

GEFM&E Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
		Review date:		9/6/05
GEF ID:	1242		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
Project Name:	Desert Margin Program (DMP)-Phase I	GEF financing:	\$4.987	Not available
Country:	Regional	Co-financing:	\$10.232	Not available
Operational Program:	OP15	Total Project Cost:	\$15.219	Not available
IA	UNEP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:		Work Program date		12/07/2001
		CEO Endorsement		07/17/2002
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		11/2002
		Closing Date	Proposed: 06/01/2004	Actual: 06/01/2004
Prepared by: Antonio del Monaco	Reviewed by: Claudio Volonte	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 2 and ½ years	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 2 and ½ years	Difference between original and actual closing: - 0 -
Author of TE: Dr. J. M. Nicholson, Dr. Zadoc Ogutu		TE completion date: August, 2004	TE submission date to GEF OME: 11/3/2004	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 3 months

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS

GEFME 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). GEFME Ratings for the project 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. OED)	GEFME
2.1 Project impacts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.2 Project outcomes	HS	Good (3 on scale of 1 = excellent through 5 = unsatisfactory)	N/A	Moderately unsatisfactory
2.3 Project sustainability	N/A	Good (3 on scale of 1 = excellent through 5 = unsatisfactory)	N/A	Unable to assess
2.4 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	Satisfactory (4 out of 5)	N/A	Moderately satisfactory
2.5 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	N/A	Moderately satisfactory

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why? No. Refer to quality

of the TE below.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

What are the Global Environmental Objectives? Any changes during implementation? The Desert Margins Program is a collaborative initiative of nine African countries assisted by five centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the project is being implemented in three phases over six years. This is an evaluation report corresponds to phase 1 of 3. The Project Brief indicates that the overall objective of the DMP is to arrest land degradation in Africa's desert margins through demonstration and capacity building activities developed through unravelling the complex causative factors of desertification, both climatic (internal) and human-induced (external), and the formulation and piloting of appropriate holistic solutions. The project would help to address issues of global environmental importance, in addition to the issues of national economic and environmental importance, and in particular the loss of biological diversity, reduced sequestration of carbon, and increased soil erosion and sedimentation. No changes were indicated in the terminal evaluation report.

- **What are the Development Objectives? Any changes during implementation?** The Project Brief indicated that the broader objectives of the overall DMP were to:
 - develop a better understanding of the causes, extent, severity and physical processes of land degradation in traditional crop, tree, and livestock production systems in the desert margins, and the impact, relative importance, and relationship between natural and human factors;
 - document and evaluate, with the participation of farmers, NGO's, and National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), current indigenous soil, water, nutrient, vegetation, and livestock management practices for arresting land degradation and to identify socio-economic constraints to the adoption of improved management practices;
 - develop and foster improved and integrated soil, water, nutrient, vegetation, and livestock management technologies and policies to achieve greater productivity of crops, trees, and animals to enhance food security, income generation, and ecosystem resilience in the desert margins;
 - evaluate the impact and assist in designing policies, programs, and institutional options that influence the incentives for farmers and communities to adopt improved resource management practices;
 - promote more efficient drought-management policies and strategies;
 - enhance the institutional capacity of countries participating in the DMP to undertake land degradation research and the extension of improved technologies, with particular regard to multidisciplinary and participative socio-economic research;
 - facilitate the exchange of technologies and information among farmers, communities, scientists, development practitioners, and policymakers.
 - use climate change scenarios to predict shifts in resource base and incorporate these into land use planning strategies.

No changes were indicated in the terminal evaluation report. According to Annex H of the Project Brief, Phase I was focused primarily on building capacity of stakeholder to participate, develop replication strategies, review and draft new policy guidelines, and develop an inventory of existing livelihoods and test alternative sustainable ones as well as biophysical data.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

What were the major project outcomes and impacts as described in the TE? The TE for Phase I indicated that the project improved the understanding of the status and dynamics of the dryland ecosystems regarding biodiversity loss. Site characterization is well underway and qualitative baseline studies are ongoing, as well as the establishment of benchmark sites. Some technologies and models are starting to show promise such as the small-scale irrigated horticulture and possibly the Sahelian Ecofarm, using a combination of soil conservation techniques, for example, stone bunds and improved cultivars and varieties of current tree crops. The benchmark characterization and diagnosis report points out many opportunities for

sustainable livelihoods among the target communities, but dissemination and widespread adoption is still to be seen.

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes and impacts

Rating: MU

A Relevance

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

The TE indicated that the project could be perceived as excessively research-driven. The aim of the project was to demonstrate practical technologies deriving from the long-term research projects, for example, the work on the date palm in West Africa. However, the TE indicates that at times the research appears to be the end rather than the means to the end, making some of the research of questionable relevance because the linkage between some research activities and the goals of the project was not always clear. One example is the role of the national agricultural research systems, which have been criticized because of their limited ability to keep their research practical and relevant to the problems at hand. The TE indicated that there is a need for country and subregional coordinators to be more selective in the research carried out to ensure that the research is of direct relevance to the goal of the program, which is to arrest land degradation through demonstration, training and capacity-building activities.

B Effectiveness

- **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)?**

The TE indicates that the involvement of the ultimate beneficiaries (target communities, peasant farmers, etc.) was hardly obvious at the end of phase I which is key to the project effectiveness. The TE indicates that the Kenya country report which summarized the ecological benchmarking activities provided descriptive data that are not sufficient in guiding policy decisions or serving as a reference to the impact of the project with regard to biodiversity restoration. The project has not yet developed a clear-cut strategy on capacity building despite having identified the capacity gaps. The characterization document captures a number of policy options that promote natural resource management in the three zones but it falls short of providing a critical assessment on policy aspects such as land-tenure and property rights that are important for the program.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)

- **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?**

The TE indicates that it is premature to assess the cost-effectiveness of the program but that in terms of the data collected, the awareness created, training and exchange of ideas to date, the programs would appear to be cost-effective so far. The TE indicates that in order to demonstrate cost-effectiveness, by the end of Phase II, substantial efforts at increasing incomes and improving livelihoods must be achieved, hand in hand with significant progress in reducing land degradation in the selected sites of Africa's desert margins.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of project sustainability based on the information presented in the TE.

A Financial resources

Rating: Unable to assess

It is difficult to assess the financial sustainability given that the project has two more phases funded by the GEF. The TE indicates that co-funding appears to be increasing, in part owing to the fund-raising activities by the Global Coordinator.

B Socio political

Rating: Unable to assess

The TE indicated that socio-economic sustainability is the most important aspect of overall sustainability. The bottom line of the program is increasing income generation in marginal lands. The program has sown the seed and the potential for generating high socio-economic

sustainability should be achieved, provided Phase II places greater emphasis on promising activities, for example, small-scale irrigated horticulture, the Sahelian Ecofarm, sustainable wild rooibos production, and related agricultural activities.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: Unable to assess
The TE indicates that institutional sustainability is closely linked to financial sustainability because it depends on the commitment of governments and other partners co-funding to the program. Other aspects of institutional sustainability such as policy frameworks are still not in place, but because there are two more phases, a stronger institutional framework and governance may still be developed in the future.	
D Ecological (for example, for coffee production projects, reforestation for carbon sequestration under OP12, etc.)	Rating:
N/A	
E Examples of replication and catalytic outcomes suggesting increased likelihood of sustainability	Rating: Unable to assess
The TE indicates that it is still early to assess what techniques can be successfully replicated especially because other factors are needed such as credit for farmers to adopt expensive systems (e.g.; irrigation with a cost of US\$700). The TE indicates that to achieve replication potential, the work must be successful, visible and have good potential to generate income.	

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

A. Effective M&E systems in place: What were the accomplishments and shortcomings of the project's M&E system in terms of the tools used such as: indicators, baselines, benchmarks, data collection and analysis systems, special studies and reports, etc.?	Rating: MS
The TE report indicated that since the inception of the program, a monitoring, evaluation and dissemination strategy has been put in place which has several key elements. The general and specific objectives of the program and the list of its planned outputs have provided the basis for the monitoring and evaluation plan. Phase I focused also on developing a sound biophysical baseline. However, the TE team observed that some of the baseline indicators were too qualitative; for example, lists of endemic species, while good quantitative data was also required, especially for woody biomass, grass cover, the age structure of trees and the distribution of species. Also, the TE indicates that biophysical data appeared more comprehensive than socio-economic data which was also very relevant to the objectives of the project, especially when, according to the TE report, it is largely socio economic constraints (e.g.; poverty, cultural factors, labor shortages, lack of environmental and agricultural education, lack of credit, land ownership, etc.) that hinder increased productivity in these arid regions.	
B. Information used for adaptive management: What is the experience of the project with adaptive management?	Rating: MS
The TE indicates that the project outputs were monitored annually through individual reports presented by the collaborating institutions at the national annual technical meetings. The steering committee of the program evaluated the documents for consistency with the goals and objectives of the project and approved the annual work program and budgets. The TE indicated that a closer look at what was being reported revealed that in several countries the reporting covered work done prior to the GEF co-funding. In the Marsabit sites, for example, previous initiatives by the Integrated Project on Arid Lands (IPAL) and the national research institutes make it difficult to identify the impact of the GEF project on the ground. Thus, the point of departure is only vaguely captured by the benchmark characterization and diagnostic report.	
Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? No, but the project still under implementation	

4.4 Quality of lessons

Weaknesses and strengths of the project lessons as described in the TE (i.e. lessons follow from the evidence presented, or lessons are general in nature and of limited applicability, lessons are comprehensive, etc.)

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?
Some of the lessons indicated in the TE: Despite the biophysical research of recent decades, land degradation and biodiversity loss have increased in most regions of Africa. This suggests the need for problem-solving-oriented research and proper monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic as well as biophysical indicators. Therefore, improvements in the desert margins are unlikely to come about through research alone. It should be accompanied by changes in government policy with regard to land tenure, availability of credit, privatization and marketing. Diverse activities of the program at geographically isolated sites are likely to have a limited impact given the limited resources involved and the shortness of the project period.

4.5 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.

4.5.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings
In some cases the GEF Office of M&E may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office of M&E. If substantial independent information has been collected, then complete this section with any comments about the project.
N/A

4.5.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? The report provides an assessment of accomplishments and shortcomings and the assessment of the relevance of achievements compared to the problems at hand was insightful.	S
Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? The report statements are substantiated by evidence but the ratings provided are higher than what they should be given the accomplishments and shortcomings indicated in the TE. The UNEP rating system is asymmetrical which may create a bias in the ratings by having four out of the five ratings be satisfactory or above: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory	MS
Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? The report authors presented all factors that must be considered to improve sustainability of outcomes and possibilities of replication in the following phases, however the assessment of sustainability of phase I outcomes in terms of the likelihood that these issues would be addressed was rather meager.	MS
Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Some lessons were not derived from the experience of the project (although still useful for the next phases) but there was an extensive section on recommendations for the next phases based on the prevalent issues of phase I.	MS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The TE indicates that with regard to audits, the financial arrangements appear rather cumbersome. Most of the countries have differing accounting and auditing systems, some better than others. In some countries and	MS

<p>institutions, it seems that it is difficult to extract the right information on what has been funded by UNEP/GEF and what has been funded by the institutions and other co-funding agencies. It was also mentioned that co-funding was not always transparent. The TE includes a breakdown budget by outputs and activities for GEF funding and cofinancing and by project phase. However, it is unclear from the presentation what the actual expenditures are. This is not surprising given the difficulties in financial reporting as mentioned above.</p>	
<p>A. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? Yes, but it focused mostly on reports being submitted and less on the measurement of progress towards objectives.</p>	MS

4.6 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: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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Explain: This report evaluated the 1st phase of a three phase project. Therefore, a technical assessment is recommended at the end of the third phase to identify the most effective techniques to arrest land degradation in Africa's desert margins and implement them in other areas.

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

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

Project brief of Phases I and II, terminal evaluation, PIR 2004, GEF Project Management Information System PMIS