

**GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form**

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID:	110		Review date:	11/02/07
IA/EA Project ID:	PO42573	<b>GEF financing:</b>	<u>at endorsement</u> (Million US\$)	<u>at completion</u> (Million US\$)
Project Name:	Central Asia Transboundary Biodiversity Project	IA/EA own:	10.15	10.13
		Government:	2.00	0.90
		Other*:	1.50	1.50
Country:	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan.	<b>Total Cofinancing</b>	3.50	2.40
Operational Program:	4	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	13.65	12.53
IA:	WB	<b>Dates</b>		
Partners involved:	Min. of Env't. (Kyrgyzstan); Min. of Ecology and Bioresources/State Forest Agency (Kazakhstan); Committee of Nature Protection (Uzbekistan)	Work Program date		11/01/97
		CEO Endorsement		04/21/99
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		05/08/00
		Closing Date	Proposed: 06/30/04	Actual: 06/30/06
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 50 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 74 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 24 months
Author of TE: Bulat Utkelov		TE completion date: 03/02/07	TE submission date to GEF OME: 10/04/07	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 7 months

\* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

**2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS**

Please refer to document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project outcomes	S	S	U	MU
2.2 Project sustainability	<b>N/A</b>	Substantial risk	Significant risk	U
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	S	-	Modest	MU
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	S	S

**Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why?**

Yes. It not only presents a very complete results based assessment of outcome achievements, it also presents a candid assessment of project shortcomings.

**Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.?**  
No.

**3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES****3.1 Project Objectives**

• **What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?**

The Project Brief states that the main global environment objective is to ensure the conservation of the globally important biodiversity within the West Tien Shan. Specific objectives are to: (a) conserve biodiversity through the implementation of an ecosystem-based management approach that involves the strengthening of protected area management systems and the integration of a coordinated management concept across regional, national and local programs; (b) improve knowledge of the distribution and status of rare, endangered and endemic species through targeted surveys to better focus conservation measures; (c) enhance biodiversity conservation within mountain ecosystems by developing cross-sectoral multi-use management systems to preserve critical ecosystems ; (d) promote the protection of ecosystems, natural habitats, landscapes and the *in-situ* maintenance of viable populations of species by developing sustainable land use which integrates conservation management between protected areas and adjacent forest production units and farming communities; (e) increase the awareness of biodiversity conservation and endangered species by the development of training programmes and dissemination of information.

No changes during implementation.

• **What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?**

According to the Project Brief, the primary development objectives of this project are to support the protection of vulnerable and unique biological communities within the West Tien Shan Range and to assist the three countries strengthen and co-ordinate national policies, regulations and institutional arrangements for biodiversity protection. Associated objectives are: (a) to strengthen and expand the protected area network in the West Tien Shan; (b) to identify alternative and sustainable income-generating activities for local communities and other stakeholders to reduce pressure on the protected areas and their biological resources; (c) to strengthen local and national capacity through education and training; (d) to raise public awareness of biodiversity values and participation in biodiversity conservation; and, (e) to establish regional (transnational) co-ordination and co-operation mechanisms for biodiversity conservation activities to strengthen protected area management and wildlife protection and prevent the fragmentation of habitat corridors.

No changes during implementation.

**3.2 Outcomes and Impacts**

• **What major project outcomes and impacts are described in the TE?**

- The area under protection increased by 183%, while the management effectiveness increased by 28% (according to the IUCN score card). Four new strict nature reserves (*zapovedniks*) and one new natural park was created under the project.
- The Small grants program was pivotal to changing the attitude of local communities to biodiversity conservation: until this program, those communities saw the reserves as only a limit to their regular activities. The SGP component also improved natural resources management at the level of local communities, and was particularly successful at improving pasture management (9242 ha).
- Monitoring of prevalence of protected species in PAs and adjacent areas showed a clear increase in biodiversity thanks to active project interventions from the year 2000 to 2004. The average increase in population has been between 9 and 45% while in some specific reserves the increase has been up to 250 percent.
- The project contributed a significant amount of research about status of biodiversity including a common methodology for identification of natural area value, ecosystem definition, and regular monitoring of the status of ecosystems and biodiversity within and outside of the protected areas. This information was the basis of many regional maps used to develop the bioregional plan.
- Awareness of biological conservation was achieved through training and dissemination activities and through the small grant program. An independent survey carried out in 2005 revealed that 48% of respondents noticed positive changes in the attitude of the population surrounding the project protected areas to the forests and other nature resources. It also noted that 66% of direct beneficiaries perceived a change in their attitude toward the environment, while 40% non direct beneficiaries perceived the same change.

**4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT**

**4.1.1 Outcomes (use a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU)**

<b>A Relevance</b>	<b>Rating: MS</b>
<p>The project is consistent with the GEF Operational Strategy for Biodiversity, especially support for in-situ conservation and protected areas under the OP for Mountain Ecosystems. The West Tien Shan mountain area is biologically rich. It supports unique plant and animal communities, including many endemic species. In addition, wild relatives of several important horticultural and agricultural species, including tulips, grapes, apples, nuts and other fruit trees have originated in the region.</p> <p>The IEG review assesses that there is a lack of linkages between the project and the Bank Country Assistance Strategies for the three countries. This is of concern since GEF projects should be designed and implemented within the sustainable development priorities of the countries, particularly considering that this is a regional project.</p>	
<b>B Effectiveness</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
<p>Although there was a significant improvement in the conservation of the protected areas, there were also major shortcomings:</p> <p>(i) institutional development: the three countries have not yet been able to finalize the administrative works and establish the regional protected area (the "Western Tien Shan Biosphere Reserve"); (ii) the level of effort to improve conservation in areas adjacent to protected areas was below expectations; (iii) attention to promoting the Western Tien Shan territory as an international tourist destination was below expectations.</p>	
<b>C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
<p>The total allocation for the Small Grant Program was lower than planned because some funds were redirected to Component B to finance additional infrastructure and equipment for protected areas. An analysis of the cost-effectiveness (the operating costs) of the SGP, financed at a level of US\$600,000 which spread its awards across 592 projects would have been warranted in this case.</p> <p>In addition, the project implementation period was extended by two years. This was mostly a consequence of the difficulty to start a new operation in three new countries, with cumbersome and different implementation procedures.</p> <p>Delays in the approval process of some laws had a negative effect. Also the level of administrative requirements in Uzbekistan (such as contract registration, rigid limits in cash payments, etc.) created serious difficulties to the implementation of project activities. Therefore implementation in Uzbekistan was slower and more costly than initially planned.</p>	

#### 4.1.2 Impacts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The area under protection increased by 183%, while the management effectiveness increased by 28% (as measured using the IUCN score card). As a consequence, the population of several animal and plant species either increased or was restored to target levels.</li> <li>- The Small Grant Program (SGP) of the Project contributed to reduce poverty in communities situated in the buffer zones of protected areas in Western Tien Shan. About 75% of beneficiaries of the alternative source of income projects perceive that their financial position improved during the last 3 years due to the development of livelihood options.</li> <li>- The project strengthened the legal and management capacities in the 3 countries.</li> </ul>
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**4.2 Likelihood of sustainability.** Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of **risks** to sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE. Use a four point scale (4= no or negligible risk to 1= High risk)

<b>A Financial resources</b>	<b>Rating: U</b>
<p>Risks to sustainability of the project activities vary greatly from country to country: given the availability of public budget in Kazakhstan, the risks to sustainability are low. The Kyrgyz Republic is at the opposite extreme, where the very limited availability of financial resources presents high risks to sustainability of project achievements. In addition, attention to promoting the Western Tien Shan territory as an international tourist destination was below expectations, therefore decreasing the number of alternative sources of revenue for local communities.</p>	
<b>B Socio political</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
<p>The TE mentions that the difficulties in relationships among the three countries were underestimated. Tensions among the three countries were caused by many factors, including a very different development pace and tensions related to management of natural resources. This eroded the interest in regional coordination and may have limited achievements in this area.</p> <p>Risk to development outcome is heightened by the lack of public participation in the development of alternative livelihood schemes (this important component was "merged" with component C after the MTR, but the budget originally planned for it was not).</p>	
<b>C Institutional framework and governance</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
<p>Project had a very strong component of capacity building and good support at a national level, but the three</p>	

countries have not yet been able to finalize the administrative works and establish the regional protected area (the "Western Tian Shan Biosphere Reserve"). Thus, there is substantial risk that the gains made by the project may not be sustained.	
<b>D Environmental</b>	<b>Rating: L</b>
The TE does not identify any environmental risk.	

#### 4.3 Catalytic role

<b>a. Production of a public good</b>
According to the terminal evaluation report following public goods were created by the project: - Awareness of biological conservation was achieved through training and dissemination activities and through a small grants program (SGP). - Information on biodiversity produced by the research funded through the project was the basis of many regional maps used to develop the bioregional plan. - The project published periodical informational bulletins in Russian and English. More than 100 different books, brochures, leaflets, posters, and calendars were developed and distributed at workshops, conferences, universities. The project also produced informational and popular scientific video films about biodiversity of the WTS.
<b>b. Demonstration</b>
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<b>c. Replication</b>
-
<b>d. Scaling up</b>
-

#### 4.4 Assessment of the project's monitoring and evaluation system based on the information in the TE

<b>A. M&amp;E design at Entry</b>	<b>Rating (six point scale): MU</b>
The Project Document mentioned that monitoring programs would be written into the individual management and development plans of each reserve and project components would be evaluated by a set of key performance indicators, including biodiversity and socio-economic indicators consistent with Bank M&E guidelines.	
According to the TE, the design of the monitoring and evaluation system lacked specific targets and was overly complex, leading to limited utilization during project implementation. For instance, the project document has 15 key indicators for the "main global objective" but without any numeric target. This was also consequence of the limited attention provided to M&E during project approval, in 1999. In addition, the fact that the project was designated as Environmental Assessment Category C, but in fact included elements which would seem more appropriate for Category B (with higher environmental risks), meant that important environmental monitoring activities were not required, such as Environmental Impact Assessments.	
<b>B. M&amp;E plan Implementation</b>	<b>Rating (six point scale): MU</b>
Monitoring of the protected areas appears to have been implemented satisfactorily. The project effects on the management of protected areas were assessed by independent international experts who used IUCN protected areas management effectiveness score cards. This allowed for an important quantification of project results in this area. On the other hand, there is no information provided on the grant application, selection process and M&E of the SGP component (how were proposals solicited, approved or rejected, fund level awarded, implementation capacity assessed, importance of the design of the proposed monitoring system). An independent assessment of the SGP was conducted as the project was closing and hence does not include any baseline data (livelihoods or welfare, environmental). According to the TE, the questions for that assessment are highly subjective and therefore attribution is questionable. According to the TE, project supervision was satisfactory, but the IEG review noted that the Bank proceeded with the project without reviewing the social assessments that had been carried out prior to expansion of the protected areas (although retroactive reviews of the reports were conducted).	
<b>C.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&amp;E in the budget included in the project document?</b>	
UA. The Project Document does include funding for the "Project Management" component, but does not specify what M&E activities were included under that component.	
<b>C.2 Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&amp;E during project implementation?</b>	
UA. There is no mention, either in the TE or the IEG review, of lack of funding for M&E activities.	
<b>C.3 Can the project M&amp;E system be considered a good practice?</b>	

No, as concluded in the TE, although Annex 1 of the Project Document provides specific performance indicators, it provides no baselines against which to measure progress. Even though there were some good practices (such as the use of the IUCN score card), the TE does not include enough information regarding the use of the M&E plan during implementation.

#### 4.5 Lessons and Recommendations

Project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

##### **What lessons mentioned in the TE that can be considered a good practice or approaches to avoid and could have application for other GEF projects?**

- Regional projects are usually challenging in terms of overall management to sustain ownership and commitment from the individual countries. This requires more time to achieve a consensus when this is essential. The bulk of these problems were avoided through use of appropriate implementation arrangements, which allowed for regional strategic coordination but delegated implementation to the national level partners as much as possible.
- The experience gained during implementation of the project demonstrated that biodiversity protection presents lower risk for conflicts between countries in comparison to regional coordination on water resources management.
- It is difficult to mobilize significant counterpart funds from financially weak countries. The lesson for the future operations is that in such cases co-financing may be from donors allocations (e.g., IDA) or through revenue generation mechanisms (e.g., carbon trading).

##### **List (or if detailed summarize) the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation**

- The success of regional activities often depends on adequate contribution by the national structures. Frequently delay of one of the sides delayed execution of all activities. To avoid such problems it is necessary to strengthen the role of Transboundary Steering Committees.
- Although PAs financing in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan increased, weaknesses of protected areas are still evident. It is important to develop cooperation between PAs and scientific and educational institutions, to attract students for practice in protected areas and to develop voluntary activities. Much more effort to disseminate scientific work in a form that is understandable for the public at large is still required.

**4.6 Quality of the evaluation report** Provide a number rating 1-6 to each criteria based on: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, and Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. Please refer to document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

##### **4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings from other sources such as GEF EO field visits, etc.**

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<b>4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
<p><b>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</b> Yes, the TE offers a comprehensive assessment of all project outcomes and achievement of objectives. It is also candid about the project's shortcomings and problems.</p>	S
<p><b>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?</b> In general the TE presents very complete information. However, the reviewer agrees with the IEG review in that the rating for Outcomes in the TE did not reflect the information presented, and was therefore downgraded.</p>	MS
<p><b>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</b> Project sustainability is properly assessed and the TE also provides information on exit strategies and options for financial sustainability.</p>	S
<p><b>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</b> Lessons are comprehensive and supported by the evidence presented in the TE.</p>	S
<p><b>E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?</b> Required information is included.</p>	S
<p><b>F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&amp;E systems?</b></p>	MS

<p>The TE gives a complete assessment of project supervision by the Bank. It also states that the M&amp;E system was too complex and therefore limitedly used during implementation, but there is no discussion on how M&amp;E was utilized to affect project performance over the implementation period, particularly regarding the SGP component.</p>	
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**4.6.3 Assessment of processes affected attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.**

<p><b>Co-financing and Project Outcomes &amp; Sustainability.</b> 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, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?</p>
<p>Counterpart funding was reduced from the initial \$2.0 million to around \$0.9 million. The Kyrgyz Republic faced particularly strong financial difficulties which were not anticipated and accounted for at project design. The other two countries reduced their contribution to maintain a balance rather than stepping in to help. Lack of financial sustainability is identified as one of the main risks of the project.</p>
<p><b>Delays and Project Outcomes &amp; Sustainability.</b> If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons responsible for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?</p>
<p>The project implementation period was extended by two years. This was mostly a consequence of the difficulty to start a new operation in three new countries, with cumbersome and different implementation procedures. These differences sometimes affected project implementation regarding the regional coordination of activities.</p>

**4.7 Is a technical assessment of the project impacts described in the TE recommended?** Please place an "X" in the appropriate box and explain below.

<p>Yes:</p>	<p>No: <b>X</b></p>
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Explain:

**4.8 Sources of information for the preparation of the TE review in addition to the TE (if any)**

<p>PIR2005, IEG review</p>
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