



ADAPTATION FUND

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Ethics and Finance Committee  
Tenth Meeting  
Bonn, Germany, 11-12 December 2012

## **REPORT ON THE LEARNING MISSION TO ECUADOR**

## **Report on the Learning Mission to Funded Project in Ecuador: “Enhancing resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change on food security, in Pichincha Province and the Jubones River basin” implemented by the World Food Programme**

### **Objectives of the Mission**

The Adaptation Fund programme in Ecuador, titled “Enhancing resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change on food security, in Pichincha Province and the Jubones River basin” has been under implementation for nearly a year. The project was approved in March 2011 and started implementation on November 29, 2011, through its inception workshop. Country and ministry-specific requirements in Ecuador require that all foreign donor investments be aligned to ministry and national priorities through its Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation (SETECI), which the Ministry of Environment undertook to demonstrate from August 2011. It led an extensive consultation and socialization process with national institutions including the Coordinating Ministry of Heritage, the National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES), the Ministry of Economy and the National Central Bank that lasted until August 2012, when the Government of Ecuador declared that the project had been prioritized. While the concrete measures of the project have not yet begun implementation, since inception, the project has made progress on defining the implementation arrangements at the execution level and the coordination mechanisms amongst local, regional, and national partners. Specifically, the mission provided the secretariat with an opportunity to assess the review criteria that were utilized during the project approval process, and to reflect generally on the Fund’s procedures and operations.

The mission took place on September 27-October 5, 2012, its preparation drawing largely on the approved project document and inception report. It was conducted through close coordination with the country office of the World Food Programme (WFP). The WFP was instrumental in the organization of the mission and facilitated a wide range of opportunities to engage in discussions with various stakeholders.

The main objectives of the mission were:

- to collect lessons learned on an AF funded project, through understanding how key project review criteria, that were assessed as adequately fulfilled prior to approval, have been applied during project implementation, including assessment of both the relevance of the criteria and the degree to which they have been met during implementation.
- to explore how communities are involved in the evolution and implementation of the project. The project was designed leaving many of the project activities to be defined and prioritized through a participatory, community-based adaptation approach. The mission sought to explore the coordination mechanisms and measures taken to ensure community feedback in the design of the project, as well as the extent to which the project has and/or is developing the outputs of the studies and assessments that serve as the basis for the concrete measures.

## Summary of meetings

*September 27-28, 2012 – Meetings in Quito at the national level with the Country Director and Project Administrator at the World Food Programme (Implementing Entity) and the Ministry of Environment (MAE) and Ministry of Agriculture (MAGAP) - Executing Entities*

Meetings at the national level were crucial in ascertaining the roles of various stakeholders in the project, as well as the status of project coordination. The Implementing Entity (World Food Programme) clarified the role of the project Steering Committee, which meets biannually, to ensure the project's continued alignment with national priorities and policies. The WFP also described the payment and disbursement system utilized to disburse funds to the Ministry of Environment (MAE) through the United Nations' Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT). Under the project, disbursements are made directly to the executing entity, for which the agency is accountable for applying national procedures, or the national entity relies on the WFP's procurement and other systems.

The project has experienced severe delays in its implementation and related delivery rate, having only disbursed marginally over US\$106,000 at the time of the mission after 10 months of implementation, compared to US\$935,846 scheduled for the first year expenses. While the Project Manager, local project coordinators and consultants (geologists, agricultural engineers, sociologists) had already been hired and begun work on a vulnerability study of the target areas, the project had yet to prioritize the communities within the target provinces, and design the adaptation plans to be implemented in each locality.

The meetings provided insight into the history of the project design and the priorities deemed most critical in aligning the objectives of reducing food insecurity and enhancing resilience in the target regions. The vision of the project was to employ ecosystem-based adaptation and community-based adaptation viewed through a lens of water resources management and food security. At the level of MAE, the project had been integrated within existing climate change programmes with a strong feedback mechanism to learn from and contribute to other projects. The ultimate goal at the MAE level was to identify successful measures that can then be replicated in other vulnerable communities not targeted by the project.

The Adaptation Fund project had already benefited from the implementation of other adaptation projects funded by the Global Environment Facility and the national government. However, a few of the limitations in the previously completed projects had been monitoring and evaluation of adaptation measures, and ensuring the strong involvement of women in the project. The project team therefore committed to enhancing the involvement of women in the Adaptation Fund project, viewing gender as a critical component linked to ensuring project sustainability. **The project is the first climate change initiative in Ecuador to have exclusively identified gender as a priority.** Therefore, the project will undoubtedly generate important lessons on the mainstreaming of gender considerations into adaptation programmes at the community level. The view of MAE and the project manager was that the integration of gender into the project is not optional – but essential to the long-term, sustained success of the project through systematic capacity building and integration of women into decision-making structures.

At the MAGAP level, the primary consideration was the engagement of local technical experts who would be able to disseminate and translate advances made through the projects to the field. In addition to the technical aspects of the project, the implementation and execution arrangements of the project were revealed to be crucial to the specific case of project administration in Ecuador. The project involved partners at all levels – national, provincial,

municipal, consortium, community, and family. Defining the roles and responsibilities at each level was a challenge at the outset – yet essential in order to engender full ownership of the project.

*October 1-3, 2012 – Meetings in Cuenca with the local coordinators, and the Rio Jubones Consortium*

The mission's most important element was site visits to the south of Ecuador in the Rio Jubones watershed, which is where the largest concentration of project funds will be applied. The principal partner in the Rio Jubones area is the Rio Jubones Public Consortium, through which the project is linked directly to local government and communities. The consortium is a voluntary network that integrates watershed management for 30 micro-regions through coordination with local stakeholders and community organizations.



**Figure 1: Staff of the Rio Jubones Public Consortium, Cuenca, Ecuador**

The greatest advantages of working through the consortium appear to be the 1) technical support provided through the staff members, 2) preexisting networks and pre-established relationships with local government, and 3) ability to mobilize communities in a large area traversing various terrains ranging from high altitudes to the coast. Field visits to select communities revealed the following trends:

- The targeted areas experience repeated droughts and therefore, struggle with water resource availability and water quality.

- Pollution was a frequently cited problem from nearby mines. Further, deforestation and reduction in vegetative cover was observed.
- The droughts have been observed to be prolonged within the last few years.
- The communities had strong organization and contributed voluntary labor through Mingas (in the local language, “community work”), usually on Saturdays.
- The involvement of women remained a high priority. Most men were employed in mines or banana plantations, whereas women sought alternative livelihoods.

While organized well at the consortium level, there remain significant data and information gaps to be able to establish the baseline and mobilize measure prioritization and selection.



**Figure 2: Discussions with (from left to right) the Project Manager (Juan Bravo), Local Coordinator (Diego Bermeo), Project Administrator (Veronica Alvarado), AFBSEC Staff (Shyla Raghav), and staff of the Rio Jubones Public Consortium (Pedro Encalada, Medardo Padilla)**



**Figure 3: Discussions with onion farmers in the Rio Jubones basin who are experiencing severe drought**

*October 4, 2012 – Meetings in the Pichincha province – Cayambe and Pedro Moncaya*

Meetings in the target provinces in the north of Ecuador, near Quito were highly informative. The smaller size of the region allowed a closer interaction with organized communities. In Pingulmi, for example, community members communicated that they have experienced more than 6 months of drought, leading to dry, unarable land. Most community members relied on floriculture for income (mostly men) in a landscape almost entirely covered with greenhouses. The women of the community, who rely on their land for their livelihood, therefore have been most affected by drought. The most commonly cited challenge was water availability and management.



Figure 4: Meetings with female community members at Pingulmi, Pichincha province

One community was severely impacted by forest fires. Poignantly, community members in Chimburlo stated, “**we do not need money. Instead, what we need more is ideas, and motivation.**” It is expected, given the high level of involvement in the Pichincha province, that the dedication of the community members will ensure that the impacts of the project be replicated and amplified throughout the course of implementation.



Figure 5: Parched terrain at the Chimburlo community, Pichincha province

The visit to communities, while informative, generated a certain degree of expectation that the project and future funding from the Adaptation Fund may be channeled or prioritized to benefit the areas visited. It is recommended this interaction be minimized (prior to community prioritization).

October 5, 2012 – Meeting with the Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD) of the Pichincha Province

The mission was concluded with meetings with staff of the decentralized autonomous government of the Pichincha province. The GAD has an instrumental role in local coordination and technical support. Some very substantial recommendations emerged from the discussion, which are presented below.

The itinerary of the mission and list of meetings is annexed to this document (Annex A)

### **Findings relative to mission objectives**

Delays in project implementation precluded an analysis of many of the review criteria, including cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and the impacts of the selected measures. The mission, therefore, can only assess the implementation and execution arrangements of the project.

*Finding 1: Strong focus on gender provides potential to demonstrate in concrete ways that women can be effectively integrated into decision-making structures to ensure resilience to the impacts of climate change*

The project strongly involves expertise at the local level and therefore has strong country and community ownership over the execution of the project. The consultants, managers, and coordinators are all extremely committed to the project and are in the best position to ensure that the project captures the most immediate needs of the communities with respect to climate change. All stakeholders are also keenly aware of the priority to include gender considerations in the project. This project has a very strong potential to demonstrate, on a regional and global scale, the concrete ways in which women can be effectively integrated into decision-making structures to ensure resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The project manager has developed a robust checklist/screening system (Annex B) for the identification of measures in communities, which include areas such as capacity, environmental impact assessments, equitable distribution of project benefits, and maintenance of infrastructures. The project has also consulted all partners at the various levels of government involved to clearly define who has the authority and responsibility to deliver project outputs.

*Finding 2: Impacts of the project activities on the selected communities should be tracked closely maintaining a climate change lens*

The project heavily involves capacity building at the local level, as well as adaptation planning. To ensure concrete results, particular attention should be paid to the impacts of the project activities on the communities themselves. Further, community consultations revealed that many of the challenges communities are facing result from mal-use or mismanagement of resources. This includes, but is not limited to poor land use planning, deforestation, and pollution. The project should explore these external factors carefully and consider minimizing the root drivers of stressors in the target region. To a certain extent, this will be addressed in the vulnerability analyses currently underway. The project should continue to frame the project around climate change specifically, although viewed through a water resources management and food security lens.

*Finding 3: Evidence of strong country ownership provides potential for replication*

Importantly, the project has been able to leverage additional funds through formal commitments with the Government of Ecuador, up to 25% of the project value. This demonstrates the

government's commitment to ensuring the replication of the project measures in communities that the project cannot reach, and continued sustainability of the project's interventions. It also serves as an important indication that even though co-financing is not required for AF projects to be approved, governments can leverage on AF funding to extend activities and results.

This mission also allowed for an opportunity to liaise with the project team on the Adaptation Fund's reporting requirements, as well as to provide some recommendations on areas that should be continued to be emphasized during the monitoring and evaluation process. The project team was very knowledgeable and committed to ensuring a successful project.

#### *Finding 4: Flexibility in project indicators*

It was observed that the project indicators reported in the results framework have been revised following project approval. While in the case of Ecuador, the indicators themselves were not changed, but rather aligned, consolidated, and expanded, revision of indicators allowed the project team a certain degree of flexibility in modifying indicators to better-suit the project activities and context. However, some individuals consulted were of the view that indicators reported in project documents were too ambitious and oftentimes not verifiable on the ground, therefore necessitating revisions at a later stage.

Adaptation Fund projects, therefore, should, to a large extent, be required to report realistic and achievable indicators and maintain the integrity of those indicators throughout project implementation. It is understood however, that some indicators may be revised after project inception, which is the standard to which projects will be held throughout project monitoring.

#### **Lessons Learned**

While the delays in project inception have stalled the implementation of concrete measures in communities, they have ensured clear coordination and establishment of implementation arrangements. The mission allowed a comprehensive assessment of a project that may lend some lessons to the Adaptation Fund's project review process.

The Board may wish to further explore ways to interpret the review criteria in order to strengthen project implementation and preempt potential delays and mismanagement. It is recommended, therefore, than many of the elements deferred to the project inception phase be solidified at the project design phase. Specifically the Board may wish to consider:

1. Better defining implementation arrangements in the project proposals. Particularly, requesting the implementing entities specify the roles of the various entities involved in the project (civil society groups, local governments, communities) with regard to their capacities, autonomy, legal mandates, capabilities, and comparative advantage. Additional clarity would prevent delays following project approval; and
2. Requiring that measures are fully defined during project design. The implementing entities should undertake analyses to inform the selection and prioritization of measures. Deferring prioritization to the inception of the project often causes delays and diverts funds to many non-concrete measures.

Lastly, reflecting on the Adaptation Fund portfolio more generally, regional forums could be held in 2-4 years to allow project teams in countries to share experiences on a) technical aspects of projects and b) monitoring and evaluation for adaptation. The resources for these activities, however, should not come from the Adaptation Fund.

## Annex A Schedule of Activities

DAY	HOUR	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	PLACE
Thursday 27th.	09h00-10h00	Security Briefing		Martha Llanos, UNDSS	WFP Av. Amazonas 2889 y La Granja, Edificio Naciones Unidas, Floor 8 593-2-2460330
	10h30-13h00	Meeting with Project Administrator	Review of Adaptation Fund requirements on M&E, Accountability and Reporting	Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	WFP Floor 6
	13h30-14h45	Lunch			
	15h00-15h45	Opening meeting	Welcome and introduction for project implementation	Deborah Hines, Country Director WFP Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	WFP Floor 6
	16h00-16h45	Meeting with Project Administrator	Review of Adaptation Fund requirements on M&E, Accountability and Reporting	Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	WFP Floor 6
	17h00-18h00	Meeting with Ministry of Agriculture	Meet national stakeholders	Marlon Acosta, Técnico de la Dirección de Planeamiento de la Seguridad y Riesgos. (Delegado del .Eco. Fausto Poveda, punto focal del MAGAP al Proyecto FORECCSA) Jorge Romero, Director de Cooperación Internacional Coordinador General de Planificación Juan Bravo, Project Manager Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	MAGAP: Amazonas y Eloy Alfaro
	19h00	Deborah's birthday celebration			
		Accommodation in Quito			Hotel Howard Johnson
Friday 28th.	09h00-11h00	Meeting with Projects of Undersecretary of Climate Change	Get to know national initiatives	Diego Quishpe, Proyecto PACC Jorge Campaña Proyecto, GACC Juan Bravo, Proyecto FORECCSA	Ministerio del Ambiente: Calle Madrid 1159 y Andalucía
	11h00-12h00	Meeting with Undersecretary of Climate Change	Background on project design and start up	María Victoria Chiriboga, National Director of Climate Change Adpatation Juan Bravo, Project Manager Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	Ministerio del Ambiente: Calle Madrid 1159 y Andalucía
	12h00-13h30	Meeting with Project Team	Review of Annual Report and next disbursement	Juan Bravo, Project Manager Johana Jácome, Project Assistant Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	Ministerio del Ambiente: Calle Madrid 1159 y Andalucía
	14h00-16h00	Lunch			
		Free Afternoon			
		Accommodation in Quito			Hotel Howard Johnson
Monday 1st.	07h15-08h00	Travel from Quito to Cuenca (Tame 173)		Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	

	10h00-10h45	Meeting with Provincial Director of MAE		Esteban Toracchi, Provincial Director MAE Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	MAE Azuay
	11h00-12h00	Meeting with Provincial Director of MAGAP		Javier Serrano, Provincial Director MAGAP Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	MAGAP Azuay
	12h30-15h00	Lunch			
	15h30-16h30	Meeting with Project Local Coordinator Jubones		Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	
	18h30-20h00	Meeting with Project Manager and Local Project Coordinator		Juan Bravo, Project Manager Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	
	20h00	Accommodation in Cuenca			Hotel El Dorado Gran Colombia y Luis Cordero
Tuesday 2nd.	09h00-11h30	Meeting with Consortium of Río Jubones Basin and Local Project Team	Background of project local stakeholders. Consortium of Rio Jubones Executive presentation FORECCSA project team presentation	Pedro Encalada, CCRJ Juan Bravo, Project Manager Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP FORECCSA Project Staff, CCRJ Staff	
	12h00-18h00	Visit to Jubones Basin	a) Cooperativa Lenta, Valle Yungilla, Junta Parroquial Asunción b) Relleno Sanitario c) Productores de Cebollas, Parroquia Sumaypamba	Medardo Padilla, CCRJ Juan Bravo, Project Manager Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	Visit to Medium Basin: Giron-Asunción – Santa Isabel
	19h00	Accommodation in Machala			
Wednesday 3th.	09h00-15h00	Visit to Jubones Basin	a) Comunidad Shumiral, Río Gala, Mun. Camilio Ponce Enríquez b) Alcalde de Camilo Ponce Enríquez c) Comunidades El Guayacan y Bellavista d) Comunidades de Chalacal, Borbona y Parlamento, Parroquia Barbona	Medardo Padilla, CCRJ Juan Bravo, Project Manager Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	Visit to Low Basin: Machala - Pasaje El Guabo – Camilo Ponce
	15h00-15h30	Meeting with El Guabo Alcalde		Medardo Padilla, CCRJ Juan Bravo, Project Manager Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	

	16h00-16h40	Travel from Machala to Santa Rosa		Medardo Padilla, CCRJ Juan Bravo, Project Manager Diego Bermeo, Local Project Coordinator Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	
	17h00-18h30	Meeting with Project Manager		Juan Bravo, Project Manager Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	
	19h35-20h50	Travel from Santa Rosa – Quito (Tame 166)		Juan Bravo, Project Manager Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	Travel by air
		Accommodation in Quito			Hotel Howard Johnson
Thursday 4th.	08h00-17h00	Visit to Cayambe and Pedro Moncayo	a) Comunidad de Santa Marianita de Pingulmi, Cantón Cayambe b) Comunidad Santa Rosa de Pingulmí, Cantón Cayambe c) Alcalde de Cayambe d) Feria de la Cebolla, Cantón Cayambe e) Comunidad de Chimburlo, Cantón Pedro Moncayo	Luis Cáceres, GAD Pichincha Juan Bravo, Project Manager Luis Catucuago, Local Project Coordinator Tania Terán y Fernando Burbano, Local Project Team Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	
	17h00-18h00	Travel from Cayambe to Quito (ground)		Juan Bravo, Project Manager Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	
		Accommodation in Quito			Hotel Howard Johnson
Friday 5th.	09h30-10h30	Meeting with WFP Finance	Review Adaptation Fund financial requirements	Lilian Velásquez, Finance Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	WFP Floor 6
	10h30-11h00	Meeting with WFP Monitoring & Evaluation Team	Detailed review on M&E plan and system	Carmen Galarza, Programme Officer WFP Luis Fernández, Assistant WFP Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	WFP
	12h00-13h00	Meeting with GAD Pichincha		Cintha Hervas, GAD Pichincha Luis Cáceres, GAD Pichincha Juan Bravo, Project Manager Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer WFP	GAD Pichincha
	13h00-14h30	Lunch			
	15h00-16h00	D-briefing		Verónica Alvarado, Programme Officer	WFP
			Accommodation in Quito		
Saturday 6th.	06h30	Transfer from Hotel to airport			
	08h50	Departure from Quito		08h50 AA 0946	

**Misión del Fondo de Adaptación  
Lista de Contactos**

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Municipio de El Guabo	John Franco	Alcalde Presidente CCRJ	
Municipio de Cayambe	William Perugachi	Alcalde	
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	Tania Almeida	Técnica Local en Ciencias Agrícolas	

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	Fernando Burbano	Técnica Local en Ciencias Sociales Pichincha	
Junta Parroquial de Asunción	Mauricio Cajamarca	Presidente	
Comunidad Cooperativa Lenta	Manuel Brito	Comunero	
Comunidad Bellavista, Cantón El Guabo	Julio Alberto Heras	Comunero	
Comunidad Santa Marianita de Pingulmi, Cantón Cayambe	Manuel Ucuango	Presidente Junta Parroquial de Cangahua	
Comunidad Santa Rosa de Pingulmi, Cantón Cayambe	Luis Pinancota	Vice Presidente Comunidad	
Comunidad Chimburlo, Cantón Pedro Moncayo	Raúl Rodríguez	Dirigente	

## Annex B - CHECK LIST PARA LAS FICHAS DE ADAPTACIÓN AL CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO, PROYECTO FORECCSA.

CRITERIOS	SOCIO EJECUTOR LOCAL	COMITÉ TECNICO ASESOR LOCAL.	FORECCSA (PICHINCHA, CRJ)	CDN
<b>1. Social y actores</b> (Relaciones de poder al interior de la comunidad).				
<b>2. Técnico</b> (Análisis y calificación de especialistas del Comité Técnico)				
<b>3. Ambiental</b> (Ficha ambiental, licenciamiento ambiental).				
<b>4. Sostenibilidad</b> (¿Cómo se ha previsto el seguimiento luego del proyecto, la replicación, etc.)				
<b>5. Participación de la mujer</b> (Fue consultada para elegir la medida de adaptación)				
<b>6. Responsabilidad compartida</b> (Acta firmada entre los actores, para asumir responsabilidades compartidas).				
<b>7. Dinámicas locales</b> (Relaciones de poder)				
<b>8. ¿Cómo y quién priorizó?</b>				
<b>9. Manejo de recursos financieros</b> (capacidad instalada técnica y operativa).				
<b>10. Seguimiento, Monitoreo</b> (indicadores claros para Monitoreo)				
<b>11. Aprobación de la ficha</b>				Ratifica la aprobación.
<b>12. Criterios para elegir la comunidad donde se implementara la medida de adaptación al CC.</b> - Nivel de vulnerabilidad frente al cambio climático. - Interés explícito de los integrantes de la comunidad. - Número de beneficiarios/as. -				