

## Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2014

### 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		100	
GEF Agency project ID		39166	
GEF Replenishment Phase		Pilot Phase	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Danube Delta Biodiversity	
Country/Countries		Ukraine	
Region		ECA	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP2 Coastal, Marine, and Freshwater ecosystems (including wetlands)	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety (MEPNS)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Through consultation	
Private sector involvement		Through consultation	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		April 1992 (approval by agency: July 1994)	
Effectiveness date / project start		August 1994	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 1998	
Actual date of project completion		June 1999	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		1.5	1.5
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	0.24	0.24
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		1.5	1.5
Total Co-financing		0.24	0.24
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		1.7	1.7
Terminal evaluation/review information			
ICR completion date		November 1999	
ICR submission date			
Author of ICR		Phillip Brylski and Alexei Slenzak	
TER completion date		October 2014	
TER prepared by		Daniel Nogueira-Budny	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Joshua Schneck	

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	N/A	S	S	S
Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	U	U	U
M&E Design	N/A	N/R	N/R	MS
M&E Implementation	N/A	N/R	N/R	U/A
Quality of Implementation	N/A	S	S	S
Quality of Execution	N/A	S	S	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	-	-	S	MS

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

According to the Project Document (PD), the project objective was to protect and enhance the Ukrainian part of the Danube Delta ecosystem and contribute to biodiversity conservation within the delta. Ukraine's portion of the Danube Delta is characterized by diverse vegetation and fauna, due to the influence of the wide range of fresh and marine water conditions present there. While it is difficult to estimate changes in total population size, there is clear evidence of species decline in birds and fish, due primarily to loss of habitat through conversion of wetlands into agriculture and fish farming areas (PD, pp 3-4). The PD goes on to note the "urgent need" to protect the existing reserve, the Danube Plavny, as well as to identify and designate neighboring core and buffer areas with the most ecologically valuable habitats, and design a system of protected area management.

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

According to the PD, the project consisted of eight Development Objectives (DOs). They are:

DO1: *Danube Plavny Authority Strengthening* - improve the capacity of the Danube Plavny Reserve Authority (DPA, renamed the Danube Biosphere Reserve Authority - DBRA) to implement the project and manage the biosphere reserve through staff increases, human resources development, infrastructure, and equipment

DO2: *Warden Strengthening* - strengthen the warden service through increased staffing, training, and provision of infrastructure and equipment

DO3: *Monitoring and Database Management* - development of monitoring and applied research activities, data management, and a GIS

DO4: *Wetland Restoration* – financing of three small pilot wetland restoration activities and small feasibility studies for the restoration of two sites with histories of intensive economic and recreational use

DO5: *Public Awareness* – activities for raising awareness of the importance of the Delta ecosystem in local communities, and encouraging international cooperation on Danube Delta and Black Sea conservation issues

DO6: *Biosphere Reserve Establishment* – establishment of the Danube Biosphere Reserve, focusing in the first phase on protecting three priority areas: Kiliya Delta, Stensovsko-Zhebrianski plavny (SZP), and Yermakov Island

DO7: *Regional Initiatives and Coordination* – facilitate the participation of the DPA in training workshops related to development of the Black Sea Biodiversity Strategy, cooperation with the Romanian GEF Danube Delta Project, and other international initiatives

DO8: *Endowment Fund* – finance technical assistance for establishing a Trust Fund for financing recurrent costs of the biosphere reserve (cf. PD, pp 13-38)

### 3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

Minor, adaptive changes were made to DO4 during implementation. The work plan and budget for dredging canals in Vilково was substantially reduced, and the funds earmarked for construction of a public dock and the dredging of canals were diverted to training activities (DO1) and cost overruns for the headquarters building (also DO1). Second, greater emphasis (time and resources) was placed on wetland management planning, rather than wetland management activities (cf. ICR, p 5).

## 4. GEF EO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 <b>Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project was relevant both to GEF and National priorities. Consistent with OP2 – the conservation of biodiversity in coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems (including wetlands), the project aimed to contribute to biodiversity conservation in the Ukrainian side of the Danube delta. The project was relevant for GEF funding because the Danube delta is Europe’s largest remaining natural wetland and, as such, represents an ecosystem of international importance. Furthermore, the project also provided a pilot for emerging biodiversity initiatives under the regional Black Sea project, a GEF-funded project in

the pipeline (PD, p 5). According to the Implementation Completion Report (ICR), reed beds, riparian forests, dunes, and the open waters of the maze of tributaries of the Danube River provide critical wintering and feeding habitats for many threatened species of fish and fowl (p 1). The project was relevant to National priorities because there is an urgent environmental need to protect the existing reserve, as well as design a way to manage the area (cf. PD, p 2). Additionally, there has been a significant decline in fish harvest over the past 50 years in Ukraine, affecting the livelihood of many Ukrainians; the causes of this decline are thought to be habitat loss and degradation (ICR, p 1).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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According to the ICR, “the project was implemented as planned and achieved its objectives satisfactorily” (pp 1, 2), although DO8 was not fully achieved (a fact the ICR glossed over). The project had positive and satisfactory outcomes with respect to human resource development, expanded vision for protected area management, and improved biodiversity protection and use within the Reserve (ICR, p 12). Below, an account of the project’s progress on each DO is detailed (cf. ICR, pp 15-19):

DO1: *DBRA Strengthening* – increased the number of wardens and scientific staff (14 to 35); heightened capacity of reserve staff and consultants, with selected staff participating in a series of English language and/or GIS training courses; construction of a headquarters building and warden stations; improved techniques and participatory methods implemented for the protection and management of the Danube’s biodiversity;

DO2: *Warden Strengthening* – wardens’ effectiveness improved through training, facilities, and equipment; chief warden recruited and number of wardens increased (4 to 13), with roughly half of them attending warden training in the Netherlands and France; construction of three warden stations and renovation of a fourth;

DO3: *Monitoring and Database Management* – scientific program designed and implemented, which produced good monitoring results on local flora and fauna; staff were trained in GIS and conservation biology; research and monitoring results were presented by Ukrainian scientists at a number of international conferences/workshops;

DO4: *Wetland Restoration* – original DO was modified during implementation phase of project. Money earmarked for canal dredging and construction of a public dock in Vilково went to training activities and cost overruns for the headquarters building. Furthermore, wetland restoration activities were downplayed—although water circulation was successfully restored to the floodplain of the delta between Kilia and Vilково--in favor of wetland management planning (cf. ICR, p 5). The new DO4 activities were deemed to be successfully achieved;

DO5: *Public Awareness* – DPA organized a number of public education activities for different target audiences; general public was targeted through regular contributions to local and regional newspapers, dissemination of brochures and calendars, televised news reports of

Reserve activities, educational videos, and an annual “March of Parks” event; informational kiosks were established in areas frequented by fishermen; an ecological education program for school children and teachers was delivered for three years at the Reserve’s information center;

DO6: *Biosphere Reserve Establishment* – Reserve was established by Presidential Decree in 1998, with land transferred over from Ministry of Forestry (MEPNS attempted to include additional areas within the Reserve, but local communities resisted inclusion of additional land due to concern over the impact on their economic activities);

DO7: *Regional Initiatives and Coordination* – partnerships were formed with WWF International and the Green Danube Program; enhanced cooperation with Romania Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, leading to regular exchange of scientific and other information between Romania and Ukraine since 1994;

DO8: *Endowment Fund* – Trust Fund was *not* established; however, for-fee facilities were put in place and additional income generation potential being explored (such as reed harvesting).

4.3 <b>Efficiency</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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Overall, the project’s efficiency was rated as moderately satisfactory. While the ICR does not rate project’s efficiency, it does note that there was one six-month extension required to complete project (without fully explaining the reasoning for the extension). Furthermore, there were significant cost overruns associated with construction of the Authority’s headquarters; the building was completed two years later than planned. However, the vast majority of activities were achieved within budget and, furthermore, the extra funds required for the headquarters construction were taken from elsewhere in the project budget (cf. ICR, pp 5, 10). ICR also noted that, in the final year of the project, substantial delays associated with obtaining the National Bank’s license for the operation of the Authority’s Special Account interrupted funds disbursement, slowing down the completion of project activities (p 10).

4.4 <b>Sustainability</b>	Rating: <b>Unlikely</b>
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Project sustainability was rated unlikely due to the precarious funding situation of the project, as mentioned in the ICR and predicted in the PD. Sustainability is assessed along the following four dimensions:

- a) *Environmental sustainability (U/A)* – ICR provides insufficient information to provide a rating on environmental risks to sustainability
- b) *Financial sustainability (U)* – Project’s financial sustainability was rated as unlikely due to the lack of support to keep the Reserve running after the end of the project, in no small part due to the failure to establish a trust fund (see DO8). Even the PD predicted that financial sustainability was likely to be an issue down the line: “annual recurrent costs are estimated at US\$47,000. This

compares with the current annual DP budget of US\$3,000” (p 4). ICR notes the dire need for external support to continue project activities, given Ukraine’s difficult economic conditions and their impact on state budgets for all protected areas (p ii). In order to help meet the challenge of financial sustainability, the Reserve gained approval for the right to operate a revenue account, fed by revenues from fines, resource use fees, fee-paying visitors, and donations; furthermore, it has had success in applying for small grants, all of which will generate a “modest supplement” to the budget (ICR, p ii). However, only approximately one third of the project’s budget for the next three years is currently accounted for, and that is excluding staff salaries. External funding was being sought at time of ICR writing, with the Dutch government a likely source. Nevertheless, “while key aspects of the project are sustainable, there remains some uncertainty over whether the project as a whole is sustainable” (ICR, pp ii, 11-12).

- c) *Institutional sustainability (L)* – The Reserve’s institutional sustainability seems highly likely, given the information provided in the ICR. Newly trained and hired staff is relatively young and highly committed to continuing with project activities (ICR, p 11).
- d) *Socio-Political sustainability (L)* – Project’s socio-political sustainability was rated as likely, as the primary stakeholders’ commitment to continue the project activities remains strong (ICR, p ii).

## **5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes**

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? 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 so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

ICR does not mention to what extent co-financing from the Government of Ukraine was essential to the achievement of GEF objectives.

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. 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 so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

ICR mentions a six-month delay in project completion; however, it does not explain the reason(s) for the delay. It does not appear as if this delay had any effect on project implementation or completion.

5.3 Country ownership. 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:

ICR does not mention extent of country ownership of project. However, it does mention frequently the severe economic crisis afflicting Ukraine during time of implementation and implies that the project’s financial sustainability was imperiled because Government’s biodiversity conservation initiatives were deemed less critical to fund than other obligations.

## 6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The PD establishes project achievement indicators and calls for short quarterly and longer annual reports (cf. p 5). The DPA was responsible for the quarterly progress reports, while the MEPNS was to consolidate those reports into longer, 6-monthly progress reports. After two years, a mid-term review was to be carried out jointly by a Ukrainian team and the World Bank; the TORs for this review were to be prepared 18 months into project implementation (p 43). Description of the project components (PD, pp 14-38) includes detailed explanation of each objective's activities; these descriptions offer targets or indicators for most activities, with which one can then track project's progress in achieving objectives. Targets are, in general, specific, achievable, and relevant; however, not all of them are time-bound or easily measurable. Annex 2 (PD, p 57), however, does include deadlines for the achievement of many, albeit not all, specific activities. Additionally, it should be noted that, in the PD sections that discuss monitoring and evaluation, what is being addressed is not M&E of the project, per se, but rather the monitoring of flora and fauna species in the delta, i.e. the main activity for DO3.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: <b>Unable to Assess</b>
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ICR does not mention project's M&E systems; as such, it is not possible to rate the project's M&E implementation.

## 7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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According to the ICR, the World Bank’s performance was satisfactory throughout preparation and implementation of the project. Project design was deemed fully appropriate to the project objectives, and the Bank provided much-needed assistance with procurement early on, helping ensure that the executing agency was prepared to run the operational phase of the project. Furthermore, the Bank was responsive to the additional, unforeseen supervision needs by accessing trust funds for technical issues and training. Furthermore, “the project was continuously supervised from project launch through completion by a technical specialist experienced with the needs of the project and with Ukraine” (ICR, pp ii-iii, 12).

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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According to the ICR, the quality of project execution was satisfactory. The MEPNS adequately facilitated all aspects of the project, and the DBRA, which consisted of a relatively small staff with little if any experience with bilateral or multilateral financed projects, performed well and adapted quickly its existing mandate to include wetland management and public education and involvement, as set forth by the project (ICR, pp ii, 12). Delays associated with the construction of the Authority’s headquarters building, as well as licensing of the Special Account, both of which caused minor delays, were deemed by the ICR to be the fault not of the executing agency, but rather of the unforeseen rise in construction materials and personnel (in part due to a lack of private sector experience in construction and government regulations) in the first case, and a new licensing requirement by the Government of Ukraine in the second.

## **8. Assessment of Project Impacts**

***Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.***

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

ICR does not mention any changes in environmental stress or status that occurred by the end of the project.



8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

ICR does not mention any socioeconomic changes resulting directly from the project.

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. “Capacities” include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. “Governance” refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) *Capacities* – project’s investment in research and monitoring activities improved the capacity of reserve staff to implement the operational program and contributed to improved international cooperation on conservation biology issues of the delta. The MEPNS’s institutional and scientific capacity was strengthened (ICR, p 7). Furthermore, the project helped increase acceptance among scientists and the MEPNS on the importance of proactive management activities, such as the use of fire in reed bed management (ICR, p 7).

b) *Governance* – ICR does not mention any processes, structures, or systems established (apart from official creation of Reserve).

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

There were no unintended impacts of the project mentioned in the ICR.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

ICR does not mention any GEF initiatives that were mainstreamed, replicated, or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project’s end.

## 9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

- 1) Well-planned public education and awareness activities are needed early in the project to get the public involved in a meaningful way. One way to catalyze the education and awareness activities would have been to initiate the project with an awareness and education activities through the non-governmental organization (NGO) development and small grants program
- 2) The creation of a biosphere reserve should be undertaken in phases to allow the administration and local communities opportunity to understand and adequately plan for its added financial and managerial responsibilities
- 3) Future projects should seek ways to simplify Ukrainian requirements and procedures early in project implementation in order to avoid delays in its progress
- 4) If the protected areas administration is to work effectively with local communities, technical studies to guide sustainable use of reserve resources (e.g., hunting and fishing) should be undertaken early in project implementation, in collaboration with local users and linked to public education activities
- 5) Continuity in supervision responsibility contributes greatly the relationship between the Bank and its client

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

*N.B.: The only recommendations provided by the ICR are provided below (cf. ICR, Appendix A):*

1. If the MEPNS is to use the remaining grant funds, it will need to authorize the PMU (?) to proceed with preparing contracts for the remaining goods and services, so that they can be paid by direct payment
2. The Bank should provide a translated version of its draft ICR to the MEPNS as soon as feasible, and not later than 7 May 1999
3. The MEPNS should provide its comment letter on the Bank's ICR within several weeks of its receipt.
4. The Academy of Sciences and MEPNS should inform the Bank of the next steps it will take for working with Romania on making the bilateral biosphere reserve operational, so that this can be included in the Implementation Completion Report.

## 10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF EO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	ICR contains a thorough assessment of relevant outcomes and potential impacts of the project, as well as achievement of objectives. However, analysis of DO8 activities was perfunctory, which is troubling, since it was the one objective that was not achieved.	MS
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	ICR is internally consistent and the evidence presented is both complete and convincing. Ratings are well substantiated.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	ICR thoroughly assesses the financial sustainability of the project; however, it glosses over socioeconomic and institutional sustainability, without mentioning environmental sustainability risks.	MS
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learned are well supported by the evidence presented elsewhere in report.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Yes, report includes actual project costs and co-financing, as well as a detailed break-down of where and how the money was spent.	S
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	ICR does not discuss or report on the project's M&E systems.	U
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MS</b>

Overall TE rating:  $0.3 * (4+5) + 0.1 * (4+5+5+2) = 4.3$

## 11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).