GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA

				Review date:	08/31/2006
GEF Project ID:	1224			at endorsement (Million US$)[1]	at completion (Million US$)[2]
IA/EA Project ID:	GF/2715-02	**GEF financing:**		5.02	5.02
Project Name:	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Below Ground Biodiversity, Phase I	IA/EA own:		0.00	0.00
Country:	Global	Government:			3.74
		Other*:			1.12
		Total Cofinancing		9.00	4.86
Operational Program:	13, 3	**Total Project Cost:**		14.02	9.89
IA	UNEP	Dates			
Partners involved:	**National Executing Agencies:** Brazil: Universidade Federal de Lavras Côte d'Ivoire: Université de Cocody (Abidjan) India: Jawaharlal Nehru University Indonesia: Universitas Lampung Kenya: National Museums of Kenya Mexico: Instituto de Ecologia, Xalapa Uganda: Makerere University **International Executing Agency:** Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Program		Work Program date		12/07/2001
			CEO Endorsement		07/16/2002
			Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		08/01/2002
		Closing Date	Proposed: **Dec 2004**		Actual: **June 2005**
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: **30 months**	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: **36 months**		Difference between original and actual closing: **6months**
Author of TE:	Eric Smaling Mateete Bekunda	TE completion date: **Jun 2005**	TE submission date to GEF OME: **08/01/2005**		Difference between TE completion and submission date: **2 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

GEF EO Ratings for project impacts (if applicable), outcomes, project monitoring and evaluation, and quality of the terminal evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), not applicable (N/A) and unable to assess (U/A). GEF EO Ratings for the project

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[1] Planned financing for the entire project (Tranches I and II).
[2] Actual financing for Tranche I.

sustainability: Highly likely (HL), likely (L), moderately likely (ML), moderately unlikely (MU), unlikely (U), highly unlikely (HU), not applicable (N/A), and unable to assess (U/A).
Please refer to document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" 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	-	S
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	S	-	U/A
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	S	HS	-	S
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	-	S

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why?
Yes. The TE presents a simple yet complete assessment of the project as a whole and also of project implementation for each of the 7 participating countries. It also provides a list of useful lessons and recommendations for Tranche II of the project.

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

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

- **What are the Global Environmental Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**
  According to the TE, the objective of this project is to enhance awareness, knowledge and understanding of below-ground biological diversity (BGBD) important to sustainable agricultural production in tropical landscapes by the demonstration of methods for conservation and sustainable management.
  A review of the Project Brief shows that there were no changes during implementation.

- **What are the Development Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**
  1. Internationally accepted standard methods for characterization and evaluation of BGBD, including a set of indicators for BGBD loss.
  2a. Inventory and evaluation of BGBD in benchmark sites representing a range of globally significant ecosystems and land uses.
  2b. A global information exchange network for BGBD.
  3. Sustainable and replicable management practices for BGBD conservation identified and implemented in pilot demonstration sites in representative tropical forest landscapes in seven countries.
  4. Recommendations of alternative land use practices and an advisory support system for policies that will enhance the conservation of BGBD.
  5. Improved capacity of all relevant institutions and stakeholders to implement conservation management of BGBD in a sustainable and efficient manner.

  According to the TE, the project was planned to be executed in two tranches, and it should be noted that the approved project did not contain specific goals and objectives to be achieved in the specific tranche and logframe for each tranche. The reviewed TE only

covers tranche I.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

- **What were the major project outcomes and impacts as described in the TE?**

The TE explains that Standard methods for the inventory of selected functional groups of soil organisms (Outcome 1) were proposed, discussed and agreed. The inventory of BGBD (Outcome 2) is finalised in all partner countries. The publication of the methods for characterization and evaluation of BGBD and the inventory results is under preparation and will be available to global community in 2007. The work on outcome 3, 4 and 5 (view previous question) will be concentrated during Phase II of the project.

The TE identifies that it is unrealistic to expect major impact from the BGBD project at the end of the first tranche (which was not envisaged to be a "stand-alone" component with a particular expected impact). Even early impact is hard to substantiate given the strong focus on (agreement on) common methodology development, sampling and inventory in the laboratory during the first tranche.

4. GEF EO ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes

A Relevance	Rating: HS

- **In retrospect, were the project's outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain**

The project outcomes were consistent with OP13 and OP3 by addressing the identification and conservation of components of biological diversity important for sustainable use of agro-ecosystems with regard to the list of Annex 1 of the CBD, and by incorporating components of targeted research important for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

B Effectiveness	Rating: S

- **Are the project outcomes as described in the TE commensurable with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (i.e. original or modified project objectives)?**

According to information provided on the TE, 70% of the work plan had been realized by the end of Tranche I. The achievement of outcomes varied among the 7 participating countries since they all differ considerably in terms of physical and human capacity, in realizing of leverage, in capability to deliver outputs according to plan and of sufficient quality. Actions like Global Coordination Office facilitation, support from the Technical Advisory Group, and South-South linkages within BGBD greatly improved the effectiveness in countries that were lagging behind (for example, experts from Brazil provided crucial support to the Indonesia team).

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: MS

- **Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost – effective? How does the cost-time Vs. outcomes compare to other similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?**

According to the TE, the project had a slow start and initial poor communication which was greatly improved starting early 2004. It also faced some challenges related to coordination of activities, communication and disbursement of funds between the Global Coordination Office and the different Country Programmes.

The TE finds that outputs per unit project input came close to 90% and observed that convening institutes still had to pay substantial sums of money to partner institutes that did part of the inventory work. But it also identified that apparently US$1.2 million of the funds to realize Outcome 3 were partly used to realize other Outcomes. As a consequence, Tranche II may face difficulties in getting the programmed work done.

Tranche I of the BGBD project was extended by 6 months in order to achieve the agreed objectives.

Impacts

- **Has the project achieved impacts or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts?**
  According to the TE, at the end of Tranche I, impact is modest. But it would be unfair to assess impact at this stage because the entire project was conceived for duration of 5 years, and Tranche II activities are much more geared towards impact than those of Tranche I (which were mostly inventory-geared).

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.

A Financial resources	**Rating: ML**
The project was approved in its entirety so it already has the needed financial resources to continue with the second tranche. The TE mentions that the second tranche of the project may face difficulties because it seems that US$1.2 million of the funds to realize Outcome 3 during the first tranche were partly used to realize other outcomes. It also concludes that sustainability of success will depend on persuading stakeholders that agro-biodiversity management, and in particular the relatively unfamiliar area of below-ground biodiversity, is technically feasible and economically worth investing in.	

B Socio political	**Rating: ML**
Although the commitment of major stakeholders was ensured during the project development, their involvement, the TE concludes, was rather an ad hoc component during implementation. In some countries, the lack of farmers' involvement in project implementation so far could have a negative impact on the project sustainability. Both the Project brief and the TE state that on a more long term, sustainability of the project outcomes depends on all stakeholders accepting a degree of standardization so that globally usable databases can be established and widely used.	

C Institutional framework and governance	**Rating: U/A**
The TE recognizes that the widespread adoption of the alternative practices recommended for BGBD conservation and management depend not only on compliance and sustained commitment of stakeholders at the local level but also upon the reconciliation between policies for agricultural development and those for environmental protection - including biodiversity conservation. It is not possible to assess this criterion because most of the outputs related to institutional framework and governance will be tackled in Tranche II of the project.	

D Environmental	**Rating: N/A**
-	

Provide only ratings for the sustainability of outcomes based on the information in the TE:

A Financial resources	Rating: ML
B Socio political	Rating: ML
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: U/A
D Environmental	Rating: N/A
Overall Rating on Sustainability as calculated by the old methodology: **ML**	

4.3 Catalytic role

1. Production of a public good
The TE found that the first tranche of the BGBD project has produced a considerable amount of information as a result of national inventories. But it also concluded that spite of a large number of reports produced, publication and dissemination of results is still weak, but that it is

understandable given the fact that the first major delivery of data was realized during the 2005 annual meeting.
2. Demonstration
-
3. Replication   The project was implemented in 7 different countries at the same time. The TE concludes that the decision to follow (as much as possible) common methodologies with respect to site selection, field sampling, and inventory of functional groups allows third parties to fully replicate the BGBD approach.
4. Scaling up
-

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

A. In retrospection, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient? (Sufficient and practical indicators were identified, timely baseline, targets were created, effective use of data collection, analysis systems including studies and reports, and practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, when for the M&E activities)   Rating: MS
The TE lists the many entities that were involved in the monitoring and evaluation process: UNEP, the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the Global Coordination Office (GCO), and each of the seven National Project Implementing Committees (NPACs). But even though roles, responsibilities, and reporting deadlines were described in the "Monitoring, Progress Reporting and Evaluation Plan", the TE mentions that country teams saw parts of the plan as overlapping and lacking in clarity.   The TE also identifies that there was a lack of linkages between budgets and workplans, and, that as a result, expenditures were not tightly bound to activities. This may have caused hidden budget deficits that may go unnoticed as national answerability to the Global Coordination Office on finances and outputs are separated.
B. Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards projects objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?   Rating: S
According to the TE, the M&E tools were introduced to the project only after its inception. According to the TE this caused some minor problems during implementation: a number of countries had trouble completing all the M&E requirements or provided products with little informative value. At the Global Coordination Office level, Annual Reports show good use of M&E tools, providing overall indications of progress.   It also mentions that after the 2005 Annual Meeting, the Project advisory Committee suggested useful improvements related to a better, more realistic and more project-bound quantification of performance and impact indicators for Tranche II.
C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was it properly funded during implementation? Rating: U
The TE provides no information on the planned budget for M&E.   Tables 2a and 2b in the project brief show that there was no budget planned specifically for M&E activities.
Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice?   No, although the original project structure was designed to maximize coordination and monitoring, it ended up being unnecessarily cumbersome and implied high transaction costs. In addition, it failed to recognize that not all countries have the basic level of know-how needed to correctly implement the M&E system.

The original structure was modified for Tranche 2 (see Project Summary Sep/05) by reducing the number of standing committees within countries and improving the M&E plan.

4.5 Lessons
Project lessons 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?
According to the TE following lessons could be learnt from the project: - The M&E plan should allow joint monitoring of milestones/outputs and levels of budget expenditure. This will also allow a better estimation of cost-effectiveness of projects. - Although the issue of data sharing was mentioned in the Project Document, it apparently takes a considerable time to finalize a joint policy, including the relevant protocols. It was expected that academic institutions would have experience in dealing with intellectual property rights and related issues, and would be able to come up with a policy quickly, but this is not always the case (particularly in the case of multi-country projects). - A realistic description of the "baseline" of expertise per country, and an associated needs assessment for technical support, is mandatory to assure quality of output.

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 the "Criteria for the assessment of the quality of terminal evaluation reports" in the document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings
In some cases the GEF Evaluation Office may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office. If additional relevant independent information has been collected that affect the ratings of this project, included in this section. This can include information that may affect the assessment and ratings of sustainability, outcomes, project M&E systems, etc.
No additional information was available to the reviewer.

4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	**Ratings**
A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? Yes. The TE gives a very comprehensive assessment of relevant outcomes from all the 7 countries involved in the project.	**HS (6)**
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? Yes.	**S (5)**
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? Yes. Since the TE only covers Tranche I of the entire BGBD project, it recommends that an exit-strategy should be made explicit during the early stages of Tranche II.	**S (5)**
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Yes.	**S (5)**
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? Information provided in the TE is incomplete; this is mainly due to the fact that not all countries had fully utilized the funds planned for Tranche I by the time the	**MU (3)**

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TE was finished. Actual project costs are only shown as a total per country (expenditure by end of 2004). And although there is a table of country-level expenditure per activity, it only covers data for GEF funds in the year 2004.	
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? Yes. It presents a clear assessment of what worked and what didn't, and provides recommendations for improving the M&E system for Tranche II.	**S (5)**

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.	**Yes:**	**No: X**
Explain: This TE is really the Mid-term evaluation of the entire BGBD project (only Tranche I). It would be best to wait until the TE of Tranche II is finished.		

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

Project brief, Project Summary Sep/05, PIR 2005