

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2015

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		1490	
GEF Agency project ID		992	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-2	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Mekong River Basin Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP)	
Country/Countries		Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam	
Region		Southeast Asia	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP 2 Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems Strategic Priority: Capacity Building	
Executing agencies involved		IUCN, Mekong River Commission (MRC)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		--	
Private sector involvement		--	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		June 2004	
Effectiveness date / project start		January 2002	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		July 2009	
Actual date of project completion		July 2007	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.425	
	Co-financing	0	
GEF Project Grant		4.1	N/A
Co-financing	IA own	2.52	N/A
	Government	1.67	N/A
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.83	N/A
	Private sector		
NGOs/CSOs			
Total GEF funding		4.1	N/A
Total Co-financing		5.02	N/A
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		9.12 <i>This TE notes the lack of clarity in project documents about what figures were endorsed by the project.</i>	N/A
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		20 July 2006	
Author of TE		Wim Giesen	
TER completion date		December 17, 2015	
TER prepared by		Caroline Laroche	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Molly Watts	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

*The terminal evaluation was in fact a mid-term evaluation, but due to the second phase of the project not taking place, it was used as a final evaluation. The evaluation scored the sub-programs on some of the criteria, but never presented specific ratings for the whole program.

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

While this program attempts to address critical issues related to conservation of biodiversity, there is no specific environmental objective mentioned in the results framework.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The development objective as stated in the log frame is “The conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the wetlands of the Lower Mekong River Basin” (PD p.16), with the program purpose being “strengthened capacity at regional, national and local levels for wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the Lower Mekong Basin” (PD p.16).

The three overarching goals of the project were the following:

- At the regional level, the basin-wide policy framework and economic environment will be developed to be more supportive of wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable use through influencing ministers and developing wetland policy guidelines. The institutional capacity to implement these policies will be strengthened.
- At the national level, management planning processes will be enhanced by encouraging a multi-sectoral approach, through building capacity, and increasing public involvement. The information base needed to support sound wetland policy, planning and management decision-making will also be strengthened.
- Finally, at the local level, demonstrations of Protected Area System management planning and integrated community development will be implemented for biodiversity conservation, agriculture, and other related sectors, focusing on improving sustainable use practices at wetlands in and around four of the key sites within the basin.

(PD p.3)

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

Yes. The logframe has undergone significant changes since the conception of the first (2001) project brief. The last logframe revision was done in 2006. The original logframe had five development objectives, which were later on reorganized as themes under the main development objective described above.

Those five objectives were:

1. To establish a multi-sectoral planning process operational at national and regional levels
2. To strengthen policy framework and macro-economic environment supportive of wetland biodiversity conservation and sustainable use
3. To generate and disseminate information about wetland functions and values to government decision-makers, managers, and resource-users of wetlands within the Lower Mekong River Basin
4. To improve human and technical capacity to conserve wetland biodiversity better in the Lower Mekong Basin
5. To improve community-based natural resource management at wetlands within the Lower Mekong River Basin

(PD p.241)

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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The TE does not assess relevance. This TER rates relevance as satisfactory due to the importance of the issues being tackled, but notes the lack of buy-in from some country governments.

The programme seeks to address globally important biodiversity issues in the Mekong region, which is under great demographic and development pressures. The project objective – to strengthen capacity for the conservation of wetland areas and sustainable use – is a most necessary and most relevant one.

According to the TE, at the national level, “the program supports broad national development and environmental management priorities, as set out in various strategic policy documents and plans (for example, Vietnam’s Socio-economic development strategy, nationalized MDGs) and specifically seeks to support national capacities to implement obligations under the Ramsar Convention¹, to which three of the four countries participating in the MWBP are signatories” (TE p.7). This is a good indication that the program was both well aligned with national priorities and highly relevant to environmental issues in the countries of interest.

However, the initial focus of the program on conservation, and not on livelihoods, has somewhat reduced its relevance to some of the national governments, which saw conservation and livelihoods to be mutually exclusive goals, and preferred to focus on livelihoods. Between project inception and end, the program was able to refocus and rebrand itself as a proponent of the livelihoods approach, and thereby as more relevant and supporting to local development priorities (TE p.7).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE does not give a specific rating for the effectiveness of the program as a whole. Instead, it provides ratings for each of the program sub-components, which range from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. This TER assesses effectiveness to be moderately unsatisfactory, largely due to the fact that a whole aspect of the project (Phase B) has not been delivered, but acknowledging the mitigated achievements of Phase A.

This program suffered from major delays and setbacks which have prevented it from completing most of the activities it had planned in order to meet its objectives. The program was initially planned as encompassing two phases, “the first building the enabling environment and the second realising key outputs” (PD p.1) Upon project completion, only Phase A had been completed, and Phase B had not been started. Indeed, it was decided in 2004, when the Project Document was finalized (3 years after the Project Brief was approved by the GEF Council in 2001), that Phase A would operate for two more years (until 2005), and Phase B would then kick in for an additional three years (2006-2008) and would be a completely separate project, not funded as part of the initial envelope. We divide our discussion of programme effectiveness into the main objectives of each of the two phases, namely to ‘create an enabling environment’ for Phase A and ‘implementation of the activities and outputs’ for Phase B.

Phase A objective: creating an enabling environment

The TE assesses each of the sub-program’s success on their success in creating an enabling environment. The table below is a summary of their achievements.

Sub-programme	Rating	Justification	References
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¹ The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands,[1] recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

Cambodia	Moderately Satisfactory	Partial establishment of enabling environment - provincial steering committee is not yet operational and there are no agreements yet in place over some roles and responsibilities.	TE p.17
Lao	Moderately Unsatisfactory	GoL is not yet convinced of the value of MWBP in building its capacity to address wetland issues. Stronger government ownership might prevent this mistrust. It will be possible to identify when an enabling environment is reached at field level only if positive conservation/biodiversity results are demonstrated.	TE p.32
Thailand	Satisfactory	Institutional arrangements are in place to allow local people to use and manage wetland resources in a sustainable manner, the government accepts community management arrangements in wetlands and commitment exists to the need for national (though not yet regional) wetlands policy.	TE p.44
Vietnam	Moderately satisfactory	Major changes in approach to wetland management and co-management have been initiated, but need to be consolidated during the remainder of Phase A.	TE p.55
Regional Programme	Unsatisfactory	The Regional Programme is unlikely to achieve an enabling environment by the end of Phase A.	TE p.63

Overall, despite their mixed achievements, all programs have started generating information that will be useful to the MWBP-targeted decision makers and to the development of wetland policy in those countries. “However, the value of this information tends to be site specific and locally and/or country specific. The ability to influence policy change is probably most advanced in Vietnam, with the prospect of substantial changes in the way that communities can become involved in National Park management and new fire prevention practices” (TE p.73).

Phase B objective: implementation of the activities and outputs

Phase B of the project has not actually been carried out, and its objectives have therefore not been achieved. Indeed, “funding for Phase B was dependent upon a mid-term evaluation and a proposal for a Phase B programme document. However, recent changes within GEF have closed the option of funding Phase B as originally conceived” (TE p.1). As a result, the program was closed at the end of 2006 upon

completion of Phase A, and it was left up to the national sub-programs to find further funding for Phase B.

While some of the sub-programs had started implementing some of the Phase B activities, Phase B outputs largely did not materialize. Only Vietnam was moderately on track to meet its target, with a report that some of the indicators have been met, for example the indicator “ecotourism plans developed” (TE p.32).

This TER therefore does not further elaborate on the achievement of Phase B objectives since this component was by and large left out of the redefined program.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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The TE does not rate efficiency, and provides very limited information on this topic. This program is composed of five sub-programs, all of which were individually described and evaluated. The table below summarizes the information the TE contains pertaining to efficiency of the sub-programs. Based on the information provided in the TE about the efficiency of the Phase A activities and the fact that most Phase B activities did not even take place, this TER assigns a score of unsatisfactory.

Cambodia: PMU budget allocations were often unpredictable, which has contributed to tensions with partners. Additional co-financing was leveraged (UNDP Trac Funds, Darwin Initiative). No indication of cost-effectiveness.

On the other hand, very good progress with recruitment and setting up systems. (TE pp.16-17)

Lao: There appears to be little flexibility in fund reallocation within the programme. There have been problems with recruitment that have slowed down the program, but the staff have very quickly taken ownership of the project. (TE pp. 29-20)

Thailand: Financial arrangements are unsatisfactory as they “depend on ad hoc arrangements made because of lack of an MOU between IUCN Thailand and the government”. “Compared to the other country components, operational costs are high, while the amount spent on activities is very low”. However, no GEF funds have been spent on the Thailand sub-programme as it is fully funded from other sources. Recruitment took long, but the program is now well-staffed. (TE pp. 43-44)

Vietnam: The financial procedures between the various Vietnam program partners are slow and cumbersome. The Vietnam program staff were not aware of the conditionality of Phase B funding, and has therefore not taken this into account when planning.

In Vietnam too, delays were incurred due to recruitment problems, and the program did not start its activities before January 2005. On the other hand, staff appears “qualified and committed”. (TE p.53-54)

Regional Programme: The cost of the Regional Component is not very high, but it still requires an expensive PMU, making the investment not particularly cost-effective. In addition, the programme has not generated any co-financing.

This component was also slow at recruiting staff, which were only on board by April 2005. (TE p.62-63)

Most sub-programs experienced substantial delays in recruitment, which lead to further delays in program implementation. Little information is provided in the TE about cost effectiveness, but costs are said to be too high at least for two of the sup-programs (Thailand, Regional programme).

The lack of communication about the conditionality of Phase B appears to have caused some budgetary and planning issues, which have affected programme efficiency. Finally, all the delays incurred as part of the preparatory phase and Phase A have meant that Phase B had to be dropped from the project.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Unlikely
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The TE does not provide a rating for sustainability risks. This TER rates sustainability as moderately unlikely, largely due to the fact that the lack of funding for Phase B came as a surprise and adequate plans were therefore not made early enough to ensure program continuation beyond Phase A.

The program had not incorporated sustainability or replication strategies in its design, despite this being standard practice for the GEF, even back in 2004. According to the TE, “a brief 4-page Programme Sustainability Strategy document has been drafted in 2005, but this is not much more than a discussion document, as it does not really present a full strategy on how to achieve sustainability” (TE p.9).

Financial Sustainability – Moderately Unlikely

Project stakeholders only found out mid-way through the implementation of Phase A that funding for Phase B might no longer be available. As explained in the TE (p.1), “Recent changes in GEF criteria have meant that, under GEF-4, GEF would no longer provide regional funding for biodiversity conservation. This, in effect, closed the option of implementing Phase B as it had originally been conceived, and as a consequence alternative options are to be sought.”

At project end, the IUCN had aspirations to continue the project and expand it further, and there were other regional initiatives that could continue to pursue the biodiversity objectives of the project, including the Giant Catfish Working Group, the Mekong Dolphin Conservation Program, the International Crane Foundation and the IUCN-SSC Crocodile Specialist Group. Other organizations interested in pursuing the work operate at the national level, for example the WWF (TE p.8). In Lao, donors have expressed interest in pursuing the “biodiversity through livelihood” approach developed by MWBP Lao (TE p.36). In Thailand, MWBP was formulating plans to for their work to be incorporated into the Provincial Integrated Development Plans (TE p.45). In Vietnam, opportunities were being explored to fund Phase B by tapping into funds available for ecotourism development, or to use the Vietnam Conservation Fund sponsored by the World Bank-GEF-Netherlands Government (TE p.57).

Overall, at project end, no funding for Phase B had been confirmed, although each of the national sub-programs appeared to have started looking for alternatives. It is unlikely that a concerted regional approach will remain in place, and Phase B “is likely to take on a different form than originally designed or anticipated” (TE p.71).

Socio-political Sustainability – Moderately Likely

Misconceptions related to the way in which the MWBP supports efforts to fight poverty and improve livelihoods remain. Governments and population worry that conservation efforts will come in the way of economic activity, and more needs to be done by the national programs to clarify how conservation activities can support local economic activity. According to the TE (p.25), “Misperceptions about the potential contribution of MWBP to national priorities have their origin in the early and slow formulation of the GEF Project Brief (2001), which, even on completion, did not specifically refer to poverty reduction.”

That being said, governments appear increasingly supportive of the project objectives and, provided there is funding for a Phase B, would probably not object.

Environmental Sustainability - Likely

There are no mentioned environmental risks that could undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits.

Institutional Sustainability

Unable to assess

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?

Unable to assess. The TE does not include financial figures, and it is therefore unknown how much co-financing actually came through.

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?

This program suffered from major delays and setbacks which have prevented it from completing most of the activities it had planned in order to meet its objectives.

The program was initially planned as encompassing two phases, “the first building the enabling environment and the second realising key outputs” (PD p.1) Upon project completion, only Phase A had been completed, and Phase B had not been started.

The preparatory phase of the project took much longer than expected. The preparatory process, which started in 2001, was only completed in January 2005, when Vietnam gave final approval to the project document.

In July 2004 when the Project Document was finalized (3 years after the Project Brief was approved by the GEF Council in 2001), it was decided that Phase A would operate for two more years (until 2005), and Phase B would then kick in for an additional three years (2006-2008) and would be a completely separate project, not funded as part of the initial project.

Even then, there were “a number of start-up set backs” (TE p.4) within the national programs, which meant the program only became fully operational in 2005. Set backs differed across countries. In Vietnam, where delays were the longest, it was due to delays in getting national approval for the project (TE p.54).

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:

Country ownership was very different in the various national sub-programs. However, the project having had little impact, this TE cannot assess the extent to which ownership affected project outcomes.

In Cambodia, country ownership did not appear to be very high. While there was support within the Ministry of Environment, “the host agency made clear that they do not feel they were consulted sufficiently on logframe development and revision and they perceive their inputs do not influence MWBP planning and decision-making” (TE p.12) and external, non-governmental partners showed little engagement with the project.

In Lao, country ownership was lacking due to the issue of perceived divergence in priorities, with the government strongly focusing on poverty alleviation and worrying that conservation work did not align with this priority (TE p.25).

In Thailand, there was a strong sense of ownership at local, provincial and national levels. At the beginning of the project, poor communication with the national agencies caused tensions and prevented effective cooperation, but the issue was resolved before the end of the project (TE p.40).

In Vietnam, there was a fairly good sense of ownership. Country priorities were well aligned with programme priorities, and local authorities were very engaged with the programme. At the national level, “goals and interest are well aligned” (TE p.50).

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: Unsatisfactory
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The TE includes a discussion of M&E design at entry, but no score. This TER assesses M&E design for this project to have been unsatisfactory due to the poor logframe set in place and the lack of clear M&E arrangements for the project.

The 2001 Project Brief included a logframe, which was at activity and output level rather than at outcome level. It was also very complex, including “43 outputs, 126 indicators and 153 activities” (TE p.8). The 2004 Project Document included a “Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) that specifies indicators for various levels of results, data collection and analysis methods, frequency of data collection and reporting, responsibility and use” (PD p.70). This PMF aimed to guide the monitoring and evaluation system. According to the TE, the M&E system for the project was only really developed in 2005, when the logframe was first revised. The logframe was further revised in 2006, and currently appears more workable, realistic and aligned with best practices (TE p.8).

However, it is unclear whether this new logframe has been formally endorsed, and it appears to “be more a reflection of what the project is doing than a document that sets direction. Almost none of those interviewed recognized the revised logframe document or felt that they had been part of its development” (TE p.26). The revised logframe still lacks clear and measurable indicators for biodiversity conservation, which, if Phase B of the project had taken place, would have made it difficult to assess whether program activities had led to real changes on the ground (TE p.14). Finally, several output and income indicators did not have target, or dates by which they were meant to be achieved.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE includes a discussion of M&E implementation, but no score. This TER assesses M&E Implementation this project to have been satisfactory due to the fact that all sub-programs appear to have set up and implemented useful and well-structured M&E tools that provide useful information for program management.

The Performance Management Framework that was initially defined, and later redefined, for the project, does not appear to have been implemented. There was generally a lack of clarity regarding the basis for the M&E system for the project, and even the program evaluators did not know which logframe to use. The TE reports that “The M&E system is based on the logframe presented in the Project Support Document and so it is not entirely clear how this will now apply to the revised logframe under application since January 2007 and presented to the MTE as the current basis of planning” (TE p.6).

That being said, M&E activities did take place as part of the project. A summary of M&E implementation and its TE rating is provided for each of the sub-programs in the table below.

Sub-programme	Rating	Justification	References
Cambodia	Satisfactory	The M&E system delivers impressive clarity in reporting on indicators, and produces high-quality M&E reporting.	TE pp.14-15
Lao	Satisfactory	Timely and high-quality quarterly reports have been made, as well as a very thorough annual report.	TE p.28
Thailand	Satisfactory	Basic systems for M&E are in place, but baselines are incomplete. Program is responsive to opportunities and emerging priorities, identified through day-to-day working and through monitoring and evaluation activities.	TE p.41
Vietnam	Moderately Satisfactory	The M&E and reporting system that has been put in place appears to provide good oversight on what is being achieved on the programme. The programme is not using the required GEF biodiversity tracking tool.	TE p.52
Regional Programme	Satisfactory	The M&E and reporting system that has been put in place is adequate for providing oversight on what is (not) being achieved on the programme. Good use of the ‘five stories’ approach to make the findings of M&E easier to comprehend.	TE p.62

This TER generally agrees with the assessments made by the TE. There are examples of national programs that made some revisions to their activities based on the M&E information, and M&E activities appear to be surprisingly strong despite the overall underspecified M&E framework in the project documents.

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: Unsatisfactory
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The TE rated the ‘program conceptualization and design’ as marginally satisfactory (TE p.9). This TER rates implementation as unsatisfactory due to several major implementation problems that took place.

The first implementation problem was the major delays that caused the project to have a three-year preparatory phase. While the project’s implementation arrangement were very complex due to the programming spanning four countries and including a regional component, more should have been done to better prepare the project and ensure a smoother start.

The project was also designed to take place in two phases, one of which ended up not taking place due to (i) program delays and (ii) lack of funding. The appropriateness of this two-phase approach is questionable, and more should have been done during the planning stage to avoid this outcome. This is the second important implementation problem that took place.

The fact that it was not clearly communicated to the project implementation partners that the Phase B funding was not guaranteed is the third important implementation problem that took place. Lacking this information, partners could not make the necessary programme and financial arrangements to better ensure program sustainability, and reduced the likelihood of Phase B being adequately funded.

Finally, a fourth important implementation problem is that “Government and external partners did not seem to be aware that the logframe had been revised at all”, which had important implications on the activities the sub-programs were expected to engage in.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE does not assess quality of project execution as a whole, but provides a rating for how well each of the sub-programs was implemented. On average, those ratings are satisfactory. This TER also assesses project execution as satisfactory.

Project execution assessments across sub-programs are summarized here:

Sub-programme	Rating	Justification	References
Cambodia	Satisfactory	Much of the work was sub-contracted to local NGOs, a process that has been managed extremely well. The program is overall being executed very well. Budget allocations are somewhat unpredictable.	TE pp. 13-16
Lao	Satisfactory	Good relationships with partners and stakeholders, and overall good execution. However, Government of Lao staff still feel they do not understand what the project is about, and reporting lines needs to be clarified.	TE p.27
Thailand	Highly Satisfactory	Flexible approach responding to opportunities. Relationships are good, as are technical capabilities, and good use has been made of new technologies.	TE pp. 40-41
Vietnam	Satisfactory	Flexibility in programme management and very positive relationships with stakeholders. Problems with the livelihoods component of the program need to be addressed.	TE pp.50-51
Regional Programme	Marginally Satisfactory	The programme has been adaptive, made use of logframe, work plans and new technologies, while technical capacities are also good. However, relationships are at times poor, and this has hampered at least some of the progress, and may be an issue in the future.	TE p.62

Overall, after the program was operational (after 2005), the various sub-programs appear to have been adequately executed.

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.

There was no environmental change reported.

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.

There was no socio-economic change reported in the TE.

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

According to the last project PIR (2007), only 1 protected area has already improved management capacity as a result of this project (Tram Chim National Park, Vietnam, 7700 ha) (2007 PIR p.37).

b) Governance

Not applicable

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.

There were no unintended impact reported in the TE.

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.

Not applicable – it was too early in this project to be pursuing opportunities for replication or scale up.

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 lessons learnt were discussed throughout the report, and largely rolled in to the recommendations made and summarized in the following section.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE presents several recommendations for the remainder of Phase A, as well as for a potential Phase B.

Phase A:

1. Building stronger national ownership of MWBP planning and priority- setting:

Strong national ownership will be the key constituent of an environment that will enable the development and implementation of a subsequent phase of MWBP Phase A. Many of the recommendations below are designed to support that end. As a guiding principle for all countries, institutional realignment should seek to advance harmonization with government structures and reporting systems. ^[1]_[SEP]

2. Establish a Senior Management Team to complement a restructured Project Management Unit:

The MTE recommends that the four NPCs form a Senior Management Team (SMT) – to be chaired by the UNDP Programme Manager. This ‘SMART’ Team would be complemented by the PMU, which would be given new terms of reference. ^[1]_[SEP]

3. Increase and clarify country budget allocations to enable clear budget planning: ^[1]_[SEP]

The MTE proposes giving a stronger role to NPOs, host agencies and partners in budget allocation, and ensuring that budgets are set and respected at the beginning of the annual planning process. Funds ‘freed-up’ by the re-organization of regional management should be shifted into country budgets. ^[1]_[SEP]

4. Strengthen engagement of technical partners in work plan development and implementation :

Relationships with existing (non government) partners require improvement in some circumstances. NPOs would have responsibility for ensuring that partners are engaged actively in national work plan revision, starting with work plan consultation workshops with partners in all countries immediately after country budget approval. Wherever possible and feasible, funds should continue to be delegated to government agencies, institutes and non-government partners, where these have added value in working at national and site level. ^[1]_[SEP]

5. Shift focus towards demand-driven technical support:

Based on work plans, NPOs would have responsibility for identifying and contracting-in technical support as required e.g. on environmental economics, communications, biodiversity conservation, training and M&E. ^[1]_[SEP]

6. Retain and strengthen institutional linkage with MRC:

Institutional linkages with MRC have not proven as active as anticipated, but the mission still considers this a very important linkage. The mission therefore recommends that this link be maintained and strengthened, in particular, through securing agreement on more senior-level engagement from environment programme at key meetings (bearing in mind that MRC EP capacity is also very stretched), and taking opportunities to engage MRC technical inputs into decentralized work planning for country components (see above). ^[1]_[SEP]

7. Strengthen the biodiversity focus of work across the programme:

The enabling environment established by MWBP must be capable of delivering positive biodiversity outcomes in all partner countries. Cambodia and Lao PDR need to make considerable progress on this issue in the time remaining if a platform for future GEF support is to put in place.

Phase B

8. Initiate discussions and Planning for Phase B at country level:

NPOs(in conjunction with the respective country offices) should commence discussions with host agencies as soon as possible on options for Phase B, building on Phase A achievements, and seeking to ensure that a) ongoing livelihood components continue to receive support where needed and b) biodiversity conservation outcomes are supported, particularly at site level (especially Cambodia).

9. Proposals for Phase B financing should be diversified and less' GEF dependent':

The prospects for GEF support vary from country-to-country, requiring tailored financing strategies to be developed for each case. The MTE urges a re-think of recent MWBP ideas for GEF financing of country and regional work from GEF funds – via 4 national MSPs and an Adaptation to Climate Change MSP to support regional inputs.

10. Refocusing the Regional Component:

For the remainder of Phase A, most existing regional functions will be assumed by the streamlined PMU providing support to the SMT. For Phase B, the MTE considers that the Regional Component should be more modest than that undertaken during Phase-A, with less emphasis on directly providing technical inputs, and with more emphasis on coordination, establishing linkages, developing proposals to secure additional finances, and providing small grants for innovative approaches.

11. Technical support strategies should be selected on the basis of added value, and should draw on expertise within the partner agencies.

Technical support arrangements will vary between countries. In Vietnam, a stronger role for the IUCN Country programme should be explored in delivery of support at national and provincial level. In Cambodia, engaging technical support from an established and competent conservation NGO would seem to be an obvious priority, to complement ongoing work on development/livelihood aspects, and inputs from host and line ministries and research institutes. In Thailand, technical support by local experts can easily be identified, while in Lao PDR external assistance (e.g. from IUCN Lao PDR, or other agencies) is likely to be required.

12. Livelihoods and biodiversity: MWBP should use Phase B to develop and disseminate the lessons learned from its innovative livelihood work and encourage new thinking about the broader and applied values of wetland biodiversity. This would also contribute to the implementation of the Ramsar COP 9 Resolution 14 on Wetlands and Poverty Reduction, in which all four MWBP countries have expressed a strong interest.

(TE pp.75-79)

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 TE does report on and assess relevant outcomes and achievements.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is consistent, the evidence (or discussion of the lack thereof) is complete, and ratings are always very well justified.	HS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The sustainability of each of the sub-programs was always discussed, and the problems with project exit strategies were clearly outlined.	HS

To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learned and recommendations appear comprehensive, and they are supported by evidence.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	No, none of the cost figures are available in the report.	HU
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	M&E systems are well discussed and clearly assessed.	S
Overall TE Rating		S

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

No additional sources of information were used in the preparation of this terminal evaluation report.