

# GEF EVALUATION OFFICE

## Country Portfolio Evaluation

### GUIDELINES ON THE PROJECT REVIEW PROTOCOLS

Date: September 5, 2012

#### Background

The present guidelines aim at assisting the work of the consultant teams collaborating with the Office in the conduct of Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs). They specifically deal with how to fill in a standard evaluation tool used in CPEs analysis, namely the Project Review Protocol (PRP). The guidelines are far from being prescriptive. In general terms, guidance is provided here on the contents of the main PRPs sections and the nature of the evaluative information and analysis that needs to be included in each of them. Additional guidance is provided in the PRPs Excel template<sup>1</sup> in the form of comment boxes linked to the relevant cells.

PRPs are a project evaluation template that contains in a concise yet comprehensive form, all the necessary evaluative information needed for conducting an aggregate analysis of the effectiveness and results, the relevance and the efficiency of the portfolio. The evaluation team uses the PRPs to conduct the desk and field reviews of all the GEF national and a selection of the regional projects in which the country participates. PRPs include general project data and provide preliminary evaluative judgments on their effectiveness and results, relevance and efficiency. PRPs contain key secondary information extracted from project documents, terminal evaluations and/or project implementation reviews, as well as original evaluative information and judgments compiled through interviews and field visits, direct observations and overall analysis of secondary and primary data.

#### Limitations

PRPs tend to have a strong reliance on secondary information sources and third party assessments collected through interviews. Information can be incomplete, outdated and/or based on perceptions.

Not all PRPs can be used for the same type of aggregate analysis. For example, **relevance analysis** can use PRPs for projects in the pipeline as well as PRPs for ongoing and completed projects; for **effectiveness analysis** only PRPs of completed project will be used. Regarding projects in the pipeline, PRPs are usually based only on desk reviews, while PRPs for ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> The PRP template is presented in Annex 1.

and/or completed projects also include key stakeholder perceptions as well as information obtained through interviews and field visit observations.

Filling in PRPs could become time consuming. A right balance needs to be struck between the need for conciseness and the need for comprehensiveness. PRPs should not be overly detailed, and only refer to external sources when necessary.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***What knowledge is required to prepare and use PRPs?*** PRPs include a series of evaluation questions and are designed assuming a thorough knowledge on how the GEF works. This includes specific knowledge of the GEF project cycle (from pipeline to approval and differences between older and newer cycles) as well as main stakeholders (Council, STAP, GEF Sec, GEF EO, GEF IAs, GEF Focal Points) and other operational aspects (focal areas, project modality, etc.).
2. ***Where is the information included in PRPs used during the conduct of CPEs?*** PRPs are containers of basic project data. PRPs assist in producing historic and analytical data for a particular project and at a country/systemic level when aggregated with information from other PRPs as well as other CPE tools (Global Environmental Benefits assessments, Country Environmental Legal Framework, etc.).
3. ***Are all questions within PRPs relevant to all / most projects?*** The PRP format has been standardized; therefore, most of the questions could and should be completed for all projects. However, some sub-questions may not be relevant for some projects (for example, if a project has as the only outcome “increased protected area system effectiveness”, the POPs section under outcomes may not be relevant), or, depending on the project, information for a specific question or sub-question may be limited.
4. ***Can PRPs questions be modified?*** PRPs need to be completed with the end result in mind, i.e. provide concise yet comprehensive project level information to be used for subsequent aggregate portfolio analysis. The PRP format could be adapted, up to a certain degree, to streamline the evaluation matrix and specific questions for the CPE within the PRPs. However, the standard PRPs questions should be completed and additional ones should be identified as such (by using a different color), and included mainly at the end of related sections.
5. ***Are PRPs an end product of the CPE?*** No. PRPs are tools that will help compile and analyze aggregated data. However, once the CPE is completed, all PRPs are collected and saved in the GEF Evaluation Office database as part of the evaluative evidence and for retrieval of information if needed. PRPs are not distributed or published in any form with the final report of the CPE.
6. ***Is information for PRPs readily available?*** Information for PRPs can be obtained from project documents, terminal evaluations, project implementation reviews, meta evaluations,

studies, interview of key stakeholders, relevant external sources and direct field observations. Basic project data is provided to consultant's evaluation teams by the Project Management Information System (PMIS) through the GEF Evaluation Office. Data may not always be readily available or accessible for a specific project and not all projects are reviewed in depth (i.e., field visited) for PRPs compilation during any particular CPE. PRPs should be completed and used taking into account these limitations. In any case, during a CPE, several opportunities exist where the evaluation team can collect and/or compile data (documents, studies, perceptions, etc.) from stakeholders. Evaluation teams are expected to take advantage of any such opportunities.

7. ***How much effort should be included in any PRP?*** In general, the amount of effort invested in each PRP and the search and compilation of evaluative evidence needs to be balanced with the time allotted for the CPE, field visits, resources available, etc.

### **Final general guidance**

- Maintain consistency during compilation of information in PRPs, keeping in mind that not all projects are in the same stage and therefore availability of information will vary.
- Include evaluative evidence compiled through interviews and field visits direct observations wherever possible.
- Always include the source of information, especially when it does not come from project documents such as project implementation reports, mid-term evaluations and/or terminal evaluations. During the completion and use of PRPs, evaluation teams should decide what the best analytical information is to be concisely included in the PRP (including information from field reviews, interviews, external sources of data, etc.) in an iterative fashion.
- Any information not available (ua) or not applicable (n/a) should be stated as such in the PRPs template.

## Annex 1: Project Review Protocol Template<sup>2</sup>

GEF Country Portfolio Evaluations				
1. General Information				
<b>Project Identification</b>				
GEF ID:				
AGENCY ID:		Pre filled by:		
Project Name		Pre fill date:		
Country		Completed by:		
Type of project (FS, MSP, EA)		Completed date:		
GEF phase in which project was approved				
Focal Area				
Operational Program(s)				
Strategic Priorities (SP)				
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Name or list</b>	<b>Contact</b>		
GEF Agency(s):				
Executing Agency (institution implementing the project)				
Beneficiaries (disaggregated by local communities, women, ethnic groups, disabled people, youth)				
<b>Project Financing (in US, else note currency)</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Completion</b>		
GEF project grant				
PDFs/PPFs				
Co-financing				
Total Project Cost:	\$0			
<b>Project Cycle milestones</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>number of days between steps</b>		
Status:				
Pipeline entry ("official" entry into GEF project cycle) / received PDF/PGG approval date		0		
Work Program Entry: Council Approval (only full-size projects) / PIF approval		0		
CEO Endorsement / approval (depending if FS, MSP or AA):		0		
GEF Agency approval		0		
Begins disbursement (effectiveness for WB or prodoc signature in UN) / effectiveness / implementation start		0		
Proposed Completion:		0		
Actual Completion:		0		
Project Closing:				
<b>Performance ratings</b>	<b>Last PIR</b>	<b>IA Terminal Evaluation</b>	<b>IA Evaluation Office evaluations or reviews</b>	<b>TER</b>
Date				
Progress towards objectives				
Sustainability of outcomes				
Monitoring and evaluation				
Quality of implementation				
Quality of Execution				

<sup>2</sup> The version in Excel includes specific guidance in comment boxes linked to the relevant cells.

Are there any evaluation findings that require follow-up, such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, mismanagement, etc.? Summarize the concerns noted in these evaluations.	
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## 2. Project Objectives and Components as proposed and any changes during implementation

List Global Environmental Objectives of the project; in case changes were made during course of project implementation, note the change.	
List development objectives of the project; in case changes were made during course of project implementation, note the changes.	
Describe key components of the project noting changes, if any, made during the course of project implementation	
If there were changes in the global environmental objective, development objectives, or project components/activities, during the implementation, describe the reasons for it.	
Did the project involved trade-off between environment and development issues? Explain	

3. Deliverables and Impacts		
<b>Describe the key expected outputs of the project and the extent to which these have been delivered</b>	<b>Response (narrative)</b>	<b>Rating/state (retain the rating/state that applies)</b>
<b>What were the key expected outcomes of the project and to what extent have these been achieved?</b>	<b>Response (narrative)</b>	<b>Rating/state (retain the rating/state that applies)</b>
<b>Factors that may influence the achievement of long term impacts</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Rating/state (retain the rating/state that applies)</b>
Was the project linked to an ongoing process supported by other stakeholders?		
Robust arrangements for continuation of activities are (were) in place after GEF support has ended?		
Has the project included adequate arrangements within its project design to facilitate replication, mainstreaming, up-scaling?		
Are contextual conditions- that are beyond the control of the project but enable progress to impact (in the chain of causality) present?		
Are the key assumptions of the project for causal chain of impact achievement realistic?		
<b>Environmental stress reduction and status change</b>	<b>Within project boundaries</b>	<b>Outside project boundaries, sectoral, geographic, thematic boundaries</b>
Evidence on intended stress reduction achieved at the local level		
Evidence on intended stress reduction at a systemic level		
Evidence on intended changes in environmental status at the local level		
Evidence on intended changes in environmental status at a systemic level		
Evidence on unintended changes in stress or environmental status at the local level		
Evidence on unintended changes in stress or environmental status at the systemic level		
<b>Socio economic impacts</b>	<b>Within project boundaries</b>	<b>Outside project boundaries, sectoral, geographical, thematic boundaries</b>
Evidence on intended socio-economic impacts at the local level		
Evidence on intended socio-economic impacts at systemic level		

Evidence on unintended socio-economic impacts at the local level		
Evidence on unintended socio-economic impacts of the project at the systemic level		
<b>Progress to impact rating (which of the following four stages in progress to impact does the project correspond to and why)</b>	<b>explanation for the given rate</b>	
High progress to impact (intended global environmental benefits)	4	
Significant progress to impact (intended global environmental benefits)	3	
Moderate progress to impact (intended global environmental benefits)	2	
Low or negligible progress	1	
Unable to assess	UA	
<b>Likelihood of Sustainability</b>	<b>Risk to sustainability</b>	<b>likelihood of sustainability</b>
Adequate plans for sustainability		
Institutional sustainability		
Financial sustainability		
Political sustainability		
Socio-Economic		
Environmental		
Exit Strategy		
<b>CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</b>		
<b>1. Capacity Building</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Individual		
Institutional		
Systemic		
<b>2. Catalytic Effect/achievements</b>	<b>Description</b>	
1. <b>INCENTIVES:</b> To what extent have the project activities provided incentives (socio-economic / market based) to catalyze changes in stakeholders. Evidence of behavior changes due to awareness building		
2. <b>INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE:</b> To what extent have the project activities changed institutional behaviors (enhanced knowledge, development of databases and information sharing arrangements, other institutional mechanisms).		
3. <b>POLICY CHANGE:</b> To what extent have project activities led to legal, policy and regulatory changes and frameworks (and implementation of policy)?		
4. <b>CATALYTIC FINANCING:</b> To what extent did the project led to sustained follow-on financing from Government and / or other donors? (this is different than co-financing)		

4. Relevance		
<b>Relevance to national sustainable development agenda and development needs and challenges</b>	Rating (Yes for relevant; No for not relevant; Not Applicable; no information; unable to assess: U/A)	Justification/Comments
List		
<b>Relevance to national environmental framework, agenda and priorities (including GEF supported ones)</b>	Rating (Yes for relevant; No for not relevant; Not Applicable; no information; unable to assess: U/A)	Justification/Comments
List		
<b>Relevance to regional sustainable development and environmental framework, agenda and priorities</b>	Rating (Yes for relevant; No for not relevant; Not Applicable; no information; unable to assess: U/A)	Justification/Comments
List		
<b>Relevance to GEF focal areas strategies and operational programs</b>	Rating (Yes for relevant; No for not relevant; Not Applicable; no information; unable to assess: U/A)	Justification/Comments
List		
<b>Relevance and linkages with GEF Agencies national strategies/frameworks</b>	Rating (Yes for relevant; No for not relevant; Not Applicable; no information; unable to assess: U/A)	Justification/Comments
World Bank CAS/ UNDP/ UNEP/ other		
<b>Relevance to other GEF projects</b>	Rating (Yes for relevant; No for not relevant; Not Applicable; no information; unable to assess: U/A)	Justification/Comments
<b>Linkages with other interventions</b>	Response	
Describe and list the important preceding interventions that were taken up in the site or in surrounding areas and are relevant to the given activity/demonstration and the environmental concern being addressed		
<b>Country ownership and driveness</b>	Response	
What has been the level of government's commitment at different tiers of governance to support project implementation and undertake follow actions to support sustenance of and building up on project's achievement?		



What has been the level of civil society commitment to support project implementation and undertake follow actions to support sustenance of and building up on project's achievement?	
What has been the level of private sector commitment to support project implementation and undertake follow actions to support sustenance of and building up on project's achievement?	
Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability highlighting the causal links.	

<b>5. Efficiency (input for this section includes also the efficiency tables)</b>	
<b>Cost of project preparation and management</b>	
Use / review efficiency table	
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Comments/Lessons</b>
Assess quality of M&E system at project design	
Assess quality of M&E system at project implementation (if implemented or completed)	
Assess M&E system funding and budget	
Assess engagement of OFP on M&E	
Are arrangements/institutions in place to monitor stress reduction/improvement in the environment and/or socio-economic conditions at the systemic level after project completion?	
<b>Assessment of Quality of Implementation and Execution</b>	<b>Comments/Lessons</b>
Overall quality of implementation	
Overall quality at execution (Country) including Focal Point Mechanism	
<b>Assessment of Co-financing (Assessment of processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability).</b>	<b>Comments/Lessons</b>
To what extent was the reported co-financing (or proposed cofinancing) essential to achievement of GEF objectives?	
Were components supported by co-financing well integrated into the project?	
If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?	
<b>Assessment of Delays (Assessment of processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.)</b>	<b>Comments/Lessons</b>
If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?	
<b>Project Interaction with stakeholders</b>	<b>Comments/Lessons (Is/Was the project part of an ongoing process supported by other stakeholders? (Yes/no/unable to assess) Explain.)</b>
What arrangements did the project have in place to facilitate interaction with the relevant stakeholders (government agencies and institutions)? And to what extent were these arrangements effective (are roles and responsibilities clear)?	
What arrangements did the project have in place to facilitate interaction with the relevant stakeholders (civil society)? And to what extent were these arrangements effective (are roles and responsibilities clear)?	
What arrangements did the project have in place to facilitate interaction with the relevant stakeholders (private sector)? And to what extent were these arrangements effective (are roles and responsibilities clear)?	
Has the project considered gender aspects? Where and how?	
<b>Project synergies with:</b>	<b>Analysis</b>

To what extent was the project able to utilize existing potential for synergistic implementation and co-ordination with complementary actors and interventions (implementing agencies and executing agencies)? Describe the opportunities that were well utilized and also those missed in the process along with consequences.	
To what extent was the project able to utilize existing potential for synergistic implementation and co-ordination with complementary actors and interventions (government agencies and institutions)? Describe the opportunities that were well utilized and also those missed in the process along with consequences.	
To what extent was the project able to utilize existing potential for synergistic implementation and co-ordination with complementary actors and interventions (other donors)? Describe the opportunities that were well utilized and also those missed in the process along with consequences.	
<b>Project Lessons (Briefly describe the key lessons, good practice or approaches mentioned in or by key sources that could have application for other GEF projects)</b>	<b>Description/Comments</b>
List	
Indicate how the project has incorporated lessons from other comparable projects during design and implementation; or the project has incorporated and adapted to changes during implementation.	
How is the project sharing experiences/knowledge?	