

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2013

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		1475	
GEF Agency project ID		P076740	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Establishing the Basis for Biodiversity Conservation in SAPO National Park and in South-East Liberia	
Country/Countries		Liberia	
Region		Africa	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP3: Forest Biodiversity; BD-1 Catalyzing sustainability of Protected Areas	
Executing agencies involved		Fauna & Flora International (FFI); Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Lead Executing Agency	
Private sector involvement		None	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		November 12, 2004	
Effectiveness date / project start		September 23, 2005	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		September, 2010	
Actual date of project completion		July 31, 2011	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.025	0.025
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		0.975	0.975
Co-financing	IA/EA own	0.0	0.0
	Government	0.495	0.495
	Other*	0.944	0.944
Total GEF funding		1.0	1.0
Total Co-financing		1.439	1.439**
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		2.439	2.439
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		December 2010	
TE submission date		11/18/2013	
Author of TE		Michael Abedi-Lartey	
TER completion date		December 12, 2013	
TER prepared by		Joshua Schneck	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Neeraj Negi	

*Includes contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development, cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and beneficiaries.

**Taken from Pg 77-78 of ICR.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

According to the Project Document for CEO Approval document, the GEO of this project is to secure the sustainable conservation of the 180,000 hectare Sapo National Park (SNP) in Liberia, as well as support the sustainable-use conservation management of 70,000 hectares of surrounding forest. Containing some of the largest remaining undisturbed tracts of Upper Guinean rainforest, SNP is home to globally significant biodiversity, including African forest elephant, pygmy hippopotamus, and Diana monkey (PD, pg 3). The park is also at the center of a large forest mosaic that facilitates migration for large numbers of threatened species. All of Liberia’s forests, including Sapo, face increasing threats of fragmentation and degradation from bushmeat hunting and shifting subsistence agriculture, as well as alluvial gold mining, settlement, and non-timber forest collection (PD, pg 6).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

According to the final CEO approved Request for GEF Funding, the 5-year project development objective was to *“establish biologically and socially sustainable management of Sapo National Park and peripheral communal forests as part of landscape-level development and sustainability of the whole Protected Areas Network.”* To achieve these objectives, the project aimed to produce the following five outcomes:

1. Sustained and effective park operations and coordination improved.
2. Park and FDA Conservation Department HQ staff empowered and technically strengthened.
3. SNP stakeholders better understand the objectives, constraints and opportunities of SNP conservation & natural resources management issues.
4. SNP’s biodiversity better known, documented & monitored within park boundaries, and human-wildlife conflicts investigated.
5. Local communities are empowered to control and manage forest resources for their benefit in the forests surrounding SNP, and benefiting from livelihoods compatible with Park protection.

At the time of project approval, the park management and Liberian Forest Development Authority (FDA), who are responsible for overseeing the conservation and protection of Sapo and the surrounding forest ecosystems, were recovering from Liberia’s two civil wars (1989-1996 & 1999-2003).

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

Yes. The 2008 MTR recommended that the number of output indicators be reduced, in light of challenges faced on the ground including illegal settlers in the Park, many of whom were involved in artisanal mining of gold. Four output indicators were selected for “focus” by the WB:

1. Park operational management working (under Sub-component 1.1);
2. Old Sapu park boundaries marked (under Sub-component 1.2);
3. Improved performance of park management (under sub-component 1.5);
4. FDA staff trained in Park operations and participatory park management (under component 2).

All other output indicators were still to be measured by FFI.

4. GEF EO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

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

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

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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Project outcomes were consistent with GEF Operational Program number 3, Forest Ecosystems, which seeks to support the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources in forest ecosystems. As indicated in section 3, SNP and its surrounding areas are areas of globally important, biologically diverse, threatened biodiversity. The project seeks to be a catalyst for expanded conservation efforts throughout Liberia. In addition, the project’s objectives of establishing the basis for sustainable conservation of Sapu park and the surrounding areas is aligned with Liberia’s stated national goals. This is evidenced by Liberia’s ratification of the CBD in November 2000, and recent national Liberian conservation efforts including publishing of several national environmental acts in May 2003 that set out a framework for national environmental management and conflict resolution.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The project was successful in achieving a number of its objectives. Key among these were the improvements in staffing and operational procedures at SNP, provision of field equipment, and provision of capacity building workshops and training that have helped to build up the skills and performance of SNP staff, along with FDA counterparts (ICR, pg 45 and appendix 6). The project was also successful in delivering several community outreach education programs on conservation and SNP to local communities (ICR, pg 34). At the same time, the project was largely unsuccessful in several areas

that were hoped would contribute to the long-term sustainability of the park. These include: (1) clearly establishing new park boundaries that are patrolled, protected and respected; (2) formal establishment of community liaison groups and a fully operational Management Advisory council that would facilitate active stakeholder participation in the co-management of the park by its neighboring communities; and (3) identification of long-term mechanisms to provide financial autonomy to the park.

The principal difficulty preventing project staff from moving forward on the first objective – establishment of new park boundaries - was a re-occupancy of the park for most of the project lifetime by illegal settlers, mostly gold miners and hunters. Occupancy slowly increased from almost zero at project start to a peak in 2010, and many of these settlers were armed. Their presence presented a real security threat to project staff. It was only in 2010 that a voluntary eviction process got underway, with support from the FDA and Liberian President.

Local community buy-in for the park, as well as establishment of effective functional mechanisms allowing for stakeholder participation were hampered by a number of factors including mistrust, frequent changes in community leadership, poor road conditions, and differing expectations as to what stakeholder participation in park management means as well as the legal benefits that can be expected from SNP (ICR, pg 26). In hindsight, it appears that the project design (see section 7.1 below) did not give enough attention to addressing risks of inadequate buy-in from park fringe communities, from which most of the illegal miners and settlers originate.

The project was unsuccessful at developing a plan for the long-term financing of SNP, which was an expected output of the project. While the outlines of such a plan appear to be known – a percentage of stumpage fees from logging operations would be used to help finance a trust fund supporting SNP – a formal plan was not completed. The ICR states that a study on eco-tourism development potential was completed (with the findings indicating that this is not a viable source of funding in the short- medium term), however a larger, integrated report was never produced, owing perhaps to insufficient buy-in or consensus among governmental stakeholders (ICR, pg 92). Although the project was successful in making progress on a number of objectives under a very challenging operating environment, overall effectiveness is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory because the project failed to produce several key outcomes upon which the long-term sustainability of the SNP depends. As noted above, these include a fully operational Park Management Advisory Council (PMAC). The ICM notes that “when fully operational,” the PMAC would provide an effective means for the surrounding communities to be part of the park’s decision-making (ICM, pg 7). However, this remains to be seen. An operational PMAC was not established during the five-year implementation period due to numerous challenges including lack of stakeholder buy-in and frequent changes in community leadership (ICR, pg 26), and following closure of project activities, there is little reason to expect that this outcome would prove any easier to achieve. Completion of the plan for long-term financial support of the project was not completed during project implementation period as called for in the project document. Moreover, the livelihood strategies under component 5 of the project were of limited success, with no piloting of communal forests achieved during the project and other activities, like the pig husbandry, abandoned after they proved to be of little interest to community members (ICR, pg 42).

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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For the first three years the project faced challenges including delays in funds flow that were caused in part by a difference in the financial management practices employed by the World Bank and FFI. This affected annual workplans, and contributed to the rationale for a 1-year no-cost extension after year 3. While this issue was resolved, other factors, principally the security situation in the park, and the failure to establish a more constructive working relationship with fringe community members, continued to plague the project. The ICR also notes several problems related to clearing of the old park boundaries, which itself was a reduction in scope from the original target that was curtailed due to the presence of illegal settlers in the park. The ICR states that 25% of the old park boundary was left uncleared, though costed and paid for (ICR, pg 23). Furthermore, the old eastern boundary, which was made redundant by the park extension, was “mistakenly re-opened with the consequence that communities in the Putu Extension have strengthened their opposition to the extension, re-affirming the re-opened old boundary as the official boundary. At the time of this report, they are in favor of creating some Communal Forests in this disputed area...it will require considerable diplomatic effort to address the issue which will continue to be pursued by the FDA and through the FFEM funded Community Forest Program.” (ICR, pg 23).

While the ICM reaches a favorable assessment of project efficiency by comparing the costs of PA management per unit at SNP with that of other countries (ICM, pg 11), this analysis has little connection to actual project outputs and the approach taken at SNP. In addition, the project lacked an effective M&E system for many of the project outputs, including capacity-building of park staff and DWNP-Monrovia, and the community awareness and livelihoods programs. This limits the ability to assess the project’s efficiency along these dimensions.

The project’s approach to delivering some of the community awareness activities, including through radio broadcasts and the use of theater, appears to have been an efficient way to deliver on outcome three of the project, albeit, one whose effectiveness is difficult to measure.

Project efficiency is rated as moderately satisfactory, taking into account the difficulties in funds management that affected procurement, project delays, and project coordination issues that were cited in the ICM and ICR (ICR pg 59)..

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Unlikely
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There are significant risks to the sustainability of project outcomes. Chief among these are securing financial resources to support the gains in park staffing and management, and continue to strengthen the community outreach activities and institutions that are key to achieving greater community buy-in for the park and addressing long-term threats to park health. As noted above, a long-term plan for securing financial sustainability of the park –called for in the PD – was not completed at the time of project completion. At the time of project completion, there was **no committed funding** by either NGOs or the government of Liberia (ICR, pg 55). Furthermore, as the ICR notes, “the current budget balance

can sustain current auxiliaries' numbers and stipend rates until June 2010, after which all or most auxiliaries would be laid off unless FDA or other projects provide co-funding. Such an event would cripple Park operations" (ICR, pg 25).

Other threats to the park relate to the broader prospects for improved governance, continued stability, and improved economic conditions in Liberia. These threats, while not as pressing as the financial threats, are still of concern. The ability of the FDA to use logging resources to support the network of protected areas is dependent upon a lifting of logging sanctions, which has not yet happened and is dependent upon sustained improvements in governance.

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?

According to the ICR, all promised co-financing was delivered (ICR Appendix 2c), although there appear to be areas where co-financing was late in materializing or did not materialize in time to be allocated for its intended use (ICR, pg 24). This delay in co-financing did appear to increase difficulties in project management in the field, but it is not mentioned as a key cause of project underperformance. In addition, the project benefitted from parallel financing from FFEM that supported project objectives 4 and 5.

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 did receive a no-cost 1-year extension due in large part to delays in fund disbursement due to a mismatch in financial accounting procedures between FFI and the World Bank. The delay did not appear to significantly affect project outcomes or sustainability.

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:

An assessment of country ownership is mixed. On the one hand, the GoL demonstrated interest in the project in devoting high-level (presidential) influence in resolving the situation of illegal settlement of SNP at the close of the project. On the other hand, GoL has not yet committed to financing the park's annual expenses by project close, as was hoped for at the project outset. Whether the GoL will continue to provide support for SNP by finding a way to address the underlying threats to the park remains to be seen, and will be critical for the sustainability of SNP and other PAs.

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: Moderately Satisfactory
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While the design of the project's M&E is strong with respect to establishing systems for assessing and monitoring SNP's biodiversity, in other key regards, M&E is weak, lacking SMART indicators. This is particularly true for the staff development, community awareness campaign, and community development campaign. For each of these objectives, the indicators are simple measures of outputs (ex., # trainings delivered, # of posters installed, rather than indicators that would allow a fuller assessment of whether the trainings, community engagement, and community awareness campaigns were having the intended effects. Other indicators, such as a reduction in the number of park infractions, proved to be worthless given the persistent problems with park occupancy. Other outcome indicators and means of verification are not clearly defined. For example, the outcome indicator under Objective 3 is the "Active participation of the full range of local, public and private stakeholders in SNP Mgmt. Advisory Council," which is not clear, and the verification of this is to be accomplished through the minutes of SNP advisory council meetings (PD Annex 1, Logical Framework analysis).

The project design called for and budgeted yearly reviews, and a final project evaluation.

Given the above shortcomings, project M&E design is rated as Moderately Satisfactory.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE notes that processes for M&E were put into place however execution was "partially completed" (TE, pg 81 & 91). On the other hand, monitoring, research and conservation planning under objective 4 does seem to have taken place to a large extent, and much is ongoing in this regard. Moreover, the ICM provides a more positive assessment of M&E Implementation activities. The ICM states that an M&E system monitoring staff performance and resource use at SAPO was established; that policy recommendations and management guidelines for M&E have been developed to strengthen park related activities for protected areas in general and will be incorporated into the Park Management Plan as appendices when the PM is complete; and that a database has been established to monitor patrolling efforts as well as data from bio-monitoring to assess trends in biological resources. Finally, the WWF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores system has been adopted to assess the overall performance of SNP on an annual basis. In light of these developments, and using both the ICM and ICR as datapoints, M&E implementation is rated as Moderately Satisfactory.

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: Moderately Satisfactory
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Project supervision on the part of the WB did result in a scaling back of project’s focus following MTR recommendations – an example of adaptive management. However, project implementation suffered from a project design that failed to give sufficient attention to establishing good relations with neighboring communities, or address the threat that a reoccupation of the park by settlers, most of whom come from the fringe communities, posed to the project. The project design also seems to have underestimated the difficulties in establishing effective participatory management process with communities whose membership changes frequently, and the challenges that very poor road infrastructure presented to the project’s activities. The TE, for example, lists the expense of transporting community members over rough roads as one of the reasons that the PMAC failed to meet during the project (TE, pg. 27). Most of these challenges are noted in the project design document under project design (section 2, pg 6-9), and yet the project design does not devote sufficient resources and attention to addressing them in an integrated and sufficient manner. Other project shortcomings related to the design of the M&E system, as noted above, are reflected in the project implementation rating. Quality of project implementation is therefore rated Moderately Satisfactory.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The ICR notes that the project encountered a number of implementation challenges stemming from “inadequate coordination with partners at the field and at the national level” (ICR, pg 59). The situation apparently improved with the formation of a Management Steering Committee in 2008 (ICR, pg 59), however by this time the project was already halfway through its implementation. While many of the challenges faced by management were indeed out of the control of project management staff, others project components that were fully under the control of executing agents, such as completing project M&E activities and establishing an effective working relationship between partners, experienced significant shortcomings (ICR, pg 59). Quality of project execution is therefore assessed at Moderately Satisfactory.

8. Lessons and recommendations

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

The ICM provides the following key lessons from the project as having relevance not only for SNP, but for the development of protected areas in general:

- Proponents of nature reserves should make clear to stakeholders that the primary goal of these areas is biodiversity conservation. As such, there will likely be limited opportunities for revenue generation that does not compromise the overriding objective of conservation, particularly in areas with limited tourism potential due to limited infrastructure.
- Effective skills and knowledge transfer is fundamental to the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes in capacity-poor areas. A systematic effort is needed to achieve this capacity transfer, including formalized training settings.
- A well laid out structure for institutional collaboration among all project stakeholders is essential to ensure efficient use of resources and improved outcomes.
- A realistic estimation of the time needed for legal, constitutional and central government procedures and approvals is necessary if delays are to be avoided and expectations from communities managed.
- Ownership by all stakeholders and beneficiaries is imperative for achieving deliverables and project objectives. The livelihood and community empowerment component of integrated conservation and development projects is key to their social and biological sustainability.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

- The project's implementation experience confirms that projects of this complexity operation in environments with weak clients require much longer time frames than the traditional 3-5 years to realize project objectives.
- Regarding the importance of livelihoods support and community empowerment to achieving sustainability of project outcomes, the ICM recommends that projects of this nature devote additional attention to demonstrating the linkage between community participation and community infrastructure development offered as an incentive to ensure effective participation.

9. 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	The report provides a concise assessment of the extent to which project outcomes are commensurate with project expectations. More detail on the difficulties in establishing	MS

project and the achievement of the objectives?	a working Park Management Advisory Council should have been provided, along with an assessment of the degree to which the project design document should have anticipated the risks to SNP posed by illegal settlement.	
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is internally inconsistent with regards to the assessment and ratings of M&E Implementation. Annex 1 of the ICM provides a MU rating for M&E Implementation, while the section on M&E of park operations on page 7 of the ICM presents a rosier picture.	MU
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Overall, ICM does a good job at highlighting the principle threats to sustainability faced by the park, challenges to the project's exit strategy, and is candid in its assessment.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons are well supported, however additional findings should have been presented on how community outreach can be made more effective, given the extensive experience and challenges faced by this project in this regard.	MS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The report includes actual project costs and actual co-financing used.	S
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	There is some inconsistency between M&E assessments provided in the ICM and ICR. The ICM presents a positive picture of M&E Implementation, while the ICR notes that M&E Implementation was incomplete in several regards (ICR, pg 81 & 91). Additional detail in the ICM regarding M&E Implementation would be helpful in getting a better sense for what actually took place.	MU
Overall TE Rating		MS

TE Quality = (.3*(4+3)) + (.1*(5+4+5+3)) = 3.8 = MS

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

Documents used in preparation of this TER include:

- A Project Implementation Completion Report, prepared December 2010. This document is referred to as the ICR in this TER.
- An Implementation Completion Memorandum (ICM), prepared at project completion. The ICM largely follows the ICR but includes additional ratings. As this document is the final evaluation expected for WB medium-sized projects, ratings cited in this report are taken from the ICM, not the ICR, and it is this document which is reviewed for quality in section 9 of the TER.
- The final GRM report covering the period 7/2010 to 6/2011.
- The final Project Design document submitted for GEF CEO Approval.