framework were generally clear and concise. However, Outcome 2 was overambitious compared to the scope of the related activities and outputs at both national and global level. Outcome 3 was mainly related to project management rather than the delivery of project results.

33. Overall, the project logic was clear and logical. Component 1 concerned national adaptation and testing of the draft PRAGA methodology, and aimed at refining the global methodology based on the lessons. Component 2 aimed at linking each country's assessment results to national and local decision-making as well as sharing the PRAGA method at international level to promote uptake and replication. Outcome 2 had two elements, which were very different in nature: i) linking the findings and the five project countries' results from the PRAGA assessments with national and local decision-making processes; and ii) communicating the PRAGA methodology in international forums (e.g. the UNCCD COPs). As such, the national element was to directly inform concrete decision-making processes with data and information on specific rangelands. In contrast, the international element was focused on communication and aimed at promoting the PRAGA methodology, rather than directly inform decision-making. It would thus have been logical to have the national and international elements of Outcome 2 as two separate components with separate outcomes: that is, one on informing in-country decision-making, while another on international dissemination. Component 3 concerned knowledge management, but two of the three outputs were in practice project management tasks rather than delivery of results, namely project progress monitoring, the mid-term review and terminal evaluation. The third output under Component 3 was related to documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons, and thus in essence closely linked to the international dissemination of the PRAGA methodology (which fell under Component 2). Indeed, of 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 mainly related to programme management rather than project results, albeit with a knowledge management contribution that relates to international uptake and replication under Component 2. The terminal evaluation covers the knowledge management results of Components 2 and 3 together under Outcome 2.

34. Outcome 1. A participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands was developed and tested, and it clearly and directly derived from the activities and outputs under Component 1. However, for Outcome 2: National and international agrosylvopastoral decision-making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring manuals and from the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments, the contribution of the project was more indirect, as the main focus of the methodology testing was at subnational level with the expectation and hope that the participating governments would upscale PRAGA at national level. In addition, the engagement in international decision-making was mainly in the form of raising awareness on the PRAGA methodology with the hope that others would replicate and apply the PRAGA methodology in other countries. One stakeholder acknowledged that the budget allocated to engage in policy processes should have been higher in order to create more lessons on how to link PRAGA assessment results to, and influence policies at national level. Similarly, the Government of Uruguay had hoped for a stronger link to, and visibility of the project in international processes.
35. During implementation, no changes or adjustments were made to the project strategy or results framework

Finding 7. The timeline was overoptimistic and the budget too constrained to fully test the potential of the PRAGA methodology.

36. The project start-up was delayed due to a number of factors, including a lengthy and complex approval process required for the Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) contacting modality, delayed government approval of the project in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay (in particular in Kyrgyzstan due to change of government), security issues in Burkina Faso and the Niger. Due to the delays, the PRAGA data collection and assessments was carried out in a somewhat rushed manner in order to complete them on time. Moreover, the budget allocated for each country was only sufficient to carry out the data collection once in each country, thereby giving a snapshot of the conditions in one season only (e.g. the wet season), whereas a full assessment of the rangeland status would also require data from other seasons (e.g. the dry season), when water availability, vegetation cover and grazing pressure is very different.

Finding 8. The planned management and implementation setup was not sufficiently clear and not fully banking on the capacities of FAO and IUCN at country level.

37. The ProDoc specified that, as executing agency, IUCN was responsible for day-to-day project management and coordination, technical implementation at country-level and for PRAGA methodology testing and refining. As implementing agency, FAO was responsible for overall oversight and, in addition, for international outreach activities and capturing and dissemination of best practices and lessons. The ProDoc included a brief description of IUCN's structure and stated that IUCN would work with a range of stakeholders, including national and local governments, international pastoral networks, civil society organizations, research institutions, livestock producers and communities.
38. However, the respective roles and responsibilities of FAO and IUCN were not sufficiently clearly spelled out. The time available for FAO and IUCN to prepare and submit the project proposal was limited, hence there was no time to fully establish and agree upon detailed implementation arrangements for each project country. The ProDoc did not describe the fact that, as far as in-country implementation was concerned, for those places where it does not have any regional office, IUCN would rely on its members. In addition, it did not even define the member organizations IUCN would rely on for in-country implementation. Similarly, the ProDoc neither described how FAO Country Offices would engage in the project from a technical and

administrative point of view or *vis-à-vis* facilitation, nor were any budgetary resources set aside to cover Country Office involvement.

39. Since IUCN does not have any office in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay, FAO's internal Project Task Force decided that implementation in these countries would be taken over by FAO, which would use its country offices to facilitate implementation at national and local levels. In Uruguay, the decision was aligned with the government's preferences and the FAO Country Office played a key role in implementation. However, in Kyrgyzstan, implementation was practically carried out by CAMP Alatoo, which was contracted directly by FAO headquarters, with limited FAO Country Office engagement. The engagement of IUCN in the implementation in Uruguay was limited, as was FAO Country Office's engagement in the Niger. The level of engagement of IUCN in Kyrgyzstan and of FAO Country Offices in Burkina Faso and Kenya was higher, but still modest. The ProDoc described that the internal FAO PTF had the mandate to ensure the project was implemented in a consistent manner and in compliance with FAO policies. However, the decision, process, and links and lines of communication between the PTF, the Project Steering Committee and IUCN as operational partner and executing agency were not clearly spelled out.

Rating of relevance

40. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities: Highly Satisfactory. The project was fully aligned to both GEF and FAO priorities *vis-à-vis* the promotion of SLM.
41. Relevance in terms of national, regional and global priorities, and beneficiary needs: Satisfactory. The project responded directly to address LD and SLM objectives of UNCCD, to SDG 15 and to priorities and gaps in the pilot countries. However, a clear link to UNFCCC and CBD was not made, despite its relevance.
42. Complementarity with existing interventions: Moderately Satisfactory. The project complemented other SLM interventions and drew from other assessment methodologies, such as the Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland. However, opportunities for synergy were not fully banked upon, e.g. *vis-à-vis* providing incentives to further motivate local participation.
43. Overall strategic relevance: Satisfactory.

3.2 Effectiveness

Finding 9. Outcome 1 was achieved – a participatory rangeland assessment and monitoring methodology was developed, tested and refined.

44. Overall, Outcome 1 (a participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands was developed and tested) and the associated outputs have been achieved, albeit with a few minor elements still to be finalized.
45. The PRAGA methodology was adapted and tested (albeit only tested in one season) in the five pilot countries with consultations with local stakeholders at the beginning and end of the PRAGA assessment, and with the participation of government stakeholders and community representatives in the data collection. The results were presented and discussed with stakeholders at local and national level and possible policy entry points in each country were identified. Policy briefs were produced in Burkina Faso, Kenya and the Niger, as well as in Kyrgyzstan. A policy brief will be produced after the completion of the ongoing second phase of the pasture use planning process. Moreover, policy action plans were prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya, and one is being prepared in Uruguay. It should be noted that policy briefs were not included in the original global targets for Component 1 (although included under Component 2 in the annual work plans for

Uruguay), but they were added in response to a recommendation from the mid-term review. Moreover, the methodology and lessons from the five countries were further discussed at international level by a Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group. The outcomes from these discussions were used to revise/update the PRAGA manual, and a lessons learned annex was included in the manual. Based on the experience gained through methodology testing, a revised set of "Indicators for Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment" was produced and included in the revised PRAGA methodology. The revised manual is under peer review and, once completed, it will be finalized and published. Once published, Outcome 1 will have been fully achieved.

46. Appendix 5 presents a detailed assessment of the level of delivery of each outcome and output, and the degree of achievement of the related targets from the project results framework.

Finding 10. The PRAGA methodology was very well received by stakeholders at local, national and international level, who found it of high quality, appropriate and applicable.

47. The quality and applicability of the PRAGA methodology is broadly recognized among interviewees from all stakeholder groups at local, national and global level.. Interviewees point to the following positive features of the methodology:

- i. The methodology is participatory and allows the integration of rangeland user perspectives, including in the selection of indicators.
- ii. Scientific data and local knowledge are integrated.
- iii. The methodology brings different stakeholders together, enabling a discussion about a common vision for the landscape, as well as links to policymaking.
- iv. The methodology and its nine steps are logical and fairly simple, and this facilitates the planning and implementation of the assessments.
- v. Rangeland assessments results are in a form that local stakeholders can understand and relate to.
- vi. Methodological/data robustness and financial and technical feasibility are balanced – the method is relatively inexpensive, the number of indicators is manageable, and the method is not overly scientific or complex for governments and other potential users.
- vii. Field data and satellite imagery are combined to ensure both accuracy and scale. The methodology can be used at different scales, both at local and national/larger scale.
- viii. It is adaptable to the local context and maintains a fairly good balance between standardization (allowing comparison between countries and compiling data at supranational level) and adaptability, although this remains challenging (see below).
- ix. Socio-economic factors are mapped in the baseline, and the methodology touches upon the socio-economic impacts of LD.
- x. Root causes/driving forces for LD can be identified through the baseline study and possible solutions can be identified.

Finding 11. The application of the PRAGA methodology has a few challenges, mainly in relation to the use of remote sensing and the identification of globally relevant and comparable indicators.

48. While there was general consensus on the value and quality of the PRAGA methodology, a few challenges were also identified by some stakeholders. The main area of challenge is the use of remote sensing. Remote sensing data captures vegetation cover, but not vegetation composition and its palatability for livestock, thus local livestock producers did not always agree with the remote sensing classification of specific areas as being degraded or healthy. Hence, while remote sensing is essential to enable assessment at a larger scale and well-suited to detect changes in land cover, ground-truthing of selected areas is essential to ensure the rangeland assessments yield correct information on rangeland status. Moreover, the application of remote sensing and

of the geographic information system (GIS) software is often beyond the capacities of stakeholders and technical staff – especially at local level – and often requires capacity development or external technical support for local stakeholders to fully implement PRAGA.

49. The initial draft PRAGA methodology did not provide specific indicators, but it emphasized the need for indicators in three domains: soil, hydrology and biota. However, hydrological indicators proved difficult to understand for local stakeholders and to apply in practice and, at times, they led to misunderstandings. Another major area of challenge is the balancing of global and local indicators. On the one hand, several stakeholders find it important to have global indicators that enable comparison of results between countries and the upscaling of findings to regional or even global level. However, given the context-specific nature of LD and how it has been historically and currently shaped by local land use practices, the Scientific Resource Expert Group found it difficult to establish universally applicable indicators. Hence, the focus in terms of promoting global indicators was on monitoring the SDG 15 indicators. However, according to some stakeholders, there is still the need to identify a few globally relevant and simple indicators. A similar challenge applies to the national level, where local stakeholders in different locations prefer different indicators, while there is also a need to have nationally comparable indicators. Some indicators were qualitative in nature and thus open for diverging interpretations.
50. Moreover, to get a good PRAGA assessment, some stakeholders emphasized that gathering a multidisciplinary team of experts is essential to ensure the focus is sufficiently holistic and not narrow or biased, for example *vis-à-vis* taking aspects such as biodiversity adequately into consideration. It was found that this aspect could feature more prominently in guidance on assembling the team in the PRAGA manual. Another challenge is getting livestock producers to commit to fully participate in two-day workshops.
51. One key stakeholder with a lead role in the methodology development and testing found that the PRAGA manual is overly detailed and could benefit from being further simplified and shortened and made a bit less rigid – with a focus on key principles, accompanied with training on these principles. This view is supported by the fact that in countries where FAO and IUCN are replicating PRAGA, it is done in a simplified and downscaled manner.

Finding 12. Outcome 2 was partly achieved – the intended policy outputs were delivered or are in the process of being delivered, but the actual use of the PRAGA assessments in decision-making in the project countries remains uneven.

52. The outputs and associated targets for Outcome 2 (national and international agrosylvopastoral decision-making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring procedural and operational manual and the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments) and the associated outputs were mostly achieved, albeit with a few elements still to be finalized in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay. As described above, the idea to influence policy processes was overambitious compared to the planned outputs and resources allocated.
53. Policymakers and leaders at local and national level were engaged in the inception and assessment validation workshops in the five countries, although the extent to which they engaged varied, depending on the level of interest in, and priority given to, rangeland management. Moreover, PRAGA national teams engaged in dialogue and policy discussions with policymakers at national and local levels. Policy briefs were prepared in Burkina Faso, Kenya and the Niger, and planned for Kyrgyzstan after the ongoing pasture planning cycle is completed. Moreover, policy action plans were prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya. In Uruguay, a policy action plan is under preparation, a national report on the state of grasslands was prepared and the livestock producer organization (Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas, CAF) which carried out field assessments prepared

a report with recommendations on PRAGA and best practices. Two county action plans for the integration of the PRAGA methodology in county planning processes were prepared in Kenya.

54. However, it is too early to assess the extent to which the PRAGA assessments will have tangible influence on national and local policies and plans, or the extent to which the methodology will be internalized in national or local systems. In Uruguay, the PRAGA assessment process led to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on grasslands, bringing together livestock producers and their organizations, two line ministries (agriculture and environment) and academia. Moreover, the project had a close relationship with the two ministries, but with the change of government in 2020 the dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture was disrupted, whereas it continues with the Ministry of Environment. Government engagement has proven particularly difficult in Kyrgyzstan, with local government capacity and high staff turnover, and the project focused on working with local pasture committees, which are the entities responsible for rangeland management as specified by the Pasture Law. Moreover, with additional CAMP Alatau and FAO support, the PRAGA assessment is contributing to informing the ongoing pasture planning cycle in some of the project's target pasture committees. The PRAGA tool was integrated into the Gorouol municipal development plan in the Niger and similar integration in the local development plans for the two target communes in Burkina Faso is underway. In Burkina Faso and the Niger, the possibilities that the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, is integrated into the national rangeland assessment processes are good. In Kenya, the PRAGA assessment informed the new county rangeland policy for Isiolo, but internalization of the PRAGA methodology at county and national levels would depend on continued support and county leadership buy-in appears uneven.

Finding 13. The PRAGA methodology was promoted internationally and generated interest, but it is too early to assess whether it will become a significant contribution to international decision-making processes.

55. The outputs associated with engagement at international level were affected by the travel restrictions and social distance measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, but this was to a good extent mitigated through engagement in global online events and the associated output targets can be considered reached or even exceeded. The PRAGA methodology and experiences were presented in a side event at the UNCCD 14th Conference of the Parties (COP 14, 2019) and in the online Global Landscapes Forum (2021). Reportedly, the UNCCD COP 14 side event was well attended by governments, international organizations, and NGOs. Planned side events at the International Rangeland Congress and World Conservation Congress were delayed by COVID-19. Moreover, the PRAGA manual will be published, as will two publications capturing and disseminating the PRAGA experience: i) "Land degradation neutrality: rationale for participatory approaches in assessments and monitoring of rangelands health"; and ii) "Best practices in support of sustainable land management in pastoral areas". The PRAGA manual and the two publications were scheduled to be launched at the World Conservation Congress (October 2021), but they were not ready at the time of the Congress. A lessons learned annex for the PRAGA manual was prepared. Moreover, PRAGA contributed with a case study (Kyrgyzstan) as well as some financial support (USD 7 000) for the Global Rangelands Atlas (2021). PRAGA was presented at the FAO Committee on Agriculture's 27th Session (2020), which focused on FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism. The methodology was promoted to the members of IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management. FAO supported a regional workshop in Togo on transboundary pastoralism (not funded by the project), where regional monitoring and the PRAGA methodology were promoted. Furthermore, CAF co-developed a regional symposium for Latin America, where they presented Uruguay's PRAGA experience. However, the representatives of the Government of Uruguay found the global contribution, visibility and experience-sharing with the other project countries was below expectations. So far, there is no indication of other countries

(other than countries directly supported by FAO or IUCN in rangeland assessment) or organizations replicating or adapting the PRAGA methodology.

Finding 14. The project objective was partly achieved – local and national capacities in the five countries were strengthened *vis-à-vis* assessing LD and available SLM options, but the application of these skills remains to be seen.

56. The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities in the five countries, and thus made a significant contribution to the project objective: 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. Government technical staff and national experts were trained on the PRAGA methodology and gained experience with its application. A postgraduate training course was developed in Uruguay. Livestock producers gained an increased understanding of the status of their rangelands, SLM options and assessment of rangelands. Policymakers at local and national level were made aware of rangeland-related challenges and policy options. Local government offices were trained in the PRAGA methodology in Kenya. Pasture committees and local authorities were coached on the PRAGA methodology in Kyrgyzstan. However, remote sensing remains a constraint. Moreover, the extent to which these skills will be put into use is too early to assess but it is likely to be uneven among the five countries, given the above-described different prospects for internalization and institutionalization of PRAGA in national or local systems.

Finding 15. Given the scope and nature of the project, it was neither expected nor positioned to deliver direct impacts.

57. The project did not invest in tangible SLM measures in the project countries and the only benefit participating livestock producers experienced was enhanced knowledge about rangeland assessment, LD and SLM. A potential contribution to indirect impacts would fully depend on the extent to which rangeland assessments influence policies and the extent to which these policies are implemented in a manner that improves rangeland management. Given the uncertainty related to assessing the project's influence on policies, it is impossible to assess the potential contribution to indirect impacts, but it is likely to vary significantly among the five countries.

58. Hence, the project did not contribute directly to the GEF-7 core indicators, as these are impact-focused and quantitative. However, since the PRAGA tool is applied and informs policies, an indirect contribution to the following core indicators can be expected, although it is impossible to quantify such a contribution: i) area of land restored; ii) area of landscapes under improved practices; and iii) greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (from preventing the loss of vegetation). Similarly, indirect contributions can be expected to the following global environmental benefits (GEBs): i) improved provision of agro-ecosystem and forest ecosystem goods and services; ii) mitigated/avoided greenhouse gas emissions and increased carbon sequestration in production landscapes; and iii) conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in productive landscapes.

Finding 16. GEF support was instrumental for the development and testing of the PRAGA tool.

59. The development and testing of the PRAGA methodology would not have taken place, had it not been for GEF financing. Rangelands are not getting much international attention and donors generally prefer to invest in on-the-ground SLM activities rather than the development of technical tools. On the basis of the GEF funding, FAO and IUCN were able to mobilize significant co-financing for the project and this funding would not have materialized had it not been for the GEF project.

Rating of effectiveness

60. Delivery of project outputs: Satisfactory. The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed.
61. Progress towards Outcome 1: Highly Satisfactory. The PRAGA methodology was developed, tested and revised, and it is rated very positively by stakeholders.
62. Progress towards Outcome 2: Moderately Satisfactory. The contribution to national and local decision-making processes varied. Tangible contribution was achieved at local level in some countries, but national level influence was generally limited. The PRAGA methodology was made visible internationally but it has not influenced international processes.
63. Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes: Satisfactory.
64. Likelihood of impact: Unable to Assess. Given the nature of the project, there were no direct impacts. Indirect impacts will depend on the uptake of the PRAGA methodology as a decision-making tool.
65. Overall assessment of project results: Satisfactory.

3.3 Efficiency

Finding 17. The project faced significant delays due to a range of both external and internal factors, but with an extension of the completion date, the project was largely able to produce its intended outputs.

66. The project faced significant delays, in particular *vis-à-vis* the start of activity implementation, which was delayed by a full year. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic created further delays in the final years of implementation. Kyrgyzstan in particular was affected by delays, with the contract between FAO and CAMP Alatoo not being signed until the summer of 2019. In Burkina Faso and the Niger, implementation started in 2019 and the rangelands assessments were carried out in 2020. At the time of the mid-term review (early to mid-2020s), implementation of the outputs under Component 1 had been accelerated, whereas most of the outputs under the other components still lagged behind. The mid-term review recommended an extension of the project completion date, to make up for the time lost during start-up and make sure the outputs could be fully delivered for all components. In response to the mid-term review as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, the project completion date was extended from 30 April 2020 to 19 November 2021. In the period from the mid-term review to the terminal evaluation, implementation picked up on Components 2 and 3, and the intended outputs have mostly been delivered, although some still need to be completed. This would not have been possible without the project extension. However, due to delays, implementation of activities and output delivery was rushed, especially in Kyrgyzstan, where the assessment had to be carried out quickly after contract signing and before the end of the summer. The reasons for the delays were of both external and internal nature.
67. The main external delay factors were:
 - i. Change of government in Kyrgyzstan, where the new government required parliamentary clearance of all new projects.
 - ii. Security concerns in Burkina Faso and the Niger. The project sites in Burkina Faso were changed, and this took time as approval from the GEF Secretariat was required. The site in the Niger was kept, but a number of activities had to be carried out in Niamey.

- iii. Travel restrictions and social distancing measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, throughout a significant proportion of the project implementation period. For example, COVID-19 restrictions delayed field activities in Kyrgyzstan and the validation workshop in Uruguay. They also posed a major limitation for the policy discussions under Component 2. Online activities partly – but not fully – mitigated the impacts of COVID-19. In the Niger, the impact of COVID-19 on implementation was limited.

68. The main internal delay factors were:

- i. Signing of a government cooperative programme (GCP) in each country before work can commence. Such an approval is a requirement for FAO (but not for IUCN), so work could not commence before. Obtaining government approval took several months in each country. In Kyrgyzstan, it took a year.
- ii. Signing of FAO-IUCN operational partner agreement (OPA) agreement, which took seven to eight months. The OPIM modality had just been introduced by FAO, as the preparation took time. OPIM rules required a risk and fiduciary assessment was carried out by an external auditor – thus adding time – before the OPA could be signed with IUCN.
- iii. Fragmentation and lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities among project stakeholders, for example questions on delegation of authority to IUCN.
- iv. Operational issues, including finding a way for IUCN to disburse funds directly to government partners.
- v. Component 2 activities required delivery of Output 1.3, which was delayed before they could commence. At the time of the mid-term review, Output 1.3 had only been completed in Uruguay, whereas the LD indicator framework had not been established in any of the countries. Nonetheless, some Component 2 activities had been implemented in Uruguay at the time of the mid-term review.
- vi. Approval of project extension and extension of FAO-IUCN OPIM (5th amendment). The internal FAO and IUCN approval processes took time and errors in the draft amendment created further delay, which impacted delivery in Burkina Faso, as the team had to be remobilized after the gap period.
- vii. Peer review and approval of publications within both FAO and IUCN.

Finding 18. The project successfully mobilized good technical expertise and qualified implementing partners.

69. There was a consistent high level of satisfaction among interviewed stakeholders at all levels, that is with the quality of outputs and outcomes, with the on-the-ground implementation and facilitation by national partners as well as the consultation processes. Moreover, the national partners consistently expressed a high degree of appreciation with FAO and IUCN's technical support, guidance and timely responses to queries.

Finding 19. The project delivered its results, including a few additional activities within the budget frame.

70. Within the stipulated budget, the project was able to deliver its intended activities in the results framework as well as some additional deliverables, including national policy briefs, two global publications which contributed to the Global Rangelands Atlas, and inputs to additional international events.

Finding 20. Funds were generally made available in a timely manner.

71. In most cases, FAO and IUCN expedited fund transfers in a timely manner, albeit with a couple of cases of delayed fund transfers. The financial and reporting procedures were generally found smooth by interviewees and the mid-term review.

Rating of efficiency

72. Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory. The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Nonetheless, the project delivered its intended activities and outputs within budget, but this was only possible due to an extension of the project period. Staff and expert resources were used well, and the cost-effectiveness was good and included the delivery of additional activities within budget.

3.4 Sustainability

Finding 21. The uptake and institutionalization of the PRAGA methodology by national and local stakeholders in the project countries is uneven, and its use would generally depend on further donor support.

73. The prospect of uptake of the PRAGA methodology varies significantly among the five project countries. This is related to a combination of local factors, but also to the fact that due to the delays in implementation, there was limited time to engage in the policy-related activities under Component 2.
74. **Burkina Faso and the Niger.** Despite being conflict-affected least developed countries (LDCs), Burkina Faso and the Niger have the best prospect for national level adoption of the PRAGA methodology, since they have a conducive policy and institutional environment, where annual rangelands assessments are already carried out. Moreover, stakeholders find that the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, could strengthen the assessments in a cost-effective manner. The Ministry of Livestock in the Niger plans to integrate the PRAGA methodology in the national assessment, but this would require that more staff is trained on the PRAGA methodology. A challenge in both countries is the limited availability of GIS expertise as well as financial and logistic constraints. Moreover, PRAGA assessments have already informed local development plans, demonstrating the value of PRAGA as a tool for informed decision-making, but local level stakeholders would require technical support at national level for future PRAGA assessments. In Burkina Faso, the consultant engaged in the PRAGA assessment has submitted a proposal to the government's development research fund (*Fonds National de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pour le Développement*, FONRID) to test PRAGA in other locations. However, the actual application of PRAGA in the field across Burkina Faso and the Niger may be significantly limited by insecurity.
75. **Kenya.** The PRAGA assessment has informed one county's rangeland policy, and thus proven PRAGA's benefits as a tool for informed decision-making. However, while county government officers have received training on the PRAGA methodology, the counties would still need financial and technical support (in particular *vis-à-vis* remote sensing and GIS) for future PRAGA assessments. With uneven buy-in from county level decision makers, further use of the PRAGA methodology would depend on donor assistance. The State Department of Livestock (SDL) and Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS) were engaged in the project at technical level, but the national government was not engaged at policy level. There are no signs of adoption of the PRAGA methodology by the national Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing.
76. **Kyrgyzstan.** Government involvement was difficult and limited in the country due to capacity constraints and high staff turnover, and the PRAGA assessment depended entirely on a national NGO (CAMP Alatoo). Hence, the adoption of PRAGA by the Pasture Department or the Land Planning Institute is unlikely. At local level, there is commitment from pasture management committees and PRAGA is informing local rangeland management plans, but since they are local

pastoralist-based organizations, they lack the technical and financial capacities to carry out PRAGA assessments. Hence, the future use of the PRAGA methodology would depend on CAMP Alattoo, but CAMP Alattoo would need external technical support *vis-à-vis* applying remote sensing and GIS, as well as financial support from donors.

77. **Uruguay.** Of all the PRAGA countries, Uruguay has the strongest technical, financial and institutional capacity to carry out PRAGA assessments. The government demonstrated a strong commitment through the provision of significant (in-kind) co-financing from two ministries. However, following a change of government, traction was lost within the Ministry of Agriculture and so far there are no clear signs that the government will internalize the PRAGA methodology. Nonetheless, the PRAGA methodology was incorporated as an element in a postgraduate university course at the *Universidad de la República* (UdelaR), providing the foundation for potential future application by national stakeholders. The Ministry of Environment is preparing a proposal to access GEF funds for a follow-up programme, which will build on recommendations resulting from the PRAGA assessment, such as the development of a regulatory framework for the sustainable use of grasslands.

Finding 22. FAO and IUCN plan to further apply the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, in specific interventions. However, the uptake in FAO could be limited by the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangeland management.

78. Both FAO and IUCN are using and planning to use the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, in other initiatives, but joint efforts to promote PRAGA have not been planned.
79. **FAO.** FAO is funding an expansion of the project in Kyrgyzstan, where a second PRAGA assessment will be carried out and the development of local pasture management plans will be supported in five of the 13 communities that were involved in the project. Moreover, FAO is already applying simplified versions of the PRAGA methodology in Georgia, Jordan and Uzbekistan. It is also FAO's intention to integrate PRAGA in projects on land degradation neutrality in Central Asia. An internal challenge for FAO is that, unlike for forests, there is no dedicated unit with a holistic view for rangelands. Instead, different aspects are covered by different divisions and there is no in-house rangeland officer responsible for coordinating rangeland-related work. Moreover, FAO only has a small number of officers with rangeland expertise.
80. **IUCN.** IUCN is already applying simplified versions of the PRAGA methodology in Egypt and Jordan, and also plans to do so in the United Republic of Tanzania. Moreover, IUCN has incorporated the PRAGA methodology in the "Towards ending drought emergencies: Ecosystem based adaptation in Kenya's arid and semi-arid rangelands (TWENDE)" project funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the GEF-funded "Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya" project. IUCN is also including a simplified version of the PRAGA methodology in a GCF project concept note for a regional Great Green Wall-related project covering Burkina Faso and the Niger. Moreover, IUCN is creating an academy and aims at including rangeland monitoring in the training in order to have a ready-to-go training package. The IUCN Country Office in Burkina Faso plans to integrate PRAGA in the "Sustainable management of dryland landscapes in Burkina Faso" GEF project.

Finding 23. Broader uptake of the PRAGA methodology depends on the level of attention to and investment in rangeland management but, at the same time, PRAGA assessment findings have the potential to contribute towards an increased international prioritization of sustainable rangeland management.

81. It is too early to assess whether the PRAGA methodology will be taken up by other international development partners engaged in sustainable rangeland management, but there are no signs of such an uptake so far. Nonetheless, after participating in the above-mentioned regional workshop in Togo, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has shown interest in the PRAGA methodology.
82. Despite the very large area they cover, international attention to rangeland management is generally much lower than the attention paid to other types of ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands. Moreover, rangelands appear to be addressed mainly from a land degradation perspective and UNCCD context. However, the awareness of the importance of rangelands in climate change and UNFCCC or a biodiversity and CBD perspective is much lower. This is a significant limitation, since the level of international funding directed towards the implementation of UNFCCC and CBD commitments is much higher and countries are currently being supported in building up systems to monitor their progress on their national commitments under these conventions. The current level of attention to rangelands may limit the potential sources of funding for PRAGA assessments. Nonetheless, PRAGA could be used as a tool to enhance the awareness on rangelands and their ecosystem services, and create momentum for increased funding for sustainable rangeland management, for example in the contexts of climate change and biodiversity.

Rating of sustainability

83. Financial risks. Sustainability is Moderately Likely. FAO and IUCN have and are mobilizing funding for projects that use PRAGA or elements of it. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depends on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and the Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organizations.
84. Socio-political risks. Sustainability is Moderately Unlikely. The level of political interest in PRAGA varies among the five countries. The political risk for upscaling and replication of the methodology through donor-funded projects is low. However, obtaining political ownership, using assessment results as well as the PRAGA methodology will require concerted efforts. Security concerns are a major risk in Burkina Faso and the Niger, and it is also a risk in certain parts of the livestock production areas of Kenya. Moreover, it could make it difficult or impossible to carry out PRAGA assessments.
85. Institutional and governance risks. Sustainability is Moderately Likely. The conduciveness of the institutional and governance landscape is high in Burkina Faso and the Niger, fairly high in Uruguay, but quite low in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Both FAO and IUCN are committed to using PRAGA in the future. However, institutional fragmentation of rangeland work in FAO is a limiting factor.
86. Environmental risks. Sustainability is Likely. There is no environmental risk. On the contrary, increased environmental degradation is likely to enhance the interest in PRAGA as a tool for pursuing SLM.
87. Catalysis and replication. Satisfactory. FAO and IUCN are already replicating PRAGA, or elements hereof. Replication by other organizations cannot be judged yet. At country level, the project had a catalytic effect since it has influenced local plans in some countries, enhanced capacities and generated interest and appreciation among stakeholders.
88. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability. Sustainability is Moderately Likely.

3.5 Factors affecting performance

3.5.1 Monitoring and evaluation system

Finding 24. The design of the M&E system was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project.

89. Most of the outcome and output indicators in the project results framework were straightforward, clear and easy to monitor. However, Outcome 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) did not clearly specify what “level of involvement” means or how it was measured. Moreover, Output 2.1 indicator (number of SLM best practices shared with decision makers) does not seem fully appropriate as it did not relate directly to the PRAGA assessments and their link to decision-making, and the targets did not correspond to the indicator, as they did not give clear numbers to be achieved, but instead indicated how the SLM practices would be shared. The indicator for Output 2.2 (alignment proposals) was not entirely clear and did not fully relate to the output’s intention of disseminating the PRAGA methodology, and the target was not related to the indicator as it concerned the dissemination of a study rather than proposals.
90. The ProDoc specified the monitoring methods to be applied: i) an inception workshop; ii) field-based impact monitoring by the IUCN project coordination unit (PCU) and the FAO Liaison Officer; and iii) supervision visits by the PCU, if needed with the participation of the FAO Lead Technical Officer and FAO Investment Centre (TCI)/GEF Coordination Unit. The monitoring information was to be presented in the following standard reports for GEF projects: project inception report, six-monthly project progress reports, annual project implementation review report (PIR), co-financing reports, GEF LD tracking tool, and a final report. Two evaluations were also specified in the ProDoc: the mid-term review and terminal evaluation. The project budget contained dedicated budget lines for M&E: for USD 30 254 from the GEF grant and USD 200 000 of co-financing for monitoring, and USD 95 254 from GEF grant for evaluation. The ProDoc indicated that an M&E plan was to be developed in the project inception phase and that a results-based annual work plan and budget with time frame targets and milestones for the indicators for each year was to be developed.
91. The described monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate, and the description of monitoring was reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.

Finding 25. Monitoring and reporting were generally sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project.

92. The detailed M&E plan mentioned in the ProDoc was never developed. However, while the mid-term review considered this a shortcoming, the nature of project outcomes, outputs and activities did not require an elaborate M&E plan to be assessed and reported on. Three-monthly project progress reports were prepared and reported with respect to the outcome and output indicator end targets, but not with respect to the targets for the first and second year. Six-monthly progress reports captured the outcome indicators, but not the output indicators, and the end targets for Outcome indicators 1.2 and 2.2 deviated from the results framework. The project implementation reports reported on outcome indicators, covered end targets and second year targets but did not mention first year targets. The project implementation reports also reported on outputs but did not mention the output indicators or targets. Overall, monitoring and reporting was largely

adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.

Finding 26. In general, the mid-term review recommendations were adequately addressed.

93. The mid-term review report (May 2020) provided nine recommendations. The mid-term review was carried out late in the project, and its recommendations thus came too late to significantly contribute to project delivery (the original completion date was April 2020, but extended to November 2021). In the management response, FAO and IUCN accepted five of the recommendations, whereas four were only partially accepted. Overall, the action taken on the recommendations was adequate. See Annex 2 for a detailed assessment of the response to, and action taken on the recommendations.

Finding 27. After initial unclarity was solved, FAO carried out its role as project implementing agency well, providing appropriate guidance in a timely manner to IUCN and national partners. However, OPIM-related processes created delays and, with the exception of Uruguay, the FAO Country Offices were not mobilized for project oversight and support.

94. Despite the initial lack of clarity on FAO and IUCN's respective roles and responsibilities as well as issues related to FAO's decision to take over execution in Kyrgyzstan, the overall cooperation, coordination and communication between FAO, IUCN and national partners worked out very well. FAO headquarters provided administrative guidance and technical support in a timely manner and to the full satisfaction of all project partners, including IUCN, FAO Country Offices and partners as well as the organizations and consultants contracted to carry out rangeland assessments. Reporting requirements were generally unproblematic for the partners, cooperation agreements did not pose major challenges to the operational partners and funds were mostly disbursed in a timely manner, thanks to the proactive facilitation of the FAO Liaison Officer for the project.

95. However, there were a couple of areas where FAO processes took time, such as the peer review and approval of draft publications by both FAO and IUCN before printing. Another time-consuming process was the steps required to get the operational partner agreement under the OPIM modality approved, including the fiduciary assessment of IUCN by an external auditor. Moreover, at the time of project inception, the OPIM modality was new and in-house processing in FAO was complex, but it has since become easier. A total of five minor amendments were made to OPIM and were generally processed smoothly, but the amendment for the project extension took some time due to some minor errors that needed correction. The letters of agreements with national partners in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay were generally smooth and did not create difficulties.

96. In Uruguay, the contracting and administrative support and implementation oversight was carried out by the FAO Country Office, but in Kyrgyzstan the FAO Country Office only handled payments to CAMP Alatoo. Similarly, the FAO Country Offices were not involved in overseeing or supporting the project in the countries where IUCN was responsible for implementation.

Finding 28. The Project Task Force significantly contributed to the carrying out of FAO's tasks as implementing agency, but the decision-making was not sufficiently inclusive in relation to the decision to transfer the project execution in Kyrgyzstan from IUCN to FAO.

97. Within FAO, the PTF supported the oversight, administrative guidance and technical support for the project, which significantly facilitated the work of the FAO Liaison Officer and its timely administration. However, the PTF's decision that FAO would take over the project execution in Kyrgyzstan due to concerns about the major delays in project start-up was not sufficiently inclusive of IUCN. FAO thought that the absence of an IUCN Country Office would hamper

implementation, but in fact this is the normal operational modality for IUCN to work through member organizations. In practice, the execution in Kyrgyzstan was carried out by CAMP Alatoo, which was involved by FAO in the project design and had prior experience with FAO project implementation (CAMP Alatoo is a member of IUCN). CAMP Alatoo was contracted directly FAO headquarters and there was little engagement of the FAO Country Office in the implementation in Kyrgyzstan. The Country Office handled disbursements, assisted with obtaining government approval of the project and assisted with visas. Moreover, the reasons for delayed start-up in Kyrgyzstan were not related to IUCN. Overall, the decision to transfer execution without the agreement of IUCN does not appear fully justified. In Uruguay, the decision of FAO to execute the project was justified, as it was in line with the government's preference, and enabled the project to benefit from FAO's in-country presence and build on the existing relationship between the government and the FAO Country Office.

3.5.2 Quality of execution

Finding 29. Both FAO and IUCN carried out well their roles as executing agencies, at national and international level.

98. Despite the major initial delays, both FAO and IUCN successfully accelerated implementation in all the countries and ensured that the intended results were largely delivered both at country and global level. Moreover, technical quality was good. Implementing partners and stakeholders in all countries and at global level expressed satisfaction with the project implementation, implementation guidance, technical support and process facilitation by the two agencies. Contracting, administrative and technical guidance as well as disbursement of funds to national partners carrying out rangelands assessments, field work, data collection and analysis were mostly smooth and timely. Overall, interviewed stakeholders were very satisfied with the execution and coordination of the project both at country and global level.
99. In Uruguay, the FAO Country Office was de facto the executing agency, thus internally separating the implementing function (FAO HQ) from the executing one (FAO Country Office). The FAO Country Office entered a contract with CAF to carry out rangeland assessment. In Kyrgyzstan, the execution was de facto done by CAMP Alatoo. The participating communities were very satisfied with CAMP Alatoo's execution of the project.

Finding 30. FAO and IUCN successfully mobilized relevant and qualified technical experts as well as national partners to carry out rangelands assessments and stakeholder mobilization.

100. In all project countries, rangeland assessments were carried out by multidisciplinary teams of national experts. In Kyrgyzstan, rangelands assessments were carried out by CAMP Alatoo. In Uruguay, the livestock producer association CAF was selected and contracted through a call for proposals, and it coordinated and carried out the rangelands assessments in cooperation with the faculty of agronomy at the Universidad de la República and the Comisión Nacional de Fomento Rural (CNFR). The livestock producer association Alianza del Pastizal helped mobilize the communities. Moreover, upon request from the Government of Uruguay, the FAO Country Office engaged a national consultant, who coordinated and facilitated project implementation. Stakeholders found this role instrumental for the successful implementation of the project. IUCN applied a model, where individual experts were engaged as consultants and national public research institutions were also mobilized to carry out the rangelands assessments. In Burkina Faso, L'Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles (INERA) was engaged and, in the Niger, L'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique du Niger (INRAN) and AGRHYMET were mobilized. Similarly, in Kenya, the Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) were mobilized alongside with individual consultants. Technical staff from the

national ministerial counterparts also participated in the rangelands assessments, except in the case of Kyrgyzstan.

101. Overall, the technical teams carrying out the rangeland assessments were qualified and the assessments produced were of good quality. However, the remote sensing part was often more challenging and relied on individually contracted experts. In Kyrgyzstan, the remote sensing was done by an international consultant, who also carried it out for the rangeland assessments in Kenya. Stakeholders in Uruguay requested FAO for international expert inputs but, in the end, this service was not provided and a national solution was found.

Finding 31. FAO and IUCN cooperated and coordinated well at global level, but there was generally limited inter-agency cooperation at country level.

102. Staff at both FAO and IUCN were very satisfied with the coordination and cooperation at global level with regular exchange and technical discussions. IUCN compiled the lessons from all five countries. The two organizations complemented each other well. Both organizations contributed to the development and refining of the PRAGA methodology. They both reviewed the PRAGA assessments coming out of all project countries. FAO ensured access to the global agricultural community, whereas IUCN provided the link to the environmental community. The agencies thereby opened doors for each other, for example through reeling each other into events, such as the Global Landscapes Forum.
103. At country level, the inter-agency cooperation was more limited and varied among the countries. IUCN provided some training and technical advice for CAMP Alattoo, but it did not engage in Uruguay. Similarly, the engagement of FAO Country Offices in Africa was limited, as there was neither a clearly defined role nor a budget allocation for their engagement, and time and – in some cases – capacity constraints also limited their involvement. Nonetheless, the FAO Country Offices participated in project workshops especially in Burkina Faso and also in Kenya, but only to a lesser extent in the Niger. In Burkina Faso, the FAO Country Office also participated in field work activities and in the regional workshop in Togo. Similarly, the FAO Country Office in Kyrgyzstan had little involvement, but the Country Office in Uruguay played a pivotal role in facilitating the implementation as de facto executing agency. The limited inter-agency cooperation at country level and engagement of FAO Country Offices was not a hindrance to project implementation, but opportunities to link PRAGA to ongoing programmes were not utilized. For example, FAO has animal health and fodder-related projects in Isiolo County, which could have been a means to link the project to community benefits and thereby further facilitate community participation and ownership; perhaps they could have also functioned as an entry point to local decision-making processes, banking on FAO Country Office's existing partnership with local authorities in Isiolo. Similarly, the project did not draw upon the in-house livestock expertise in the FAO Country Offices. FAO headquarters' in-house remote sensing expertise was not mobilized to provide support to any of the five countries.

3.5.3 Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing

Finding 32. GEF budget was almost fully executed. Overall, the spending deviations from the budget were small.

104. The project was supported by GEF with an allocation of approximately USD 2.6 million. Ninety-nine percent of the total budget was spent. With the exception of a couple of minor budget lines, the spending deviations from the budget were minor. Table 2 provides an overview of the spending. As described earlier, financial procedures were not a hindrance and disbursements were mostly made in a timely manner, albeit with a few exceptions.

Table 2. Overview of spending (USD), October 2021

Budget line	Budget allocation	Spent	Committed	Spent and committed	Unspent	Percent
Salaries professionals	582 699	554 047	21 340	575 387	7 312	99%
Salaries general services	4 970	4 970	-	4 970	-	100%
Consultants	319 294	278 855	53 479	332 334	13 040	104%
Contracts	1 619 958	1 519 748	84 018	1 603 766	16 192	99%
Locally contracted labour	1 093	1 093	-	1 093	-	100%
Travel	75 136	70 731	-	70 731	4 405	94%
Training	6 573	6 573	-	6 573	-	100%
Expendable procurement	17 535	3 204	-	3 204	14 331	18%
Technical support services	4 500	-	-	-	4 500	0%
General operating expenses	5 294	7 490	-	7 490	2 196	141%
General operating expenses external common services	222	222	-	222	-	100%
General operating expenses internal common services	2 453	2 453	-	2 453	-	100%
Total	2 639 727	2 449 386	158 837	2 608 223	31 504	99%

Source: Evaluation team, based on recent project implementation reports.

Finding 33. The level of co-financing was somewhat lower than expected, but this did not affect the achievement of results. While some of the anticipated funding did not materialize, co-financing was mobilized from additional sources.

105. Appendix 4 provides a detailed breakdown of the anticipated and materialized co-financing. At the time of the project design, the anticipated co-financing was USD 5.76 million, of which USD 2.3 million was in cash. A mix of cash (grant-based) and in-kind co-financing was expected from three European Union-funded IUCN programmes, the European Union-funded FAO Great Green Wall programme, FAO's own resources and the FAO-hosted PKH and MPS as well as the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) in Uruguay. While some of the expected co-financing did not fully materialize, unanticipated in-kind co-financing was mobilized from national government entities in the five countries, CAMP Alatoo and CAF. Some of the unexpected co-financing was used for additional activities in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay, such as the additional support for the development of local rangeland management plans in Kyrgyzstan and a producer

best practices manual prepared by CAF. Overall, 74 percent of the expected amount of co-financing was mobilized, including 44 percent of the expected cash co-financing and 118 percent of the in-kind co-financing. The somewhat lower than anticipated level of co-financing was not a hindrance to the delivery of project results. The co-financing was mostly managed by the organizations or programmes that provided it, with the exception of the cash co-financing from the FAO core budget mobilized by the FAO Liaison Officer.

3.5.4 Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Finding 34. The project was successful in engaging a range of stakeholders. However, the level of stakeholder ownership varies among the countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could link to existing processes.

106. As described earlier, stakeholder participation is a central feature of the PRAGA methodology for rangeland assessment and a feature that is particularly appreciated by national stakeholders at all levels. The methodology aims at a multi-stakeholder approach, involving national and local governments, academia and livestock producers themselves, including producer associations. This is widely seen by stakeholders as one of the most important features of the PRAGA methodology, as is its adaptability to local contexts. In the implementation of the project, there was mostly a good level of participation from the full range of relevant stakeholders from national and local governments, academia, civil society and the private sector in the form of livestock producer associations, as well as communities and livestock producers themselves.
107. Communities and livestock producers. Communities and a number of livestock producers participated in the project, in particular in the inception and validation workshops. However, the lack of the project's direct engagement in tangible improvements in rangeland management, or a clear indirect linkage through direct association with interventions that addressed rangeland management posed, to some extent, a limitation to participation and to the creation of ownership at community level, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, where CAMP Alatoo is also engaged in tangible livelihoods improvements.
108. Local governments. The project also fed into local planning processes, such as county development plans in Burkina Faso and the Niger, country rangeland policies in the Niger and, more recently, local pasture management plans in Kyrgyzstan. However, the ownership among local decision makers in Kenya remains uneven and while the ownership is good among pasture committees in Kyrgyzstan, who are mandated to manage rangelands by law, local government participation and ownership remain low.
109. National governments. Where the project could plug into existing national and local processes, institutional stakeholder ownership was stronger. For example, in Burkina Faso and the Niger the project was able to enrich the existing national rangeland assessment system. The ownership of national government entities varies among the countries, with clear ownership in Burkina Faso and the Niger by the entities responsible for annual rangeland assessments, but limited ownership, especially at decision-making level, in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. In Uruguay, government participation, engagement and ownership started out strongly, as evidenced by the significant co-funding. However, after the government changed, the Ministry of Agriculture's engagement and ownership declined, while the Ministry of Environment's remained strong, thus illustrating that institutional ownership is often linked to personal ownership and influence within the organization.
110. National experts and implementing partners. The national experts and partner organizations mobilized to carry out the assessments show a strong degree of ownership and can thus play an important role in the future uptake of the PRAGA methodology, also linking to national and local

processes. For example, in Uruguay, UdelaR has established a postgraduate training course, which draws upon PRAGA and the project lessons, while CAF has prepared a rangeland management best practices guide without any additional project resources. A national consultant in Burkina Faso has submitted a proposal to apply the PRAGA methodology in other locations in the country.

111. Local stakeholders and community representatives were not involved in the initial design of the project. Given the limited time available to prepare the project proposal for the GEF, such an engagement would not have been feasible. Considering that the purpose of the project was to develop a new tool, including the use of scientific approaches, it would have been too technical for community members to engage in the initial design of the project and the PRAGA methodology. Thus, the engagement of communities at inception at national level as well as the national indicator selection were appropriate.

3.5.5 Knowledge management, communication and public awareness

Finding 35. The project's experiences and lessons as well as the PRAGA methodology were promoted both at national and international level with publications and presentations at events.

112. Publications and written knowledge products. A number of written products were published to inform decision makers and capture and disseminate lessons. At national level, PRAGA assessment reports were produced to communicate assessment findings. The findings were validated in local and national workshops, and findings and recommendations resulting from such workshops were captured in workshop reports. Policy briefs were produced in Burkina Faso, Kenya and the Niger, and will also be produced in Kyrgyzstan. Policy action plans were prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya, and one is also under preparation in Uruguay. Moreover, two county action plans for the integration of the PRAGA methodology in county planning processes were prepared in Kenya. Using its own funding, CAF prepared a report on best practices in rangeland management in Uruguay, drawing on the findings and lessons from the project.
113. At global level, the primary knowledge product is the PRAGA manual, including the revised "Indicators for Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment" and an annex on lessons learned. Two publications capturing and disseminating the PRAGA experience were produced: i) "Land degradation neutrality: rationale for participatory approaches in assessments and monitoring of rangelands health"; and iii) "Best practices in support of sustainable land management in pastoral areas". Moreover, a case study on Kyrgyzstan was prepared as a contribution to the Global Rangelands Atlas, which is available online. An online PRAGA portal was also produced, providing an overview of the project, basic information about the five countries and project sites, as well as GIS data generated for the PRAGA assessments. The portal also has a page for reports, but it only contains one policy brief and two land degradation maps, all for Kenya.
114. Participation and dissemination in international events. FAO and IUCN engaged in international events to disseminate and create awareness about the PRAGA methodology and experiences from the five countries, although this was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with planned side events at two international congresses, which were postponed. A well-attended side event was held at the UNCCD COP 14 in New Delhi in 2019 and the online Global Landscapes Forum in 2021. Moreover, PRAGA was presented at the FAO Committee on Agriculture's 27th Session in 2020. At regional level, the PRAGA methodology was promoted at a regional workshop in Togo on transboundary pastoralism and CAF presented Uruguay's PRAGA experience at a regional symposium for Latin America. The PRAGA manual and the two publications are scheduled to be launched at the World Conservation Congress (October 2021).

Finding 36. There was limited peer learning and sharing of experiences among the five project countries.

115. Cross-country learning. Some activities were implemented to promote sharing and peer learning, such as an expert meeting with the participation of the project's national focal points held in connection with the UNCCD COP 14, where Kenya's experience was presented. There was also an online meeting in 2020. However, the sharing of experiences among the countries was overall limited, it only involved a small number of people from the five countries, and the stakeholders interviewed were generally unaware of the experiences of the other countries.

3.5.6 Rating of factors affecting performance

116. Project design and readiness. Moderately Unsatisfactory. The project start was significantly delayed. This was due to a combination of internal and external factors, over which FAO and IUCN had no control. The internal factors were mainly related to administrative issues of the two agencies, but also due to the fact that the project design did not adequately clarify roles, responsibilities and modes of operation at national level.
117. Quality of project implementation by FAO. Satisfactory. FAO headquarters provided effective administrative guidance and approval processes and disbursements were mostly smooth and timely. OPIM-related processes created challenges that contributed to delays. The FAO Country Office in Uruguay was proactively engaged in the project support, but, in the other countries, FAO Country Office engagement was limited.
118. Quality of project oversight. Moderately Satisfactory. Project Task Force decision-making process worked well internally in FAO. However, the decision to transfer execution in Kyrgyzstan from FAO to IUCN on the basis of the lack of an IUCN Country Office was not sufficiently inclusive and does not appear to be fully justified, considering FAO headquarters handled the implementation with little involvement of the FAO Country Office.
119. Overall quality of project implementation: Moderately Satisfactory.
120. Quality of project execution: Satisfactory. Project implementation was successfully accelerated after the initial delays and the outputs delivered were of good quality. Stakeholders were satisfied with the facilitation, coordination and technical support. FAO and IUCN were well coordinated at global level but the collaboration at country level was generally limited and opportunities for synergies at country level were therefore not banked upon.
121. Financial management and co-financing: Satisfactory. The GEF budget was fully executed and deviations from the budget were minor. Co-financing was somewhat below expectations.
122. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products: Satisfactory. The project's experiences and lessons and the PRAGA methodology were promoted both at national and international level with publications and presentations at events. However, efforts to promote cross-country peer learning among the five project countries were relatively limited.
123. M&E design: Moderately Satisfactory. Monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring was reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.
124. M&E plan implementation: Moderately Satisfactory. Overall, monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.

125. Overall quality of M&E: Moderately Satisfactory.
126. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement: Satisfactory. Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are key strengths of the PRAGA methodology. The project was generally successful in including relevant stakeholders in implementation. However, ownership among government stakeholders remained uneven and varied among the countries.
127. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance: Moderately Satisfactory.

3.6 Gender, equity and inclusion

Finding 37. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but this was not done in an entirely systematic manner. The participation of women was significantly lower than that of men. This was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding.

128. The ProDoc identified women and youth as stakeholders in rangeland management and specified in different sections that their participation would be ensured. However, it did not contain an analysis of the factors that could limit or even prevent their participation, or specific strategies to overcome these gaps. The number of participants and the number of participating women in project workshops and activities were captured in the project implementation reports. The participation of youth was not captured systematically. The outcome and output indicators in the project results framework were not of a nature that would require gender disaggregation.
129. The PRAGA manual notes the importance of ensuring the participation of women and youth. It specifies that: i) the baseline and stakeholder analysis should capture the role and engagement of women and different age groups; and ii) participation of women, youth, elders and different social classes should be ensured, including in the field assessment teams. Moreover, it notes that this could require that separate groups are made for women or different ethnic groups, or that all groups have a balanced representation of different stakeholder groups. It also mentions the right to participate as being an important element of good governance, which is established in international law and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
130. Efforts were made to include women and youth in the project. However, more men than women generally participated in the assessment teams. Moreover, the participation of women in project activities was in most cases significantly lower than the participation of men. As pointed out by several interviewees, this was to a large extent due to the fact that women are underrepresented in livestock production in the project countries, in particular when it comes to taking livestock to pastures or claiming ownership of livestock. Separate groups to ensure that women and youth would raise their voice in community consultations were generally not arranged. Nonetheless, in a few cases, the communities or local authorities themselves appointed women to represent them in assessments or workshops. Moreover, the project reported that the responses to rangeland assessment indicators were similar for women and men. Women and youth were not mentioned in most of the rangeland assessment and validation workshops reports, with the exception of Uruguay. It should be noted that, at global level, both FAO and IUCN had female coordinators for the project, as did the project in Uruguay. Given that the project exclusively engaged in data collection and validation, assessment capacity development, as well as the formulation of policy recommendations, it did not have any direct positive or negative impact on women, youth, or other groups. Inclusion of indigenous peoples was not explicitly considered in project implementation.

Rating of gender sensitivity, equity and inclusion

131. Gender and other equity dimensions. Moderately Satisfactory. The PRAGA methodology emphasizes the need to ensure participation of women, youth and different social groups across ethnicities. Women's participation in activities was monitored. Some efforts to include women and youth in project activities were made. The assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions.
132. Human rights issues/Indigenous peoples: Satisfactory. The project and the PRAGA methodology supported the right to participation and access to information. Indigenous peoples' rights are referred to in the PRAGA manual, as is the need to ensure the inclusion of different ethnic and social groups.

3.7 Other sections based on the main evaluation questions

Finding 38. Given the nature of the project, which did not involve on-the-ground investments, it did not have any negative environmental or social impacts. It is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts.

133. The focus of the project was to develop a methodology that would help with the promotion of sustainable rangeland and grassland management through the provision of data for informed decision-making, in a way that can likely to indirectly contribute to improved environmental sustainability. The project engaged in methodology testing, participatory data gathering and policy recommendations for SLM, and supported on-the-ground investments. Therefore, it did not have any direct environmental or social impact, whether positive negative. The project conformed to FAO's pre-approved list of projects excluded from requiring a detailed environmental assessment.

Rating of environmental and social safeguards

134. Environmental and social safeguards: Satisfactory. The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to indirectly contribute to improved environmental sustainability.

Box 4. Overall ratings for GEF online portal

<p>Progress towards achieving the project's development objective(s). The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities in the five countries, and thus made a significant contribution to the overall objective: <i>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.</i> Moreover, the project achieved its primary result, that is the delivery of a proven participatory model for rangeland assessment.</p> <p>Rating: Satisfactory</p>
<p>Overall progress on implementation. The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed. The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs.</p> <p>Rating: Moderately Satisfactory</p>
<p>Overall risk. The PRAGA methodology will be applied by FAO and IUCN. Both of them have mobilized, and are mobilizing, funding for projects that use elements of PRAGA. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and the Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organizations.</p> <p>Rating: Moderately Low</p>

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Relevance

Conclusion 1. With a focus on land degradation, the project responded directly to global, national and local priorities *vis-à-vis* ensuring that rangelands are managed sustainably. However, opportunities to link to the global biodiversity and climate change agendas were largely missed.

135. The project contributed with a methodology to enhance the knowledge about the status of rangelands and identify options at national and local level to ensure they are managed sustainably. As such, it responded both to international agendas related to environmental sustainability, as well as the socio-economic importance of maintaining rangelands productivity for the participating countries and communities. The project and the PRAGA methodology were framed explicitly in the UNCCD context, but rangeland management is not only important *vis-à-vis* land degradation, but also in relation to biodiversity and climate change, and thus the monitoring of the delivery of commitments under CBD and UNFCCC. With significantly larger donor attention and support for work under these two conventions than under UNCCD, there is a significant untapped potential to enhance the use of the PRAGA methodology. These days, countries are being supported in building up systems to monitor their progress on their national commitments under these conventions.

Conclusion 2. The emphasis on multi-stakeholder participation was a key strength of the project, but without a clear link to tangible investments to improve rangeland management, some opportunities to promote participation and ownership and influence policy and planning were missed.

136. When the project was designed, the reliance on scientific data for rangeland assessment with little stakeholder input made it difficult to communicate results to decision makers and livestock producers. The project addressed these challenges by combining scientific methods, remote sensing and stakeholder participation, allowing for assessment findings that were more easily understood and agreed upon. The project focused on methodology development and did not have resources to invest in tangible on-the-ground activities to improve pastures. Hence, local stakeholders engaged in the project without any direct benefits. Moreover, the project was aimed at influencing national and local decision-making, but the project resources and the scope of planned activities were not sufficient to ensure such an influence. A direct link to rangeland investments could have further demonstrated the value of PRAGA to local stakeholders. This could have been overcome without requiring funding for pilot investments, had the project at local level been implemented as a component of larger rangeland restoration projects.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

Conclusion 3. The project successfully developed an implementable and participatory rangeland assessment tool of good quality, although the use of remote sensing and indicator selection remain a challenge.

137. The main result of the project was a tested, validated and refined multidisciplinary tool for rangeland assessments, which combines scientific data with local knowledge and perspectives, and promotes an inclusive analysis process, making it easier for stakeholders to understand and assume ownership of the findings. The methodology and process were highly appreciated by different stakeholder groups, including academia, governments and livestock producers. Overall, stakeholders found the PRAGA methodology robust, logical, affordable and relatively easy to apply. Nonetheless, the use of remote sensing was challenging and an area where several stakeholders find additional support would be required. Another methodological challenge was

the indicator selection, including balancing locally identified and relevant indicators with globally relevant and comparable indicators.

Conclusion 4. The project enhanced national and local capacities to assess rangeland health and the understanding of available options for improved rangeland management, but the influence on policy and planning and the adoption of PRAGA is uneven.

138. The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities and knowledge in the five countries *vis-à-vis* carrying out rangeland assessments as well as understanding the rangeland status and available policy, planning and management options to improve their management and ensure sustainability. However, the extent to which the skills and knowledge will be put into use remains to be seen and is likely to be uneven among the five countries. It is also too early to assess the extent to which the PRAGA assessments will have tangible influence on national and local policies and plans, or the extent to which the methodology will be internalized in national or local systems. In Burkina Faso and the Niger, local development plans were influenced and the possibilities that elements of the PRAGA methodology are integrated into national rangeland assessment processes are good. In Kenya, the PRAGA assessment informed the new county rangeland policy for Isiolo, but internalization of the PRAGA methodology would depend on continued support. Government engagement proved difficult in Kyrgyzstan, so the project focused on working with local pasture committees. Moreover, with additional CAMP Alatau and FAO support, the PRAGA assessment is contributing to informing the ongoing pasture planning cycle in some of the project's target areas. In Uruguay, the project had a close relationship with the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment, but with the change of government in 2020 the dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture was disrupted, whereas it continues with the Ministry of Environment. The most tangible uptake of PRAGA in Uruguay is in a rangeland management postgraduate course at UdelaR. A number of activities and products were delivered to create global awareness of project experiences and the PRAGA methodology but, so far, there is no indication of other countries or organizations replicating or adapting the PRAGA methodology.

4.1.3 Efficiency

Conclusion 5. The project was significantly affected by delays, but the intended outputs were largely delivered within the budget, as were some additional activities.

139. The project experienced major delays and it was extended for more than a year. Some significant factors causing delays were external and beyond the control of the project, such as the change of government in Kyrgyzstan, insecurity in Burkina Faso and the Niger, and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a number of factors were internal, and some of these could have been foreseen or factored into the project design, such as the time needed to get five governments to formally approve the project, areas of unclarity on roles and responsibilities, and FAO procedures and requirements concerning the approval and signing of the FAO-IUCN OPA agreement. Nonetheless, with the extension, the project activities and planned outputs were delivered (albeit with a few activities still to be completed) within the project budget, as were some additional deliverables, including national policy briefs and two global publications. However, due to the delays, the implementation of some activities and output delivery were rushed.

4.1.4 Sustainability

Conclusion 6. The uptake of PRAGA remains uneven and would require further support from FAO and IUCN – they both have plans for further application of PRAGA, but the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangelands in FAO appears to be a limitation.

140. The prospect of uptake of the PRAGA methodology varies significantly among the five project countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could link to existing processes. Burkina Faso and the Niger have the best prospects for national level adoption of the PRAGA methodology, since they have a conducive policy and institutional environment, and PRAGA assessments have already informed local development plans. In Kenya, the PRAGA assessment has informed one county rangeland policy, but the buy-in from county level decision makers remains uneven. There are no signs of national level adoption of the PRAGA methodology. In Kyrgyzstan, government involvement was limited and adoption of PRAGA is unlikely. Future use of the PRAGA methodology would depend on CAMP Alatoo. Uruguay has the strongest technical, financial and institutional capacity to carry out PRAGA assessments, but, following a change of government, traction was lost within the Ministry of Agriculture and, so far, there are no clear signs of the government internalizing the PRAGA methodology. A common challenge for the project countries is the need for further remote sensing and GIS expertise. Moreover, local level stakeholders would require technical (and financial) support for any future PRAGA assessments.
141. Both FAO and IUCN are already using simplified versions of PRAGA in other countries. Moreover, FAO is funding an expansion of the project in Kyrgyzstan, where a second PRAGA assessment will be carried out in some of the project communities. IUCN has incorporated the PRAGA methodology in upcoming GCF- and GEF-funded projects in Kenya. Both agencies also intend to integrate PRAGA in a couple of other projects. However, FAO only has a small number of in-house rangeland specialists, it has no dedicated unit for rangelands and there is no officer with the responsibility of coordinating rangeland-related work. It is too early to assess whether the PRAGA methodology will be taken up by other international development partners engaged in sustainable rangeland management, but there are no signs of such an uptake so far.

4.1.5 Factors affecting performance

Conclusion 7. The project was largely well implemented and executed, albeit with some shortcomings, for example in relation to the unclarity of roles and limited synergy between the two agencies at country level.

142. Overall, FAO carried out well its role as project implementing agency, with good internal support from the Project Task Force, and it provided appropriate guidance in a timely manner to IUCN and national partners, who found FAO procedures manageable. Moreover, disbursements were generally timely. Similarly, both FAO and IUCN carried out well their roles as executing agencies, both at national and international level, once the initial delays were overcome. Both agencies successfully mobilized relevant partners and technical experts to carry out the rangeland assessments in the five countries. Project M&E was largely adequate given the project's nature. The two agencies cooperated well.
143. There was initial unclarity on roles and mandates, which, in combination with complications related to FAO's OPIM procedures, contributed to the delays. At country level, cooperation between the two agencies was often limited. In particular, there was limited involvement of the FAO Country Offices, with the exception of Uruguay, where the execution was successfully led by the Country Office, demonstrating the potential added value of FAO Country Office engagement. Hence, an opportunity to benefit from Country Offices technical capacities and links to governments was largely missed. FAO's decision to take over implementation in Kyrgyzstan on the pretext of IUCN not having an in-country presence was not fully justified, considering that FAO supported implementation from Rome rather than the Country Office. Moreover, country-to-country peer learning, sharing of experiences and synergy among the five project countries was limited.

4.1.6 Cross-cutting issues

Conclusion 8. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but not in an entirely systematic manner.

144. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, and the participation of women was monitored. The PRAGA manual notes the importance of ensuring the participation of women and youth. However, measures to encourage their participation in the project were not applied in an entirely systematic manner. Women and youth were identified as stakeholders in rangeland management, but the factors that could limit or even prevent their participation were not analysed, and specific strategies to overcome such gaps were not designed. The participation of women was significantly lower than that of men, and this was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding.

Conclusion 9. The project did not have any negative environmental or social impact, but it is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts.

145. The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. Given that the project exclusively engaged in methodology development, data collection and validation, as well as the formulation of policy recommendations, it did not have any direct positive or negative impact neither on the environment nor on women, youth or other groups. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to indirectly contribute to improved environmental sustainability.

Overall rating of project

146. Overall project rating: Satisfactory. Overall assessment based on the ratings of the project performance across the different GEF evaluation criteria emanating from the findings is shown in Appendix 2.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. To FAO and IUCN. Develop strategies to facilitate the use of remote sensing and GIS in PRAGA assessments by national stakeholders.

147. Capacity constraints to use remote sensing and GIS are the largest technical impediment to the application of PRAGA by national and especially local stakeholders. But, at the same time, those tools are essential for the ability to assess rangelands at scale. Suggested actions:

- i. explore opportunities to simplify the PRAGA tool *vis-à-vis* the application of remote sensing and GIS;
- ii. develop and test models to include systematic and targeted remote sensing and GIS capacity development in future applications of PRAGA.

Recommendation 2. To FAO and IUCN. Strengthen the gender dimension in PRAGA.

148. The project made attempts to ensure the participation of women and youth, and the PRAGA tool mentions the importance of ensuring participation of women, youth and different social and ethnic groups. However, the participation of women could have been pursued more systematically, and gender issues could have been reflected better in the PRAGA assessments. Suggested actions:

- i. strengthen the PRAGA tool with a more in-depth discussion on the gender, youth and inclusion dimension, and tangible tools to address gender issues and ensure inclusion and participation.

Recommendation 3. To FAO and IUCN. Refine and promote the PRAGA methodology as a tool for the monitoring of national commitments under the CBD and UNFCCC conventions.

149. Rangelands harbour important biodiversity, but biodiversity is under pressure due to unsustainable management practices. On the one hand, livestock production and land degradation are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, well-managed rangelands can act as carbon sinks, and improve the resilience of vulnerable pastoralist communities. So far, the PRAGA methodology has mainly been framed in the context of land degradation and UNCCD. Limited attention has been given to promoting PRAGA as a tool for the monitoring of progress on national commitments under CBD and UNFCCC, which is an area of work other parts of FAO and IUCN are already engaged in. Suggested actions:

- i. develop a set of simple rangeland indicators that feed into national CBD and UNFCCC monitoring and reporting;
- ii. test PRAGA as a tool to gather information for CBD and UNFCCC reporting, ideally as an integrated tool that simultaneously feeds the reporting of all three Rio Conventions.

Recommendation 4. To FAO and IUCN. Integrate more comprehensively PRAGA assessments in programmes and projects that invest in tangible rangeland management improvements.

150. The uptake of the PRAGA methodology and the policy influence of the rangelands assessments carried out were uneven. In most cases, the project was not linked to ongoing on-the-ground investments and/or policy interventions to improve rangeland management. Hence, the value of PRAGA *vis-à-vis* informing policy and the benefits stakeholders would get from participation were not fully demonstrated. Both FAO and IUCN have plans to integrate elements of PRAGA in other projects, but there is scope for, and value in, a more systematic and comprehensive approach to integrate PRAGA in relevant rangeland management interventions, including those of other development partners. Suggested actions:

- i. identify all ongoing and planned FAO and IUCN policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management that PRAGA could be integrated into;
- ii. identify ongoing and planned policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management by other development partners that PRAGA could be integrated into in the five pilot countries;
- iii. develop and implement a project which offers to add and finance a PRAGA assessment component in relevant ongoing or planned rangeland interventions implemented by FAO, IUCN or even other development partners.

Recommendation 5. To FAO. Establish a clear institutional home to engage in sustainable rangeland and grassland management in an integrated, holistic and coordinated manner.

151. Despite covering a very large area, global attention to the ecosystem services and the socio-economic importance provided by rangelands is significantly lower if compared to other types of ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands. This includes enhancing the awareness on the role of rangelands *vis-à-vis* biodiversity as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation. FAO is currently not fully equipped to tackle this challenge, as there is no dedicated unit for rangelands or clear mechanisms to coordinate FAO's rangelands work, and the number of in-house rangeland specialists is low. These shortcomings also have bearing for the capacity to further promote PRAGA. Suggested actions:

- i. appoint or recruit an expert to coordinate rangeland-related work within FAO;
- ii. Establish a dedicated rangeland management team or unit in FAO;

- iii. carry out in-house awareness raising and capacity development for relevant FAO staff on the importance of rangelands *vis-à-vis* land degradation, biodiversity, climate change, and human and economic development.

5. Lessons learned

152. The project produced a detailed lessons learned report, drawing upon the implementation experience from the five countries. This section does not repeat the findings from the lessons learned report, but highlights a few lessons that came out prominently during the terminal evaluation process:
- i. Combining scientific and local knowledge in a participatory process yields significant benefits in terms of understanding and owning assessment findings, and bringing different types of stakeholders together.
 - ii. A successful participatory data collection and analysis process as well as evidence-based policy advice may not be enough to ensure uptake and policy influence. The prospects of influencing national and local systems are higher when there is a clear link to already existing systems (such as the national rangeland monitoring in Burkina Faso and the Niger) and processes (such as the local pasture management process in Kyrgyzstan).
 - iii. For partnership-based projects, it is important to ensure that roles are clearly defined during the design phase and based on a clear understanding of how each partner operates.
 - iv. Clear roles and allocated budgets in the project design are necessary if FAO Country Offices are to engage significantly in project delivery.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Abdygaziev	Zamir	Head of Pasture Committee	Kara Koyun village, Kyrgyzstan
Abrahmanova	Kenje	Head of Pasture Committee	Karasuu village, Kyrgyzstan
Abudiku	Duncan		FAO, Kenya
Aloo	Fredrick	Principal Livestock Production Officer	State Department of Livestock, Range Resource Development Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and Cooperatives, Kenya
Asanaliev	Muratbek	Executive Secretary of Village Council	Acha-Kayindy village, Kyrgyzstan
Asanaliev	Ruslan	Head of Pasture Committee	Jergetal, Kyrgyzstan
Azamat Isakov	Azamat	Former Director	Former Camp Alatoo, Kyrgyzstan
Bambara	Ghislain	Project Focal Point	Directorate Général des Espaces et des Aménagements Pastoraux (DGEAP), Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso
Bicksler	Abram	Agricultural Officer	FAO, Rome
Boerstler	Fritjof		FAO, Rome
Boggiano	Pablo	Professor	Facultad de Agronomía – UdelaR, Uruguay
Coronel	Fernando	Representative at the Mesa de Ganadería sobre Campo Natural	CAF, Uruguay
Davies	Jonathan	Senior Programme Officer	IUCN, Nairobi
Diubanova	Margarita		FAO, Rome
Djibo	Soumana	GIS Specialist	AGRHYMET, Niger
Evia	Gerardo	Director	Dirección de Biodiversidad y Servicios Ecosistémicos (DINABISE), Ministerio de Ambiente, Uruguay
Formoso	Daniel	Consultant	Facultad de Agronomía – UdelaR, Uruguay
Frachia	Luis	General Manager	CAF, Uruguay
Hambe	Haret	Head of Livestock Sector	County Executive Committee, Garissa County, Kenya
Idrissa	Soumana		INRAN, Niger
Jumanazarov	Sagynbek	Village Council Member	Karasuu village, Kyrgyzstan
Kazybekov	Nuradil	Head of Pasture Committee	Kazybek village, Kyrgyzstan
Kiema	André	Animal Breeding Expert	INERA, Burkina Faso
Manapbaev	Altynbek	Head of Pasture Committee	Ak Jar village, Kyrgyzstan
Martinez	Marcos	National Focal Point	Directorate for Natural Resources, MGAP, Uruguay
Masumbuko	Bora	Project Coordinator	IUCN, Nairobi

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Medina	Santiago	Former National Focal Point	MVOTMA, Uruguay
Metternicht	Graciella	Professor	University of New South Wales, Australia
Miinazarov	Maksat	Project Coordinator	CAMP Alatoo, Kyrgyzstan
Mongela	Lawrence	County Executive Commissioner	County Executive Committee, Isiolo County, Kenya
Muktarbekov	Adilet	Pasture Specialist	Jergetal, Kyrgyzstan
Nianogo	Aime	Rangeland Management Expert	Burkina Faso
Njogu	John	Natural Resource Scientist	Department of Resource Survey and Remote Sensing, Kenya
Noruzbaev	Mirlan	Head of Pasture Committee	Acha-Kayindy village, Kyrgyzstan
Ogali	Claire	Former Project Coordinator	Former IUCN, Nairobi
Onyango	Vivian	Agricultural Officer	FAO, Rome
Ouedraogo	Hamadou	Director General	Directorate Général des Espaces et des Aménagements Pastoraux (DGEAP), Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso
Perez	Jimena	Project coordinator	FAO, Uruguay
Plaza	Vicente	Officer-in-Charge	FAO, Uruguay
Riani	Federico		CAF, Uruguay
Roba	Hassan	Consultant	Christensen Foundation, Kenya
Rodriguez Diaz	Maria Alicia	Livestock producer, former Board Member	Comision de Formento Rural, Asociación Uruguaya de Ganaderos del Pastizal (AUGAP), Uruguay
Romeo	RosaLaura	Coordinator	MPS, FAO, Rome
Sabitakunov	Kadyrbek	Pasture user	Kazybek village, Kyrgyzstan
Sacande	Moctar		FAO, Rome
Shamiev	Azamat	Project Coordinator	Ministry of Agriculture, Kyrgyzstan
Sharpe	Nicholas		FAO, Rome
Somda	Jacques	Head of Programme	IUCN, Burkina Faso
Sydygaliev	Kulmat	Head of Village Administration	Jergetal, Kyrgyzstan
Tougiani	Abass	Sustainable Rangeland Management Expert	INRAN, Niger
Uriarte	Carlos María	Livestock producer, former Minister of Agriculture	MGAP, Uruguay
uulu Kojo	Omurbek	Head of Pasture Committee	Acha-Kayindy village, Kyrgyzstan
Velasco Gil	Gregogio	Coordinator	PKH, FAO, Rome
Zanoniani	Ramiro	Professor	Facultad de Agronomía – UdelaR, Uruguay

Appendix 2. GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating ²	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project was fully aligned to both GEF and FAO priorities <i>vis-à-vis</i> the promotion of SLM.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities as well as beneficiary needs	S	The project responded directly to address LD and SLM objectives of UNCCD, to SDG 15, and to priorities and gaps in the pilot countries. However, a clear link to UNFCCC and CBD was not made, despite its relevance.
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MS	The project complemented SLM interventions and drew from other assessment methodologies, but opportunities for synergy were not fully banked upon, e.g. <i>vis-à-vis</i> incentives for local participation.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	S	The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	S	
- Outcome 1	HS	The PRAGA methodology was developed, tested and revised, and it is rated very positively by stakeholders.
- Outcome 2	MS	The contribution to national and local decision-making processes varied. Tangible contribution was achieved at local level in some countries, but national level influence was generally limited. The PRAGA methodology was made visible internationally but has not influenced international processes.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	S	
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	UA	Given the nature of the project, there were no direct impacts. Indirect impacts will depend on the uptake of the PRAGA methodology as a decision-making tool.
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MU	The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Staff and expert resources were used well, and the cost-effectiveness was good and included the delivery of additional activities within budget.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	FAO and IUCN have and are mobilizing funding for projects that use PRAGA or elements of it. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and Niger.

² See Appendix 3 for rating key.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating ²	Summary comments
		It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organizations.
D1.2. Socio-political risks	MU	The level of political interest in PRAGA varies among the five countries. The political risk for replication of the methodology through donor-funded projects is low. However, obtaining political ownership, using assessment results as well as the PRAGA methodology will require concerted efforts. Insecurity is a major risk in Burkina Faso and Niger, and it is also a risk in certain parts of the livestock production areas of Kenya. Moreover, it could make it difficult or impossible to carry out PRAGA assessments.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	The conduciveness of the institutional and governance landscape is high in Burkina Faso and Niger, fairly high in Uruguay, but quite low in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Both FAO and IUCN are committed to using PRAGA in the future. However, institutional fragmentation of rangeland work in FAO is a limiting factor.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	There is no environmental risk. On the contrary, increased environmental degradation is likely to enhance the interest in PRAGA as a tool for pursuing SLM.
D2. Catalysis and replication	S	FAO and IUCN are already replicating PRAGA, or elements hereof. Replication by other organizations cannot be judged yet. At country level, the project did have a catalytic effect, since it has influenced local plans in some countries, enhanced capacities, and generated interest and appreciation among stakeholders.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MU	The Project start was significantly delayed. This was due to a combination of external factors, over which FAO and IUCN had no control, and internal factors. The internal factors were mainly related to administrative issues of the two agencies, but also due to the fact that the project design did not adequately clarify roles, responsibilities and modes of operation at the national level.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	S	FAO headquarters provided effective administrative guidance and approval processes and disbursements were mostly smooth and timely. OPIM-related processes created challenges that contributed to delays. The FAO Country Office in Uruguay was proactively engaged in the project support, but in the other countries, FAO Country Office engagement was limited.
E2.2 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	PTF decision-making process worked well internally in FAO. The decision to transfer execution in Kyrgyzstan from FAO to IUCN based on the lack of an IUCN Country Office was not sufficiently inclusive and does not appear to be fully justified, considering that FAO headquarters handled implementation with little involvement of the FAO Country Office.
E3. Quality of project execution For DEX projects: Project Management Unit/BH; For OPIM projects: Executing Agency	S	Project implementation was successfully accelerated after the initial delays and the outputs delivered were of good quality. Stakeholders were satisfied with the facilitation, coordination, and technical support. FAO and IUCN were well coordinated at global level, but the collaboration at country level was generally limited and opportunities for synergies at country level were therefore not banked upon.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	The GEF budget was fully executed and deviations from the budget were minor. Co-financing was somewhat below expectations.

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating ²	Summary comments
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are key strengths of the PRAGA methodology. The project was generally successful in including relevant stakeholders in the implementation. However, ownership among government stakeholders remained uneven and varied among the countries.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	The project's experiences and lessons as well as the PRAGA methodology were promoted both at national and international level with publications and presentations at events. However, efforts to promote cross-country peer learning among the five project countries were relatively limited.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	
E7.1 M&E design	MS	Monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring was reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	MS	Overall, the monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	The PRAGA methodology emphasizes the need to ensure participation of women, youth, and different social groups across ethnicities. Women's participation in activities was monitored. Some efforts to include women and youth in project activities were made. The assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions.
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	The project and the PRAGA methodology supported the right to participation and access to information. Indigenous peoples' were not a focus of the project, but their rights are referred to in the PRAGA manual, as is the need to ensure the inclusion of different ethnic and social groups.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to indirectly contribute to improved environmental sustainability.
Overall project rating	S	

Appendix 3. Rating scheme

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

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

During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account despite the achievement of results. As per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

Quality of implementation and execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF Agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF Agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale:

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

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

153. Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of:

- Design
- Implementation

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability will be assessed by taking into account the risks related to financial, socio-political, institutional and environmental sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluator may also take into account other risks that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point scale:

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

Appendix 4. GEF co-financing table

Name of the cofinancer	Cofinancer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Materialized Co-financing at project mid-term (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind	Cash	Total
IUCN – EU, Building Drought Resilience through Land and Water Management in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas, Kenya and Uganda	GEF Agency	Grant/cash	-	1 000 000	1 000 000		1 000 000	1 000 000
IUCN – EU, Enhancing the Value of Ecosystem Services in Pastoral Systems			100 000			100 230		100 230
FAO – EU, Action against Desertification (AAD), “Great Green Wall” (GGWSSI), Burkina Faso and Niger	GEF Agency	Grant/cash + in-kind	1 000 000	1000000	2 000 000	300 000	1 200 000	1 500 000
Pastoral Knowledge Hub (PKH)	International network	In-kind	562 270	-	562 270	350 000	-	350 000
Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS)	International network	In-kind	500 000	-	500 000	200 000	-	200 000
FAO NSP (former AGP) – Multi-partner support mechanism (FMM)	GEF Agency	Grant/cash	-	300 000	300 000	-	300 000	300 000
FAO NSP (former AGP) – FAO Strategic Programme 3	GEF Agency	Grant/cash	-	-	-	-	60 000	60 000
FAO Forestry Team – FAO Collect Earth	GEF Agency	In-kind	-	-	-	40 000	-	40 000
Government of Uruguay – MGAP, MVOTMA, INIA	National government	In-kind + material	1 200 000	-	1 200 000	326 650	-	326 650
Government of Uruguay – MGAP, MVOTMA, INIA	National government	In-kind + material				43 290	-	43 290
Governments of Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Niger	National government	In-kind	-	-	-	????	-	???
CAMP Alatau, Kyrgyzstan	NGO	In-kind	-	-	-	150 000	150 000	300 000
CAF, Uruguay	Producer association	In-kind	-	-	-	22 204	-	22 204
Grand total (in USD)			3 462 270	2 300 000	5 762 270	1 532 374	2 710 000	4 242 374

Appendix 5. Results matrix

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of project Target – year 3		
Project Objective/Impact 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.						Assessment and decision-making capacities at local and national level in five countries enhanced. <i>(Note: achievement not captured in PIR)</i>	Partly achieved. PRAGA methodology fully developed. Capacities enhanced in five countries, but uneven level of adoption of PRAGA methodology.
Outcome 1 A participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands was developed and tested.	Outcome Indicator 1.1: Standardized procedural and operational manual available.	There are no standardized procedures to monitor and assess LD in grasslands and rangelands.	A draft operational and procedural manual to monitor and assess LD and SLM based on the framework of indicators domains is developed.	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.	PRAGA methodology is fully developed, tested and finalized. Currently under review in preparation for publication.	Almost completed. Target will be achieved.
	Outcome 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 to monitor and assess LD in grasslands and rangelands.	An international technical consortium of experts meets to identify, define and review a minimum number of global indicators by domain of assessment. Five national level workshops organized to i) introduce the project objective, and the framework of global indicators by domain of assessment; ii) identify key national and local resource people to support the assessment; and iii) assess relevant policy entry points.		A second international consultation is organized 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 finalized assessment and monitoring method.	Two international consultations with Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group members held (2018–2019) + one online meeting (2020) Initial national workshops in five countries. Assessment of policy entry points completed in five countries. Policy briefs finalized in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Policy action plans prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya. Policy action plan in Uruguay ongoing. Policy brief to be finalized in Kyrgyzstan after completion phase 2 of pasture use planning.	Completed. Consultations completed at global level and in five countries.

Appendix 5. Results matrix

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of project Target – year 3		
	Outcome 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.	Participatory testing of the relevance and feasibility of the selected global indicators is conducted at field level in the five targeted pilot sites	District/site consultations are organized in the five targeted pilot sites to select the sampling sites, identify specific indicators per global indicator domains, present the assessment work, validate the indicators selected by the communities, test the proposed data collection technique(s) for each indicator as well as for feedback exchanges.	The final version of the assessment and monitoring operational and procedural framework is done by taking into account feedbacks received from local communities.	Local communities involved and consulted as part of assessment in the five countries. Feedback from local communities received. Lessons learned annexed to PRAGA methodology.	Completed.
Output 1.1 A monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual is developed.	Procedural and operational manual.	No standardized procedures to monitor and assess LD in grasslands and rangelands.	A draft operational and procedural manual to monitor and assess LD and SLM based on the framework of indicators domains is developed.			Reported completion: 90%. Methodology completed; peer review ongoing.	Almost completed. Target will be achieved.
Output 1.2 The monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual is tested at local level and the global indicators are further	Number of sites where the manual is tested.	The design of existing assessment and monitoring systems has generally not sufficiently involved the land users.		An assessment team is trained in the five pilot countries district/site consultations organised in the five pilot countries to select sampling sites, identify specific indicators per global indicator domains, present the assessment work, validate the indicators		Reported completion: 80%. Field assessments completed in the five countries. Global indicators finalized. Policy briefs finalized in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Policy discussions ongoing in Uruguay and Kyrgyzstan.	Almost completed. Targets likely to be achieved. PRAGA methodology tested in the five countries. Policy briefs finalized for three countries.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of project Target – year 3		
adapted while assessing policies.				selected by the communities as well as test the proposed data collection technique(s) for each indicator.			
Output 1.3 The assessment and monitoring method is refined and finalized based on lessons learned from the district/site tests.	Finalized manual	There are no standardized procedures to monitor and assess LD in grasslands and rangelands which takes into account feedback from land users.			The procedural and operational manual is revised based on feedback received and lessons learned compiled. A second international consultation is organized to present and discuss the final framework of global indicators and the finalized assessment and monitoring method.	Reported completion: 90%. Feedback from local communities received. Lessons learned annexed to PRAGA methodology. Two international consultations with Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group members held (2018–2019) + one online meeting (2020).	Completed. Targets are achieved despite 90% self-reporting.
Outcome 2 National and international agrosylvopastoral decision-making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring procedural and operational manual and the participatory national grassland and rangeland	Outcome 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 national workshop is organized in each country to present and discuss the action plan and identify SLM best practices and measures that are best fit to influence policymaking regarding pastoral areas.	National policy discussions are held in the five countries. Policy briefs are finalized for Niger and Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Kenya: - Two county policy discussions. - County technical officers trained in PRAGA methodology. - Two county action plans to integrated PRAGA rangeland assessment in county normative work. - Policy action plan prepared. Niger: - Stakeholder workshops on PRAGA methodology. Burkina Faso: - training on PRAGA methodology. - Policy action plan prepared.	Partly completed. Targets achieved, but uptake not fully ensured in all countries.

Appendix 5. Results matrix

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of project Target – year 3		
assessments.						<p>Uruguay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National report on the State of the Grasslands. - Policy recommendations. - Final consultancy report by CAF with recommendations re. PRAGA and best practices. - Online feedback conference. - Discussions with Ministry of Agriculture disrupted by change of government – shifted to dialogue with Ministry of Environment on policy action plans. <p>Kyrgyzstan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - validation and proposals by pasture committees on how PRAGA methodology can improve current assessment - Phase 2 validation ongoing as a basis for pasture use planning cycle. <p>West Africa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multi-country workshop through FAO co-financing promoting participatory regional monitoring. 	
	Outcome Indicator 2.2: Recognition of the assessment and monitoring method in at least two relevant international fora.	There are no standardized procedures to monitor and assess 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 two international fora.	<p>One side event held at UNCCD COP 14.</p> <p>Two side events delayed by COVID-19: Int'l Rangelands Congress, World Conservation Congress.</p> <p>PRAGA manual and publications (LDN and PRAGA, SLM best practices from pilot sites) to be launched at World Conservation Congress (Oct 2021).</p> <p>PRAGA methodology shared at online Global Landscapes Forum (Jun 2021).</p>	Almost completed Delayed by COVID-19, but target will be achieved or exceeded.

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of project Target – year 3		
						PRAGA in Kyrgyzstan among case studies in Rangelands Atlas.	
Output 2.1 Participatory national grassland and rangeland assessment results are linked to national and local decision-making processes.	Number of SLM best practices shared with decision makers.	Pastoral decision-making processes are not informed by specific assessment on LD, SLM, multiple benefits and ecosystem services trends.		SLM best practices are compiled and discussed and an action plan to insert the assessment findings into the pastoral decision-making processes is developed for each pilot site.	A national workshop is organized in each country to present and discuss the action plan and identify SLM best practices and measures that are best fit to influence national pastoral decision-making processes.	Reported completion: ? National policy discussions held in the five countries. Policy briefs finalized in Niger and Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Kyrgyzstan: Phase 2 validation ongoing as a basis for pasture use planning cycle. Uruguay: Discussions with Ministry of Agriculture disrupted by change of government.	Partly completed. Completed in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger. Ongoing in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay.
Output 2.2 Assessment and monitoring method shared with relevant international mechanisms in order to integrate/align with existing frameworks.	Alignment proposals.	International fora do not have standardized procedures to monitor and assess LD in grasslands and rangelands.			Study on possible alignment/integration with international frameworks conducted and disseminated to relevant fora.	Reported completion: 80%. Regional workshop in West Africa (FAO-funded). PRAGA methodology shared at online Global Landscapes Forum (Jun 2021). PRAGA manual and publications (LDN and PRAGA, SLM best practices from pilot sites) to be launched at World Conservation Congress (Oct 2021). Lessons learned annex prepared. PRAGA in Kyrgyzstan among case studies in Rangelands Atlas. Uruguay: co-developed 1 international Symposium + 1 training programme for professionals.	Largely completed Good progress, but partly delayed by COVID-19.
Outcome 3 Project's outcome and output targets are monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned and	Outcome Indicator 3.1: Fulfilment of planned M&E activities including establishing baseline values for all project	N/A		50% percent progress in achieving project outcomes.	Project outcomes achieved and showing sustainability.	Results reported in PIRs and project. MTR and TE carried out. Lessons learned annexed to PRAGA methodology. FAO-led authorship on publications drawing upon PRAGA experience, to be launched at World Conservation	Irrelevant outcome. M&E is related to project management, not result. Learning closely linked to output 2.2.

Appendix 5. Results matrix

Results chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of project Target – year 3		
best practices are captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations.	indicators, yearly updating of indicators, a mid-term evaluation/review and a final project evaluation.					Congress: - best practices and policy document on LDN. - best practices supporting SLM in rangelands.	
Output 3.1 A project monitoring system providing systematic information on progress towards the project outcome and output targets is set up and implemented.	N/A	N/A	Performance framework developed.	Monitoring of results.	Monitoring of results.	Reported completion: 70%. Results reported in PIRs and project.	Irrelevant output. Related to project management.
Output 3.2 Midterm and final evaluation/review conducted.	N/A			Mid-term evaluation/review conducted.	Mid-term evaluation/review and final evaluation conducted.	Reported completion: 55%. MTR carried out. Terminal evaluation underway.	Irrelevant output. Related to project management
Output 3.3 Project-related best practices and lessons learned are documented and published.	N/A	N/A	Best practices and lessons learned in developing and testing the assessment and monitoring method are captured.	Best practices and lessons learned in developing and testing the assessment and monitoring method are captured.	A report compiling project's best practices and lessons learned is developed and disseminated through the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub and the knowledge management platform for the Great Green Wall.	Reported completion: 60%. See output 2.2.	Unnecessary output. Activities closely linked to output 2.2.

Sources: ProDoc, PIRs, interviews.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of reference

<https://www.fao.org/3/cb7972en/cb7972en.pdf>

Annex 2. Implementation of the mid-term review recommendations

<https://www.fao.org/3/cb7973en/cb7973en.pdf>

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