

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID:	1477		Review date:	
IA/EA Project ID:	PMIS 1075	GEF financing:	at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
Project Name:	Conservation of Pu Luong-Cuc Phuong Limestone Landscape	IA/EA own:	0.75	0.75
Country:		Government:		0.06
Operational Program:		Other*:	0.56	0.30
	Vietnam	Total Cofinancing	0.56	0.36
	3	Total Project Cost:	1.31	1.11
IA:	WB	Dates		
Partners involved:	Fauna and Flora International	Work Program date		NA
		CEO Endorsement		04/05/01
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		06/27/01
		Closing Date	Proposed: 09/30/04	Actual: 03/31/06
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 39 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 57 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 18 months
Author of TE: Ross Hughes		TE completion date: 1/30/07	TE submission date to GEF OME: 03/13/07	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 1.5 months

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

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS

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

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project outcomes	S	S	-	S
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	Does not provide an overall rating	-	ML
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	S	No rating	-	S
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	-	S

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

Yes. The TE is a good example of how to present comprehensive information on the achievement of project objectives, and provides a very comprehensive assessment of the project implementation. The TE did not include a section on M&E but presented relevant information in other sections of the report.

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

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

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

The Project Brief indicates that the environmental objective was to maintain the ecological integrity and cultural character of the Pu Luong - Cuc Phuong limestone range at the landscape level by building a foundation for capacity in ecosystem landscape management.

No changes during implementation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation? <p>The Project Brief describes 5 Development Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Develop a landscape plan and strengthen inter-provincial co-ordination; (2) Enhance management quality of an expanded protected areas network based on improved knowledge of the limestone landscape; (3) Develop conditions for protection so that threatened habitats and species can recover; (4) Generate support and participation among stakeholders and wider public for conservation of the limestone ecosystem; and (5) Enable community-based natural resource management to support ecosystem conservation. <p>The Mid-Term Review mission concluded that the project partners did not have the requisite institutional authority to achieve the first objective concerning landscape planning. Therefore, the first objective was changed to “establishing a foundation for landscape planning and management within the limestone range through promotion of inter-sectoral and inter-provincial processes”. This change was approved by World Bank and endorsed by the implementing partner and host agency.</p>
3.2 Outcomes and Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What major project outcomes and impacts are described in the TE? <p>TE describes various outcomes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a Landscape ‘forum’ that has met regularly during and since completion of the project - Strong provincial commitment to the Inter-provincial landscape management forum, as a pioneering and innovative institutional mechanism. - Participatory evaluation of PLCP concluded that project interventions were highly successful in raising levels of professionalism and capacity of forest protection units - Conservation needs assessments and operational management plans prepared for two sites, and baseline management effectiveness studies were undertaken. - Introduction of an ordinance for gun control and wildlife trade introduced by Thanh Hoa People’s Committee. This enables forest protection rangers to address gun ownership in collaboration with the police. - A voluntary gun control and wildlife trade ordinance was introduced in Hoa Binh province.

4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT	
4.1.1 Outcomes (use a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU)	
A Relevance	Rating: HS
<p>The project was highly relevant to GEF objectives. The Pu Luong-Cuc Phuong limestone range is a globally important example of a karst ecosystem and is the only remaining large area of lowland and limestone forest in northern Vietnam. Protection of this landscape was especially important since it is currently under-represented in both global protected area networks and conservation investment portfolios. At national level, the project provided support to central and provincial governments to implement forest conservation and management priorities identified in the National Forest Development Strategy – that sought to expand protected areas coverage to include priority sites and to strengthen the management capacity of existing protected areas management authorities</p>	
B Effectiveness	Rating: S
<p>According to the TE, the project made good progress against its objectives and indicators on most aspects and received strong support from the host agency – the Forest Protection Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). On some aspects, project performance was excellent (e.g. overall project management and building-up the level of knowledge and understanding of the biodiversity and other values of the limestone landscape, and the threats to these values) or strong (e.g. on increasing professionalism of forest protection units, successful support for the introduction of gun and wildlife trade ordinance, and basic but effective support to guide management planning of the three protected areas included in the original project design plus Van Long Nature Reserve, added following the Mid Term Review - MTR). Changes introduced following the MTR led to very good progress in strengthening inter-provincial dialogue and this led to the development of an encouraging approach for promoting inter-provincial planning - and one that could be replicated elsewhere in Vietnam.</p> <p>On the other hand, the establishment of the Ngoc Son Nature Reserve resulted in significant conflicts over restrictive forest management regulations. However, the highly-restrictive forest management regulations in place throughout the project period were revised after project completion, and the new regulations enable forest management boards to exercise somewhat greater flexibility for local engagement in implementing protected areas management strategies in future.</p> <p>Small scale livelihood projects were considered successful in general, although at rather limited extent, given the small size of this component.</p>	
C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: MS
<p>The TE assesses that investments in the project has been cost-effective. The project strengthened partner</p>	

capacity and then gradually relinquished its own role in field activities, to the point where project inputs comprised only monitoring of field activities, technical inputs and supervision where required. The project also succeeded in leveraging additional support from DED, the German development cooperation agency. This approach helped build ownership and capacity, and generally increased the cost-effectiveness of support.

But the effectiveness and cost efficiency of GEF support was challenged by a 13-month start-up delay caused by new project processing requirements in Vietnam. This resulted in synchronization problems of GEF supported activities with those supported by the Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development (AECI). In response to a request from the grant recipient, the World Bank granted an 18-month extension to the project implementation period to enable the project to reach effective completion.

4.1.2 Impacts

The TE mentions that creating the inter-provincial planning group was a pioneering and highly satisfactory outcome of the project, but that it is too early to assess impacts of this improved 'enabling environment' for biodiversity conservation. Nevertheless, there is a strong likelihood that this will lead to improved effectiveness of biodiversity conservation efforts throughout the landscape.

Another important impact is the strengthening of the management board capacity (as measured by Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool)

Finally, on the whole, the project improved the relationships between forest rangers and local communities, particularly as a result of the use of a micro-credit scheme managed by forest protection units in Hoa Binh Province, and by the Pu Luong Nature Reserve Management Board in Thanh Hoa province. To some extent, this transformed the relationship of forest protection units with local communities from 'forest police' to 'partners' in forest management.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of **risks** to sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE. Use a four point scale (4= no or negligible risk to 1= High risk)

A Financial resources	Rating: L
Following completion of the GEF grant, the World Bank approved grant support from the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) of US\$304,200 for continuing and expanding work with local communities in the buffer zone of Pu Luong National Park and for public awareness activities. In 2006, the Spanish government approved over US\$1 million of grant support to build on the platform provided by the project, and specifically to support community-based management in the core and buffer zones of the newly-established Ngoc Son Nature Reserve. Additional small grant support for all four protected areas in the limestone landscape (Cuc Phuong National Park, Ngoc Son Nature Reserve, Pu Luong Nature Reserve and Van Long Nature Reserve) will also be available from the Vietnam Conservation Fund, once this becomes operational in 2006. Thus, financial risks to sustainability of project outcomes are low.	
B Socio political	Rating: ML
There were substantial risks associated with conflicts over resource access within the new Ngoc Son Nature Reserve. But, after the completion of the project forest management regulations have been revised and these provide marginally more scope for management boards and provincial authorities to implement more inclusive regimes for nature reserve management. In other areas improved relations with PA management boards, increased revenue streams and development benefits from livelihood support, credit schemes and ecotourism has helped the project in gaining support from the local communities.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: L
There is now improved capacity at PA and provincial level on protected areas management and this is likely to develop further due to greater support from the central level.	
D Environmental	Rating: ML
Restricted access to natural resources in the new Ngoc Son Nature Reserve resulted in an upsurge in tree felling and firewood collection as local communities tried to build-up stores of timber, coffins and firewood before controls could be effectively implemented. But the TE mentions that there is now consensus between communes, the management board and the provincial FPD that zoning arrangements need to be revised entirely to avoid some of the most obvious and immediate sources of access restrictions.	

4.3 Catalytic role

a. Production of a public good
Biodiversity, geomorphology and hydrological surveys and various studies relevant to landscape management were undertaken and published.
b. Demonstration
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c. Replication
The TE mentions several times that this project has a very high potential for replication, but no actual cases are identified.
d. Scaling up
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4.4 Assessment of the project's monitoring and evaluation system based on the information in the TE

A. M&E design at Entry	Rating (six point scale): S
<p>M&E plan identified relevant indicators, sources of baseline information (or if none was available, studies were planned to complete the monitoring frameworks), and specified which stakeholders would participate in these monitoring activities. Activities would be conducted at the landscape, site and species level, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess institutional understanding of ecosystem management and karst conservation issues ▪ Conduct knowledge and attitude survey in the limestone range ▪ Assess improvement in knowledge and motivation of rangers ▪ Monitor impact of gun control and enforcement campaign. ▪ Design and initiate fixed-point photography to monitor landscape change ▪ Conduct monitoring of trade and disseminate information as appropriate ▪ Repeat the 1999 EPRC\FFI primate status assessment ▪ Conduct a status review of karst features in year 3 ▪ Conduct a mid-term review <p>Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) identified to measure achievements at the global goal were not very practical.</p>	
B. M&E plan Implementation	Rating (six point scale): S
<p>The M&E system operated throughout the project, and it provided important input on project implementation. For example following the MTR, the project changed one of its objectives: it was found that the project partners did not have the requisite institutional authority to achieve the first objective concerning landscape planning, so objective 1 was modified accordingly.</p> <p>The use of the management effectiveness tracker tools (METTs) towards the beginning and end of the project provided a way of measuring improvement in management of PAs. The METT scores improved from 34% to 53% between 2001 and 2004 (scores were 33 and 51 respectively).</p> <p>The TE also assesses that management and reporting of the small credit scheme were weak, although considered by forest rangers and local communities to be successful.</p>	
<p>C.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&E in the budget included in the project document?</p> <p>The ProjDoc assigned \$88,462 for project M&E; but many of the M&E activities were included in the budget for particular components such as “Enhancing management quality of an expanded PA network” and “Creating conditions for protection and conservation of species and habitats” which included several activities to define baselines.</p>	
<p>C.2 Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&E during project implementation?</p> <p>There is no mention of lack of funding for M&E activities in the TE.</p>	
<p>C.3 Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>The use of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools, Conservation Needs Assessments and Operational Management Plans for Pu Luong and Van Long Nature Reserves was pivotal to identify and prioritize threats and set-out clear priorities for conservation action. The existence of these plans and assessments also enable Van Long and Pu Luong to apply for further support from the VCF – thus increasing prospects for post-project sustainability of conservation achievements at these sites. Most importantly, Assessing project performance against the OVIs at goal and purpose level was constrained because the project was unable to monitor a number of them at the goal level. In part, this was due to the inclusion in project design of OVIs with inherent difficulties for monitoring change during the short lifetime of the project (e.g. changes in landscape using fixed point photography); or because the results of such monitoring would always deliver inconclusive evidence that goals had been attained (e.g. ‘Integrity of specific conservation features’ or ‘water flows and quality’).</p> <p>But the identification of indicators at the component level did allow the project to assess the overall outcomes by aggregating the objective (or component) level indicators.</p>	

4.5 Lessons and Recommendations

Project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

What lessons mentioned in the TE that can be considered a good practice or approaches to avoid and could have application for other GEF projects?
<p>Donor/Bank/Recipient lessons</p> <p>First, the project has demonstrated that innovative approaches to planning and project implementation can be successful, provided there is a willingness to adapt approaches as needed.</p> <p>Second, review at the design stage needs to take greater account of the institutional ‘realities’ that innovative projects of this nature require. In this case, initial design features for landscape planning and the establishment of a pilot multiple-use nature reserve proved entirely unrealistic. These issues should have been identified at design and project review stage.</p> <p>Government of Vietnam and provincial authorities</p> <p>To these agencies, the project had real value as a learning exercise, particularly concerning the benefits that arise from innovations in planning (e.g. coordinated planning and management between provinces),</p>

enforcement measures (e.g. voluntary gun control and wildlife trade control ordinances) and nature reserve establishment (multiple lessons can be drawn from experience at Ngoc Son, including lessons for national and provincial authorities and management boards).

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

The project serves as a reminder to ensure that support for protected areas management and establishment should include clear safeguards for stakeholder engagement and ensure that future support addresses systemic issues relating to local engagement in PA establishment, planning and management.

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

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

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4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
<p>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? Yes. The TE contains a very complete and candid report of the project achievements and failures.</p>	HS
<p>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? The TE is consistent and presents complete evidence to support its findings and detailed information on the project’s progress regarding all indicators.</p>	HS
<p>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? Yes. The TE identifies possible risks to project sustainability and also provides information on project replicability and exit strategy.</p>	HS
<p>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? The section on lessons learned included in the TE is vague and general. For example, it mentions that “Lessons from efforts to introduce multi-stakeholder management at Ngoc Son may now provide useful guidance and experience for the design of implementation guidelines for the revised forest management regulations” but does not provide any specific examples.</p>	U
<p>E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The TE does include the actual total project costs, but does not provide information on use of co-financing or explains the difference between planned and actual budgets.</p>	MU
<p>F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? The TE does not provide an assessment of M&E systems, but information on this issue is addressed in other sections of the report. For example the TE mentions the implementation and use of M&E activities such as the Mid Term Review, the Participatory Evaluation of PLCP, Conservation needs assessments, and baseline management effectiveness studies.</p>	MS

4.6.3 Assessment of processes affected attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

Co-financing and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project’s outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?

There was a difference of approximately \$200,000, but the TE does not provide any explanation on how it affected project outcomes and sustainability.

Delays and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons responsible for it? Did the delay affect the project’s outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?

The project had a 13-month start-up delay caused by new project processing requirements in Vietnam. This resulted in synchronization problems of GEF supported activities with those supported by the Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development (AECI). This delay did not affect the overall outcomes and sustainability of the project because the World Bank granted an 18-month extension to the project implementation period to facilitate completion of project activities.

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

Yes:	No: X
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Explain: World Bank has already secured funding to continue and expand work with local communities in the buffer zone of Pu Luong National Park and for public awareness activities.

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

PIR2005