

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2015

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		1400	
GEF Agency project ID		2285	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-2	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Capacity Building for Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol	
Country/Countries		Mexico	
Region		Latin America	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		Biodiversity, GEF Op1-Op4.	
Executing agencies involved		National Commission on Biosafety and Genetically Modified Organisms (CIBIOGEM), the Government of Mexico	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		NGO are stakeholders through technical consultations	
Private sector involvement		Biotech and agro industry (by designating representatives) are stakeholders through technical consultations	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		5/30/2002	
Effectiveness date / project start		June 2002	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		June 2005	
Actual date of project completion		August 31,2005	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		1.461	1.461
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	4.942	4.442
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
NGOs/CSOs		500	
Total GEF funding		1.461	1,461
Total Co-financing		4.852	4.942
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		6.313	6.403
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		N/A	
Author of TE		Ramón Pérez Gil Salcido	
TER completion date		11/18/2015	
TER prepared by		Chenhao Liu	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Neeraj Negi	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	NR	HS	NR	S
Sustainability of Outcomes	NR	HS	NR	ML
M&E Design	NR	S	NR	S
M&E Implementation	NR	S	NR	S
Quality of Implementation	NR	HS	NR	S
Quality of Execution	NR	NR	NR	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report				MS

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

This proposed GEF project aims at developing the beneficiary country (Mexico)'s capacity in addressing challenges associated with living modified organisms (LMOs) and biosafety. It is also a part of the global action toward "ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specifically focusing on transboundary movements." (Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2000, p.1)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

"The **development objective** of the project is:

Mexico will be able to implement the basic objectives of the Cartagena Protocol, including the assessment, management and monitoring of the potential risks posed by transboundary movement of LMOs to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including human health risks.

The **immediate objective** is:

"Within three years, the country will build sufficient capacity to assess and manage risks associated with the trans-boundary movement of LMOs through strengthening of the legal and regulatory frameworks, enhanced institutional capacity and effective communication strategies. Knowledge and methodologies on biosafety will be shared and transferred through the establishment of regional training programs based in Mexico. "(Project Brief, 10/25/01 p.12)

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

No change in Global Environment Objectives, Development Objectives. But there have been some clearly documented changes in activities as compared to the original plan. Please refer to the following

information from the Annual Project Report (PIR) 2004, which was finished 8 months before the project completion:

4. ADJUSTMENTS TO ORIGINAL PROJECT STRATEGY

Indication of any major adjustments in strategies, targets and outcomes.

- a. Have the project's expected outcomes changed in the course of implementation?
No, but there were some minor changes in terms of modifications in some of the activities. For example, a risk assessment methodology was developed for the environmental sector and training for biosafety managers was conducted even though these activities had not been included in the original project design.
- b. Explain how and when changes were made.
The changes were made in those meetings where the project activities were analyzed. Some of them were programmed in the middle of 2003 and other at the beginning of 2004.
- c. Was the logical framework matrix of the project updated to reflect changes in activities/outputs/objectives?
No, because those were extensions of the original planned activities.
- d. Has this affected the project's objectives or overall goal?
No, because these minor modifications were about planned activities.

(Annual Project Report (PIR) 2004, p. 16)

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.

This TER rates the overall project outcome as "Satisfactory". The project's goals are relevant, its outcomes have been achieved in line with expectation, and it is cost-effective. The "Satisfactory" rating is obtained by two steps: 1. Assessing the following three areas of the project respectively: i. Relevance of project goals/results (Relevance); ii. The extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved (Effectiveness); iii. The project's cost-effectiveness (Efficiency); 2. Calculating the rating score for the overall project outcome base on the assessment results of the above three key areas of the project, taking account into the three criteria and formula for calculating the overall rating for project outcome according to the TER guideline (APR approach paper 2015, p.25).The Terminal Evaluation Report (TE) has also given a comprehensive assessment of project, in

which the project's key areas assessed are similar but not identical to that of this TER. The TE will be a significant source of reference for this TER's assessment.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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Were project outcomes consistent with the focal area/operational program strategies and country priorities? Explain.

This TER rates the relevance of project outcomes/goals as "Satisfactory".

The project aims at strengthening Mexico's national capacity in biosafety, and its outcomes are consistent with the objectives and outcomes of GEF operational program 1-4 on biodiversity, especially regarding the "conservation of biodiversity and invasive species". Specifically, the project focused on developing national capacities in biosafety required to: carry out risk assessments with an appropriate scientific and technical level; implement necessary activities for risk management; evaluation and strengthening of legal and regulatory framework; and development of infrastructure for information exchange and data management. The project builds on the experience accrued in Mexico on public health, plant and animal health and biodiversity conservation efforts, especially the biodiversity enabling activities, and promotes cross-sector synergies (PIR 2004, P.1).

The project's expected outcomes are in line with Mexico's national priorities especially those related to biosafety and biotechnology issues. The National Development Plan 2000-2006 of Mexico highlights the need to balance economic, social and environmental objectives and encourages active involvement of civil society in environmental management. (GEF project concept, p.1).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: satisfactory
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Are project outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (that is, the original or modified project objectives)?

This TER rates the effectiveness of project outcomes as "Satisfactory".

For this project, five project outcomes were designed at the baseline to monitor the project's implementation, and they are in consistent and sufficient use throughout the project implementation process. In two places in the entire narrative, the author of TE gave praise of the attainment of outcome and rated it as "highly satisfactory". (Terminal Evaluation, p.27 and p.29) However, the TE didn't specify as to which certain goal/outcome has been achieved or not under the project logic framework.

This TER will in large part adopt the positive rating and comments for the attainment of expected outcomes but rate the effectiveness of project outcome as "Satisfactory". First, although the TE didn't mention any significant gaps between final outcomes and expected outcomes, there are some minor gaps such as "the seamless connection" of the information system of every participating agency built up

through the project has yet to be developed by the end of the project (Terminal Evaluation, p.27). Second, a rating of “Satisfactory” can be further supported by the following summary of PIR 2004 assessment:

In August 2004, which is 10 month before the expected termination time of the project, the Annual Project Report 2004 made a comprehensive assessment on the achievement of each the project outcomes. (PIR 2004, p.7-p.15) Specifically, each of the five outcomes is designed to be measured by a number of sub-indicators to draw a clearer picture of the extent of attainment for that outcome.

Outcome 1: Enhanced institutional capacity to carry out risk assessment.

Sub-indicators include: 1: Methodologies on risk assessment for biodiversity / Institutional Manuals; Indicator 2: Databases on cultivated species; genetic and ecological information on transgenic crops, transgenic species and their wild relatives; information on the spatial distribution on transgenic crops; 3 Adequate scientific and technical level in risk identification of gene flow and seed exchange; potential impacts of gene flow, sustainable use of biodiversity effects on ecosystems, etc. The author of the PIR 2004 gave all of the above 3 indicators “Highly Satisfactory” rating, which is substantiated through specifying into detail the status of this indicator in 2004 and comparing the status in 2004 with that of 2003 and year 0 (when project was started).

Outcome 2: National capacities enhanced in risk management and monitoring

Sub-indicators include: 1. Customs officials able to process requests; 2. Methodologies for molecular detection and tracking of LMO’s (PCR). The author of the Annual Project Report 2004 gave all of the above 2 indicators “Highly Satisfactory” rating, which is substantiated through specifying into detail the status of this indicator in 2004 and comparing the status in 2004 with that of 2003 and year 0 (when project was started)

Outcome 3: Strengthening of the legal framework

Sub-indicators include: 1. National level consultations regarding the biosafety law and regulations; 2. Targeted visits to identify and transfer know how to Mexico on useful legal instruments for biosafety. The author of PIR 2014 rated the first indicator as “Satisfactory”, and the second indicator as “Moderately Satisfactory”, and reported the status of each of the two indicators in 2004. It is clearly specified by the APR that due to the delay of progress made in advancing to the goal of the above two indicators, ratings for them have not reached the “Highly Satisfactory” level.

Outcome 4: Public awareness program and communication strategies

Sub-indicators include: 1. Dissemination of Project results through Seminars/Courses, etc ;2. Public Information fora /Information campaigns with targeted material to relevant stakeholders; 3. WEB Page of the project. The author of PIR 2014 rated the indicator 1 and 3 as “Highly Satisfactory”, and indicator 2 as “Moderately Satisfactory”. The lower rating of indicator 2 is due to that, up to mid-2004 some background materials were still in the designing and refining process and the campaign itself was still in the stage of preparation.

Outcome 5: Institutional strengthening: laboratory equipment and database infrastructure and protocols

Sub-indicators include: 1. Acquisition of modern equipment to specialized laboratories; 2. Inter-institutional network of relational databases; 3. Roster of experts according to BCH requirements. The author of the PIR 2004 gave all of the above 3 indicators “Highly Satisfactory” rating, which is

substantiated through specifying into detail the status of this indicator in 2004 and comparing the status in 2004 with that of 2003 and year 0 (when project was started).

From the 2004 assessment, which can provide sound reference for the final achievement of project outcomes, it is clear that majority of the sub-indicators are rated with “Highly Satisfactory”, with the lowest rating no lower than “Moderately Satisfactory”. Although the PIR 2004 assessment didn’t clearly give an overall rating of achievement of project outcomes, a rating of “Satisfactory” can be substantiated. Also, it worths noting that the picture of PIR 2004 assessment is consistent with the TE’s final assessment of attainment of project outcomes.

Overall, this TER rates the project’s outcome effectiveness as “Satisfactory” with sufficient evidence.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
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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 project’s cost/time versus outcomes equation compare to that of similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative, or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?

The TE didn’t provide outcome efficiency rating, but it discussed several aspects related to outcome efficiency. Overall, this TER rates the project’s outcome efficiency of as “Satisfactory”. The project was successful at reaching in desired outcomes in a cost-effective and efficient manner, but with minor efficiency problems during the process.

The project was completed on time, and no specific extension/delay was reported by the TE or other policy documents relevant to this TER. According to the TE evaluator, “the project achieved its goals in a timely fashion”. (Terminal Evaluation, p.24). However there were still some minor efficiency problems. According to the TE, limited financial capacity of CIBIOGEM, a crucial execution agency, led to an ineffective and delayed process of decision-making regarding the project execution plan. (Terminal Evaluation, p26.)

For the project’s cost, upon reviewing the all the relevant financial information, the evaluator concluded that in terms of the cost-effectiveness of the project the costs of activities is reasonable, even on the lower end of the range of costs for equivalent activities organized by other organizations used as comparison references (Terminal Evaluation, p.23), and “all previous financial audits praised the way the project was managed” regarding financial planning (Terminal Evaluation, p.22). The project can be evaluated as cost-effective.

Overall, this TER’s rating for the project’s outcome efficiency as “Satisfactory” is well substantiated.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderate Likely
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This TER rates the sustainability of the project's outcomes as "Moderate likely", considering both significant contributing factors and potential risks. The TE rates the sustainability of the project as "Highly Satisfactory" following a 4-degree scale (Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory) (Terminal Evaluation, p.3), which is different from the 4-degree scale for evaluation utilized by this TER (Likely, Moderate Likely, Moderate Unlikely, Unlikely).

This TER's rating of the project's sustainability as "moderate likely" due to the co-existence of significant contributing factors and some potential risks:

Upon the finishing of project, these have been some positive sign of continuance of the project's impact and activities. The project, led by the principal implementing agency CIBIOGEM, was successful in its strategy of knowledge spillover across the country's multiple sectors and government synergies who have been involved in this project (Terminal Evaluation, p.29). Also, through the implementation of this project, some participating agencies have laid out the plan of next stage for further strengthening the country's capacity on biosafety, such as restructuring regulations, launching laboratories, and running pilot programs to enable further knowledge spillover (Terminal Evaluation, p.29). Also, the project has successfully raised public awareness and interest on relevant topic, and by the end of the project a number of following-up and scaling-up activities were in planning by relevant stakeholders (Terminal Evaluation, p.15)

However, there are also some potential risks. In rating the project's sustainability, the TE argues that the long-term sustainability of project's achievements depends on the Mexican government's commitment to implementation of the Cartagena Protocol (Terminal Evaluation, p.28). Thus, the future variations of Mexico's politics, which entails a possible but less likely adjustment of biodiversity from of the country's priority for development, may have impacts on the sustainability of the project. Also, the limited financial capacity of CIBIOGEM, which has been identified as one of the most important risks to the project's success (Annual Project Report 2004, p.15), may pose risks to the sustainability of project since post-project financial capacity of CIBIOGEM to sustain the project impact is uncertain since no confirmed financial commitment to the sustainability of this project has been clearly identified yet.

Overall, the rating of this TER for the project's sustainability as "Moderately Likely" is reasonable.

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?

In the TE, the evaluator discussed the co-financing issue involved in this project, but the TE didn't specify the level of co-financing at the baseline or any changes afterwards in the format of numeric values. The Annual Project Report 2004 mentioned the level of co-financing 4,942 US\$ millions (PIR 2004, p.22), which is higher than 4,852 US\$ millions at the baseline as reported by the Project Brief (Project Brief, 10/25/2001, p.1). This change can be traced back to the only case of change in co-financing reported in

the TE: Due to its structural change, the WWF Mexico failed to meet its promise for contribution, however this shortfall was made up by of the country's government entities contributing more than foreseen, while other participating entities had managed to keep expenditure within estimated figure."(Terminal Evaluation, p.23-p.24). The project has achieved outcomes more than the expectation (Terminal Evaluation, p.27), and it evident that co-financing has made significant contribution in this regard.

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?

The project was completed on time,, and the TE didn't report any extension. However, it did mention one case in which project implementation was delayed at a certain point, but was salvaged timely thus didn't significantly affect the project cycle. Specifically, it mentioned "The only difficulty that all participants in the project were acquainted with had to do with a delay in the availability of GEF funds in 2005. Presumably the delay had to do with some red tape and missing deadlines (for request of un expended funds from 2004), regardless of the combination of circumstances that produced the delay, the impact of the delay in fund allocation on the project was buffered by the timely intervention of UNDP that offered some reimbursable resources to bridge the delay. " (Terminal Evaluation, p.25).

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:

The TE evaluator gave a "Highly Satisfactory" rating for country ownership/drivenness (Terminal Evaluation, p.27). The project's implementation involves multiple government entities, many of whom are at ministerial level, and their diverse efforts were primarily coalesced and coordinated by the inter-secretarial Commission on Biosafety and Genetically Modified Organisms (CIBIOGEM). The broad expertise from each agency has positively contributed to the project's successful implementation and desired outcomes of the project, and the coordination among them has been effective, as the risk identified at baseline of fragmentation of instructional mandates across multiple government entities hindering implementation has not materialized (Terminal Evaluation, p.26). The inter-agency mechanism of effective communication, dialogue, and coordination across participating government entities, as built up through this project, will be also beneficial for any following-up activities to sustain the outcomes of this project.

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: Satisfactory
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- a) **M&E design.** Project should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, and so on), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and reporting and evaluation at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should be specified. Dedicated funding for M&E should be provided in a project’s budget. Responsibilities for undertaking M&E activities should be specified. Questions to guide this assessment include: In retrospect, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient (sufficient and practical indicators identified; timely baseline; targets created; provisions made for the effective use of data collected; analysis systems specified including studies and reports; practical organization and logistics set forth in terms of responsibility for, and scheduling of, M&E activities)?

The TE evaluator gave the M&E a “Satisfactory” rating, since the M&E implementation process proceeds in accordance with its prior plan, and this TER agrees with that rating. The TE evaluator identified some potential areas for further improvement regarding the M&E Design, particularly in the “selection of the indicators and the means to measure their progress and also for the need to involve all stakeholders in the M&E efforts rather than being an activity conducted primarily by the UNDP and the Project Coordination Unit” (Terminal Evaluation, p.18). Also, a failure of taking account into gender factors is also an area for future improvement. The M&E design and implementation of this project follows the standard of UNDP nationally executed projects, and the M&E activity was mainly the responsibility of UNDP and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU). The outcomes and objectives are measured by a set of well-designed indicators, and they have undergone no change throughout the project implementation. The progress made and distance toward reaching the objectives and outcomes were evaluated through periodic evaluations/reviews, and were clearly reported such as that in the Annual Project Report (APR, also PIR). The M&E system was also managed by a systematic, specific and consistent M&E framework. As the project follows the standard set of M&E practice of UNDP national projects, relevant project documents for this TER didn’t specify in detail regarding the approach of analysis and utilization of quantitative/qualitative data, which is an area for further improvement.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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- b) **M&E plan implementation.** An assessment will be made on the quality of M&E implementation over the project’s lifetime, as well as the extent to which provisions were made for continuing M&E following project closure where warranted. Such an assessment will cover whether the M&E system was in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the project; whether annual project reports were complete, accurate, and with well-justified ratings; whether the information provided by the M&E system was used to improve and adapt project performance; and whether proper training was provided for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure. Question to guide this assessment include: 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 toward project 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?

The TE evaluator rated the entire M&E system, including both M&E design and implementation as “Satisfactory”, as the project has followed a thorough, consistent, and standardized M&E practice of the UNDP for its nationally executed programs, and this TER agrees with that rating. There has been no change in the project strategy related to outcomes, objectives, and other elements relevant to the project’s M&E framework. Annual Project reports (the 2003 and 2004 in hand for preparing this TER) have well-developed section reporting the status of objectives/outcomes/indicators with justified rating and comparison with previous years as a guidance to improve project performance. Currently, relevant project documents for this TER didn’t mention specifically any training activities related to M&E being conducted to ensure the quality of reporting. Overall, it is evident that M&E implementation has been going well with some minor shortcomings.

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.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rated the quality of project implementation as “Highly Satisfactory”, however, this TER rates project implementation as “Satisfactory”, because although project implementation was in general successful, from a management, governance and administration perspective, it was not flawless. There are some good practices in the project implementation process that worth mentioning: Logical framework was utilized by the project management group as a tool for measuring achievement and monitoring implementation; Members of the project management team kept close contact with each other, and periodic meetings were held with all of the project’s executants to discuss work plans, time tables, and potential changes on pre-establishment arrangements. (Terminal Evaluation, p.16); This project considered the use of electronic information technologies as part of proposed activities, and an information System on Modified Living Organisms (Information System on Transgenic Organisms, SIOVM) was developed within the framework of this project. (Terminal Evaluation, p.16-p.17). However, a well-rounded connection mechanism of relevant information systems across different participating agencies has yet to be developed, which is a shortcoming also pointed out by the TE: “The (participating) agencies increased their capacities in terms of managing information and data but the last goal of reaching a seamless connectivity between all agencies was not completed and postponed to a later stage. “(Terminal Evaluation, p.27). “The project visualized the development of an inter-institutional transgenic

database system that could enable all governmental entities to share seamlessly and with flawless connectivity all information in real time.” (Termination Evaluation, p.17).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE didn't rate the quality of project execution. Based on the overall description of TE, the project execution was successful, with minor shortcomings. This TER thus rates the project execution as "Satisfactory".

The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) was established in coordination with the UNDP to be the focal point for program management matters. The project operated under the strict regulations and procedures of UNDP as per the corresponding operation guidelines and policies, and the project operation was also supervised by UNDP staff from the UNDP Mexico country office. (Terminal Evaluation, p.24-25). Based on information from the three audits conducted for the project in 2002, 2003 and 2004, the Project Coordination Unit was efficient in the financial or budgetary management of the project in close work with the UNDP. Accountability standards (those of UNDP as stated above) were followed and no major problems in this area were detected (Terminal Evaluation, p.25).

However, the TE did mention the "only" difficulty in project execution ever encountered was a delay in the availability of GEF funds in 2005, and the negative impact was buffered by the timely intervention of UNDP in the form of reimbursable resources. (Terminal Evaluation, p.25)

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.

As the project mainly aims at capacity building, the project has no immediate environmental impacts.

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.

The program didn't have and TE didn't report any immediate or foreseeable long-term socioeconomic changes.

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

The program, mainly as a capacity-building program, contributed significantly to the country's capacity building in biosafety/biodiversity:

- The TE reported the project has played a significant role in capacity-building for relevant stakeholders, especially employees of relevant government entities. The TE reported that during the final evaluation process most interviewees agreed that the project has a consolidating effect on the national effort spearheaded by the CIBIOGEM in building capacities in biodiversity (Terminal Evaluation, p28). The figure of trainees attending the offered courses was also reported to be greater than originally planned (Terminal Evaluation, p28). Originally there was no training course for biosafety managers of the Project, however a course was implemented with the cooperation of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) based on demand and was carried out successfully (Terminal Evaluation, p28). Also, the TE reported an improved capacity of government agencies in terms of managing information and data, and "the quantity and quality of information gathered relevant to biosafety and the effectiveness of the information base was undoubtedly strengthened through the project". (Terminal Evaluation, p.27)

b) Governance

According to the TE, one of the most important achievements of the project was "the process of project design and formulation for it promoted a wider dialogue and consensus between the different agencies that make up the technical committee of CIBIOGEM, and helped to centre the federal government's priorities in relation to LMOs." "This improved co-ordination and dialogue was a key aspect of the proposed capacity building activity with this GEF Project." (Terminal Evaluation, p.26)

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.

The TE hasn't identified any unintended impacts.

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.

Replication approach was singled out in the TE as a section (Terminal Evaluation, p.15), below are some of the key points:

- A number of experiences coming out of the project are being replicated at this moment and, as per the information received, some will even be scaled up for application at a regional scale in a new GEF project on biosafety through the World Bank as the Implementing Agency.
- In fact, in the near future a number of requests have been made to the project executives asking to replicate activities, share the experience and lessons learned from the project. (for example training schemes and materials or information and data management software and systems requested to SEMARNAT, CONABIO and SAGARPA).

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.

The TE listed the following lessons learned (Terminal Evaluation, p30-31):

a) Even though over 300 people were trained, it's not enough; it is never enough due to the turnover of personnel in governmental agencies. Nevertheless training trainers and producing educational material and also conducting evaluations at the end of each workshop greatly increases the long term impact of the efforts.

b) A bitter lesson learned was that of acceding to a recommendation of a STAP review that suggested that all the Health Ministry considerations ought to be taken out. The Project Committee could have fought to keep them in and the project would have gained.

c) An obvious lesson one has to underline is that there is always more cooperation and understanding at the technical levels than at the political high spheres. It is lot easier to reach agreements on the "whats" than it is on the "hows".

d) Even though the National Focal point on Biosafety CIBIOGEM spelled in GEF terms eligibility, in fact it was better not to work through this Commission. The lesson one can derive from this is that if the body, entity or organization is too political, chances are it is not going to work at all, let alone as an executing agency. The capacities are elsewhere, not in the political body. Unfortunately the Commission is not working properly, it has structural problems, it is seen like a forum where the political agendas are not forgotten in favour of constructing a national vision, on the contrary, all interviewees say it is a political “hot potato” and that was never able to play its role.

e) Conducting regular evaluations and annual Auditing is a practice that should be taken as an example for it prevents problems and helps everyone involved.

f) As it often happens the process was more important and long lasting than the product. The mechanisms created to share information among government agencies involved in the project have allowed that all share criteria, know their respective objectives, exchange information and have constituted working groups as a sound task force on the topic.

g) One can never be sufficiently neutral. There is always a sector that did not like your position. NGO’s in this case felt the project promoted Biotechnology, the Biotechnology companies on the contrary felt the project was too biased against promoting biotechnology instead.

h) Everyone knows that involving all interested parties takes more time, and that taking some shortcuts bring more trouble and end up being more time consuming than walking the presumably longer path in the first place. We have already discussed this issue, we believe the lesson is that fostering a higher degree of public participation is a must; otherwise one gives room to misinterpretations such as the question on whether the project is promoting biotechnology or building capacity around biosafety. A legitimate concern indeed, but one that could have easily been dealt with in due time.

i) Another lesson learned that is at the time a best practice is the way in which a capacity building and training model was set up, one that has already benefited other countries in Central America. With the help of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Cooperation (IICA-Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura) and the International Organization of Regional Farming and Animal Husbandry Health (OIRSA- Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria), consultations started (in Costa Rica and El Salvador) and are related to the creation of the juridical framework presented as the Central American Regulation. Likewise, the government of Nicaragua needed the collaboration of the Mexican project to train and review the Technical Standard of LMO’s. As expressed by UNDP personnel the project offered ideas and practices to other offices in the region (Terminal Evaluation, p. 30-31)

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE lists the following Recommendations (Terminal Evaluation, p.32-33):

a) A book was produced as a result of this project, one that could serve several purposes linked with building capacity, the material is ready to be published hence I strongly recommend its immediate

publication, an actual printing that can reach many interested parties both in Mexico and abroad, taking advantage of the momentum the project created..

b) When selecting indicators a “scale of performance” must also be developed in order to better measure progress in the different activities detailed in a logical framework. Without this precision, rating only allows for two options, the goal is either met or not met, whereas if a range of potential outcomes is established in advance and those that are satisfactory clearly recognized, then the rating is more accurate and fair. Any effort around strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation procedures ought to be in line with the worldwide harmonisation that the UN as a whole is pursuing.

c) The discussion & working groups that CONABIO has already “tested” with members of the Academia and from Biotechnology Industries must incorporate members of other sectors of society, particularly indigenous groups and NGO’s that are eager to participate, honestly, seriously on this topic.

d) I suggest that if Steering or Directive Committees and Executive Committees are formed they should meet regularly. There has to be consistency in the way minutes or acts are recorded and a standardized procedure for following up on the agreements reached during those meetings. Results of these meetings must reach the stakeholders or involved parties affected by such agreements in a timely fashion.

e) Periodic evaluations of the people that attend the courses and training schemes should be conducted to monitor their learning, hence the impact of the workshops, also to foster greater interest and eventually to detect the need for updating.

f) I strongly recommend the immediate link with Customs authorities and with their own SEMARNAT (PROFEPA actually) and SAGARPA-SENASICA personnel at points of entry.

g) In order to bridge the foreseeable hurdle of the lack of funds from CIBIOGEM, perhaps funds could be channelled through a Trust Fund, not the current FIBIO housed in CONACyT for this is linked to the secretariat of CIBIOGEM, but a rather new one.

h) The emphasis on exclusively agriculture must also be overcome for crucial items like aquaculture or animal health were left aside.

i) Bearing replicability and learning in mind, a serious effort ought to be made in order to compile and document the “know how”, or the “how they did it” experiences of this project.

j) The Mexican Government should respond responsibly to this initial support and honour its declared interest of strengthening the country’s capacity around the Biosafety Agenda. It is only political will what fosters the design and implementation of policies, and what allocates resources to continue the path that this project started.

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?	The report is vague in detailing what outcomes and impacts have been achieved	Moderately Unsatisfactory.
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is consistent, evidence convincing, ratings well substantiated, but more detailed information is necessary	Satisfactory
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The report has a convincing analysis of sustainability, but more information such as risk assessment will be more helpful.	Moderately Satisfactory.
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lesson learned section is comprehensive and evidenced, but it can be strengthened by more detailed evidences.	Moderately Satisfactory.
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The report only mentioned rare cases of actual figures regarding project costs/co-financing, without a spreadsheet or diagram specifying their value like that in the PIR.	Highly Unsatisfactory.
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report gave a proper description of the project's M&E activity, which are strictly in line with that of UNDP national programs. However, more details will be helpful, such as whether the information generated by the M&E system was used for project management.	Moderately Satisfactory.
Overall TE Rating Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		Moderately Satisfactory

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

In the preparation of this TER, apart from PIRS, TE, and PD, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity was also referred to obtain relevant information.