

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
			Review date:	
GEF Project ID:	1679		<u>at endorsement</u> (Million US\$)	<u>at completion</u> (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	1969	GEF financing:	0.97	0.97
Project Name:	Strengthening Romania's PA System by Demonstrating Govt-NGO Partnership in Maramures Park	IA/EA own:	0.05	0.14
Country:	Romania	Government:	1.01	1.28
		Other*:	0.27	0.12
		Total Cofinancing	1.33	1.57
Operational Program:	OP# 4, Focal Area: Biodiversity	Total Project Cost:	2.30	2.54
IA	UNDP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	NFA, local governments, WWF	Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		May 27, 2005
		Closing Date	Proposed:	Actual:
TER Prepared by: Pallavi Nuka	TER peer reviewed by: B. Wadhwa	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing (in months): 36	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing (in months): 52	Difference between original and actual closing (in months): 16
Author of TE: Josh Brann		TE completion date: Nov. 19, 2009	TE submission date to GEF EO:	Difference between TE completion and submission date (in 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 AND KEY FINDINGS

Please refer to document GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for terminal evaluation reviews for further definitions of the ratings.

Performance Dimension	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office evaluations or reviews	GEF EO
2.1a Project outcomes	HS	HS	N/A	HS
2.1b Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	L	N/A	ML
2.1c Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	S	N/A	S
2.1d Quality of implementation and Execution	HS	HS	N/A	HS
2.1e Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	N/A	S

2.2 Should the terminal evaluation report for this project be considered a good practice? Why?

Yes, the TE report provides a comprehensive assessment of project performance, including an evaluation of M&E plan implementation, outcomes and sustainability.

2.3 Are there any evaluation findings that require follow-up, such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, mismanagement, etc.?

No such findings were noted in the TE report.

3. Project objectives

3.1 Project Objectives

a. What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?

The ProDoc states that the project’s objective was to ensure that “the biodiversity of Maramures Mountains Natural Park in Romania’s Northern Carpathian Mountains is effectively conserved by adopting an effective protected area management model.”

There were no changes to GEOs during implementation.

b. What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation? (describe and insert tick in appropriate box below, if yes at what level was the change approved (GEFSEC, IA or EA)?)

The development objective of the project is summarized in the ProDoc as the project’s goal, which was to strengthen “Romania’s national system of protected areas by disseminating lessons and good practices extracted from the Maramures demonstration of an effective protected area model.”

The ProDoc lists three expected outcomes

1. Stakeholders make Maramures Mountains Natural Park (MMNP) fully operational
2. Stakeholders strengthen environmental governance across Maramures.
3. Stakeholders recognize and begin to realize real value in natural capital, strengthening the link between sustainable use and conservation within MMNP.

Overall Environmental Objectives	Project Development Objectives	Project Components	Any other (specify)

c. If yes, tick applicable reasons for the change (in global environmental objectives and/or development objectives)

Original objectives not sufficiently articulated	Exogenous conditions changed, due to which a change in objectives was needed	Project was restructured because original objectives were over ambitious	Project was restructured because of lack of progress	Any other (specify)

4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1.1 Outcomes (Relevance can receive either a satisfactory rating or a unsatisfactory rating. For effectiveness and cost efficiency a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU will be used)

a. Relevance	Rating: S
<p>By operationalizing an effective management regime in the Maramures Mountains Nature Park (MMNP) and mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into economic development planning in Maramures county, the project is relevant to both the operational strategy of the GEF, and the strategic objectives of the biodiversity focal area. Outcomes are consistent with Romania’s national environmental and development priorities. Outcomes support Romania’s obligations as party to the CBD and the Carpathian Convention. The Romanian National Development Plan for 2004-2006 identified environmental protection as the second national priority, including nature conservation and sustainable development and sustainable resource use. Outcomes are also relevant to the Romanian Rural Development Strategy for 2007-2013 which identifies “sustainable use” of resources and preservation of resources and habitats as key means of promoting rural development. Project outcomes also support Romania’s Sectoral Operational Program for the Environment (EU accession process) and the implementation of adequate management systems for nature protection.</p>	

b. Effectiveness	Rating: S
<p>Through the creation of the Maramures Regional Forest Administration (MRFA), the project has established an effective protection regime for the 133,345 ha protected area (PA) in the Carpathian Mountains and laid the foundation for the establishment of a trans-boundary biosphere reserve with the Ukrainian Carpathian Biosphere Reserve. The project has successfully integrated a landscape-scale conservation plan with park management, significantly improved land-use and resource management planning capacity, reduced institutional barriers for effective PA management, and demonstrated the economic benefits of sustainable management. Through project activities the number of hectares under strict conservation management has been increased to 18,769 compared to an initial target of 7,800. The METT indicator for the MRFA went from a baseline score of 19 in 2005, to a score of 70 in 2009. The project has been extremely successful in creating an institution, changing legal norms, involving local communities and mainstreaming biodiversity into development planning.</p>	
<p>Outcome 1: MMNP Operational In the period of four years the protected area has gone from being newly gazetted and existing only on paper, to having a fully functioning administrative unit and a comprehensive management plan approved at the local government level. Stakeholders were intensely involved in developing the plan and as a result the project has strong working partnerships with regional and local government institutions in implementing and enforcing the management plan and zoning system. Protected area management and regulations have been mainstreamed into county and municipal development procedures. Public awareness and understanding of the importance of ecosystem services and the role of conservation has been increased through a communications program, and materials distributed to local schools.</p> <p>During the implementation period, more than 50% of the forest area (~43,000 ha) in the park has been restituted to its original (pre-1960) owners. Significant progress has been made during the last year in changing the local forest harvesting methods. Nearly 20 local forest owners are currently being assisted in the development of forest management plans, and illegal clearings have significantly decreased.</p>	
<p>Administrative capacities have been enhanced through staff training and workshops, as well as improvements buildings and equipment. The only output that was not realized was the implementation of a biodiversity monitoring system. The management plan also has not been approved at the national level for reasons outside the project's control.</p>	
<p>Outcome 2: Environmental Governance Strengthened The project has succeeded in mainstreaming park management and biodiversity considerations into local development and economic investment planning through the park zoning system, which was approved by all stakeholders. The land restitution law (2000) had weakened protected area authorities' say over construction/development permits. This project was able to get all the MMNP stakeholders to agree to a construction/development permitting process that takes into account conservation and sustainability criteria. The MRFA also has a place, as a full member, on the Technical Committee that determines which proposed developments require environmental impact assessments. On the ground enforcement of protected area regulations is carried out in partnership with the Forest Inspectorate (division of the NFA) and local law enforcement units. The project has also identified measures for maintaining the traditional regional architecture and these guidelines were incorporated into the region's first urban development plan. 10 park communities have made these guidelines mandatory for all new construction.</p>	
<p>Outcome 3: Stakeholders Realize Value in Natural Capital Although the project did not achieve FSC certification of national forests in the MMNP, significant progress was made in identifying paths for sustainable economic growth. The project supported pilot activities to demonstrate that burning sawdust for energy is profitable and promote the use of wood waste in municipal heating boilers. These demonstrations spurred foreign investment in a sawdust briquette plant. This will reduce the impact of sawdust waste on riparian ecosystems. The project also partnered with WWF to develop a project proposal under European Neighborhood Policy Instruments to improve the riparian zones and address waste management. The Total Economic Value (TEV) study commissioned by the project has identified several possible strategies for local communities to realize benefits from their ecosystems and will provide a useful tool for guiding economic investment in the region. The TE report notes that "stakeholders and project participants identified the TEV study supported by the project as a seminal achievement in Romania." The project has also promoted the area's potential for tourism potential through cultural events, investment in tourism infrastructure, and the preparation of the tourism master plan.</p>	
c. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: HS
<p>Based on information in the TE report and the PIRs, project implementation was highly cost-effective. The project did not experience any delays or lags in implementation. The extension granted was necessary to fully achieve outcomes and did not increase costs. The results achieved are commensurate with or exceed the level of investment from the GEF and co-financing partners. The project succeeded in leveraging additional funds following project approval, and the MRFA team has developed the capacity to apply for and access new financing sources available from the EU.</p>	

4.1.2 Impacts: summarize the achieved intended or unintended impacts of the project.

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= Likely (no or negligible risk); 3= Moderately Likely (low risk); 2= Moderately Unlikely (substantial risks) to 1= Unlikely (High risk)). The ratings should be given taking into account both the probability of a risk materializing and the anticipated magnitude of its effect on the continuance of project benefits.

a. Financial resources	Rating: L
<p>The National Forest Administration (NFA) will provide at least the baseline level of funding required for MRFA staff salaries and infrastructure maintenance. The NFA is under contract through 2014 to support the protected areas under its supervision. The MRFA has developed the capacity to apply for additional funding through EU supported opportunities, and other external programs and has developed multiple project proposals, in particular for funding from the environmental EU Sectoral Operational Program. The MRFA has begun to develop some direct revenue streams from tourism and development permit fees, but these remain insignificant for the park's overall budget. As noted in the TEV report, there is tremendous potential for realizing economic benefits from the area's natural resources.</p>	
b. Socio-political	Rating: ML
<p>The management plan has been approved by all local stakeholders. There is extensive local support for sustaining project outcomes and the MRFA operates in close partnership with NGOs and civil society.</p> <p>There is a small risk of increasing dissatisfaction with the plan by landowners whose land use rights are restricted. The current compensation system for restrictions on private land use is non-functional, and by default the administration is held liable by landowners. The situation is exacerbated by Romania's inability to fulfill requirements for the EU Natura 2000 system, and the current economic crisis. Even with the possibility of EU financed payments, multiple issues would have to be ironed out, such as dealing with associative landowners and landowners who may have land in a MMNP core area that is not covered by the Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>There is also a small risk that support by local governments/politicians for the MMNP management plan may also wane as the restrictions on development and illegal activity are actually enforced. The TE report highlights an incident in which the MRFA did not approve plans for a EURO30 M hydro-power development, and lost the support of the community's mayor. Enforcement may threaten erosion of the local support base. A comprehensive communications strategy is required to prevent this.</p>	
c. Institutional framework and governance	Rating: ML
<p>There are multiple low-level institutional risks to the sustainability of project outcomes. Capacity in the MMNP administrative unit remains weak posing a risk to sustaining outcomes and future achievement of outcomes such as the biodiversity monitoring system. The remoteness of the area and low pay offered makes it difficult to recruit qualified personnel. Furthermore, the effective operation of the park administration is also highly dependent on the few individuals involved in implementation rather than on the organization as a whole. The loss of one or two individuals could significantly hamper park management.</p> <p>At the national level, the governance framework for protected areas management is unclear. The National Protected Agency, established to coordinate and rationalize PAs management at the national level, was in existence for only 3 months in 2009 before it was de-funded. While the Agency is seeking a home in one of the Ministries, possibly the MoE, the management plans submitted by MMNP (and other parks) have not been approved. A recent amendment to the national protected area legislation is a negative development for the protected area system as a whole, but should have limited effect in MMNP thanks to the management mechanisms put in place with support of relevant regional government institutions and stakeholders.</p> <p>Another risk arises from the national land restitution process. Currently there is no deadline for restitution claims, and no limit to appeals, meaning that the extent of government land tenure in MMNP in the near future cannot be definitively known. This creates challenges for management planning, and for initiatives such as certification of NFA forests.</p>	
d. Environmental	Rating: ML
<p>The main environmental risk is illegal logging by small private land holders and by larger timber companies. Neither type poses a critical threat to the ecological integrity of the park, but the scale of illegal logging by timber companies is not fully known. Large scale illegal logging may threaten the integrity of the park administration if it is exposed and lead to a cascade effect of illegal logging in the park.</p> <p>Low level threats remain from sawdust and wood waste dumping in riparian areas as well as gravel harvesting from</p>	

river beds. An unknown risk is the mining waste from the decommissioned mines potentially contaminating ground water and riparian systems.

4.3 Assessment of processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

a. Co-financing. To what extent was the reported cofinancing (or proposed cofinancing) essential to achievement of GEF objectives? Were components supported by cofinancing well integrated into the project? 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 it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Total actual co-financing was \$1.57 M, about 13% higher than was expected at the time of endorsement. The project leveraged the additional funding from local government bodies. About 2/3 of the co-financing was in kind, through staffing for the project team and provision of equipment and infrastructure. Contributors included UNDP Trust Fund (\$0.1 M), the EU Instrument and the WWF(\$0.1K). Another \$1.37 M came through government (NFA and municipal agencies) sources. Co-financing was well integrated into project activities and critical for achieving outcomes. The NFA has invested over \$1.1 M in the project and will also provide ongoing funding for the MMNP management.

b. 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 it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project was originally planned for 36 months, but within the first year it was apparent that the planned project activities for the first year were too ambitious, and an extension of one year was requested at the end of the first year of implementation. An additional no-cost extension was requested from June 30 to October 31, 2009 at the end of the project to allow for the completion of the final activities.

c. Country Ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability highlighting the causal links.

The project was highly country driven. The NGO Ecological Society of Maramures was primary driver in catalyzing the project proposal and forming the Maramures Biodiversity Consortium, the basis of the current MMNP management plan. The project was developed by the National Forest Administration (NFA) and implemented by NFA staff. The high degree of stakeholder participation in project development and implementation has resulted in a management plan that is acceptable to most if not all parties, increasing the likelihood of its sustainability. The NFA has been active in supporting implementation and has committed on-going funding to support MMNP management. The only area where country ownership could have been stronger was in the level of staffing of the PMU. The PMU consisted of only two NFA employees who took significant additional workload to carry out project activities.

National level support for the project (outside the NFA) is weaker. The National Protected Areas Agency has not been funded and this threatens the integrity of the overall protected areas system in Romania.

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

The M&E plan in the ProDoc included a log-frame matrix, a project workplan, detailed budget, and clearly outlines procedures for project monitoring. The log-frame had relevant and measurable indicators for each outcome as well as means of verification and assumptions and risks. The indicators specified in the ProDoc log-frame meet SMART criteria. The ProDoc log-frame was to be further elaborated in an inception report. Monitoring was to be undertaken through steering committee meetings, UNDP field visits, annual workplans, and PIRs, as well as a mid-term and final evaluation. Sufficient funding for M&E was included in the budget.

b. M&E plan Implementation Rating (six point scale): S

The M&E plan was implemented according to the design. The M&E system was used in decision making and adaptive management. The log-frame was revised in the inception report and again informally during implementation and targets were revised in cases where performance quickly exceeded original targets. The project monitored both activities and impacts. The biodiversity monitoring system was not implemented so the project did not collect data on species levels or ecosystem services.

Internal project monitoring was effective with monthly workplans, quarterly reports to UNDP and annual APR/PIRs. The project team met weekly to discuss implementation and monthly with UNDP to review workplans. Recommendations of the mid-term review were implemented by the project team and the team produced an adaptive management report.

4.6 Assessment of Quality of Implementation and Execution

a. Overall Quality of Implementation and Execution (on a six point scale): S

b. Overall Quality of Implementation – for IA (on a six point scale): S

Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as quality of the project design, focus on results, adequacy of supervision inputs and processes, quality of risk management, candor and realism in supervision reporting, and suitability of the chosen executing agencies for project execution.

The project was implemented by UNDP-Romania. Implementation was efficient and timely. The quality of supervision and oversight by UNDP is rated highly in the TE report. Adequate training in UNDP financial and procurement processes was provided for the project staff. The TE report notes that the project team in weekly contact with the UNDP country office. UNDP input was critical to developing the institutional capacity required to implement a complex protected areas management plan. Oversight and supervision was consistent throughout the entire implementation lifetime despite significant staff turnover in the post of UNDP Energy & Environment Officer.

Monitoring and supervision missions have been carried out by the UNDP country officer and the regional technical advisor, every quarter in the first years of implementation and less frequently in the latter years. Furthermore, the UNDP Resident Representative visited the MMNP on the occasion of several public events organized by the project, providing valuable support and visibility for the project at the regional and national levels.

Financial management and reporting were carried out with a high degree of professionalism and responsibility. Procurement was conducted without problem. Supervision reporting was by UNDP was timely and thorough. Mid-term and final evaluations were conducted as planned. The PIRs prepared by the project team and reviewed by UNDP provide comprehensive and realistic summaries of project activities.

c. Quality of Execution – for Executing Agencies¹ (rating on a 6 point scale) HS

Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as focus on results, adequacy of management inputs and processes, quality of risk management, and candor and realism in reporting by the executive agency.

The project was executed by the NFA, a national institution under contract from the MoE, which is responsible for managing state owned forests. The NFA's regional branch, the Maramures Regional Forestry Administration (MRFA), housed the project and the project team was the MRFA staff (the park manager and the chief accountant). In the latter years of the project the MRFA hired additional permanent staff.

Quality of execution received excellent ratings from both the TE and the UNDP Country Officers. The project team was highly qualified and coordination with partner agencies was well managed. The project team and the NFA have maintained a strong focus on results and successfully delivered an effective PA management system that has the potential for replication at other sites. Activities were executed according to the action plan outlined in the Inception Report with some adaptive. Management was very effective in adapting activities to changing realities such as weakening of national legislation on PAs and the ongoing land restitution process. The project team fostered extensive stakeholder participation (local authorities, NGOs, landowners) in developing the MMNP management plan. The highly consultative process has contributed to reduced risk of conflict with stakeholders over the park's management and enforcement regime.

Internal project monitoring was consistent, reliable, and in accordance with the M&E plan. Procurement and financial managed followed UNDP procedures and guidelines. Reporting by the project team provided adequate detail on outputs and progress towards outcomes.

5. PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

a. What is the outlined outcomes-to-impact pathway?

Briefly describe the logical sequence of means-to-end linkages underlying a project (Outcome to impact pathways are the means-ends relationships between project outcomes and the intended impacts – i.e. the logical results chain of activity, output, outcome and impact)

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Data collection and information management support	MMNP designated a national PA and landscape-scale	PA management integrated into regional planning systems and	Effective PA management leading to improvement in

¹ Executing Agencies for this section would mean those agencies that are executing the project in the field. For any given project this will exclude Executing Agencies that are implementing the project under expanded opportunities – for projects approved under the expanded opportunities procedure the respective executing agency will be treated as an implementing agency.

<p>Support to develop PA management plan in consultation with NGOs, local governments, civil society</p> <p>PA management infrastructure investment</p> <p>Staff hiring, training, and capacity building activities</p> <p>Environmental education and awareness programs</p>	<p>biodiversity conservation plan for MMNP</p> <p>Stronger ties to local communities and NGOs, and a mechanism for civil society input to forest management.</p> <p>Local governments' capacity for regional planning is enhanced.</p> <p>MMNP staff trained and equipped to implement management plan in partnership with NGOs.</p> <p>Biodiversity baselines established, monitoring system operational.</p> <p>Mechanism to foster knowledge and investment in 'green' SMEs.</p> <p>Demonstration projects on wood, ecotourism, and certified forest production.</p>	<p>operating effectively in partnership with NGOs.</p> <p>Improved PA governance, including strengthened legal and institutional framework for administration of PAs.</p> <p>Stakeholders recognize and begin to realize the benefits of sustainable use and conservation.</p> <p>Project results replicated and the national PA's system is strengthened.</p>	<p>environmental status at both local and national levels.</p> <p>Biodiversity concerns incorporated into development planning and decision-making.</p> <p>Public support and identification with MMNP aims.</p>
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b. What are the actual (*intended or unintended*) impacts of the project?

Based on the assessment of outcomes [4.1.1] explain to what extent the project contributed to or detracted from the path to project impacts and to impact drivers (Impact drivers are the *significant factors* that, if present, are expected to contribute to the ultimate realization of project impacts and that are within the ability of the project to influence

The project has largely achieved the objective of establishing an effective protection regime for 133,345 ha in the Maramures Nature Park and it has signed a MoU with the Ukrainian Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (250,000 ha) for the creation of a transboundary biosphere reserve in the Carpathians. As a result of project activities, MMNP now has a fully functioning administrative unit, a comprehensive management plan agreed with all stakeholders, and working partnerships with regional and local government institutions and NGOs in implementing and enforcing the park management plan.

The project has had several positive environmental impacts. The number of hectares under strict conservation has increased to 18,769 ha (more than double the original target of 7,800). Stresses on riparian eco-systems have been reduced through demonstrations on sawdust pelleting and briquettes production. Over 4000 ta of sawdust are now consumed by a local processing plant (built with foreign investment) and municipal heating systems. The number of sawdust dump site has dropped to less than 30 from baseline of 100. Communities are also starting to invest in energy-efficient heating systems and some communities have been able to leverage the carbon sink potential of managed forests.

The project should also have a positive impact on local socio-economic conditions through the demonstration of sustainable income generation activities such as ecotourism. The Total Economic Value (TEV) study supported by the project was the first of its kind in the country and it was replicated by another UNDP/GEF project in Romania. As a result of the study the park has signed an agreement with a regional tourist agency to levy fees on visitors. WWF which is currently conducting an economic valuation of natural resources in two other areas has used the TEV study conducted in Maramures as a model.

Impacts outside the region on the national protected area system is limited. Maramures Mountains Nature Park is currently acknowledged by the NFA as one of Romania's leading protected areas in terms of the level and quality of management. However, replication of the MMNP project at other sites is hampered by lack of funding.

Impact drivers: Local support for biodiversity conservation is essential for project impacts. The project has clearly

increased the level of support, but it is important to continue fighting against the idea that conservation restricts local economic development. An effective communications strategy and demonstrated economic benefits from sustainable resource use are key drivers towards generating and maintaining support for conservation practices.

c. Drawing on the assessment of the likelihood of outcome sustainability [4.2], what are the apparent risks to achieved impacts being sustained and likely impacts being achieved?

The risks to sustainability of outcomes are moderate. Financial sustainability is likely given that the MRFA is part of the NFA. The more critical risks arise from institutional factors such as the level of administrative capacity in the MRFA, the incomplete restitution process, and the status of the national protected areas system. The project will not be able to sustain activities without sufficient staff capacity. The incomplete restitution makes planning difficult as there is certainty to government tenure over the land in the project area. Reversion of lands to the original owners (or descendents of) could erase some of the progress that has been made if the new owners do not see any benefit in managing their lands in accordance with the MMNP plan.

d. Evidence of Impact

Question	Yes	No	UA
i. Did the evaluation report on <i>stress reduction</i> ² at the <u>local level</u> (i.e. at the demonstration-pilot level, etc)?	X		
ii. If yes, describe the evidence that was provided whenever possible quoting quantitative evidence. Also discuss the scope ³ of such reductions given the range of concerns targeted by the project.			
The TE reports that sawdust dumping was reduced and the number of dump sites cut from 100 to less than 30.			
iii. Did the evaluation report stress reduction at the broader <u>systemic level</u> ?		X	
iv. If yes, describe the evidence that was provided whenever possible quoting quantitative evidence. Also discuss the scope of such reductions given the range of concerns targeted by the project.			
v. Did the evaluation report change in the <i>environmental status</i> at the local level (i.e. at the demonstration - pilot level, etc)	X		
vi. If yes, describe the evidence that was provided whenever possible quoting quantitative evidence. Also discuss the scope of change given the range of concerns targeted by the project.			
The areas of strict protection have been increased.			
vii. Did the evaluation report change in the environmental status at the broader systemic level?	X		
viii. If yes, describe the evidence that was provided whenever possible quoting quantitative evidence. Also discuss the scope of such change given the range of concerns targeted by the project.			
The entire park area is now under a single, coherent management regime with a core protection zone (18,770 ha), a sustainable management buffer zone (79,590 ha) and a sustainable development zone (35,000 ha).			
ix. Did the evaluation report change in the socioeconomic status at the local level?		X	
x. If yes, describe the evidence that was provided whenever possible quoting quantitative evidence. Also discuss the scope of change given the range of concerns targeted by the project.			
xi. Did the evaluation report change in the socio-economic status at the systemic level?		X	
xii. If yes, describe the evidence that was provided whenever possible quoting quantitative evidence. Also discuss the scope of change given the range of concerns targeted by the project.			
xiii. Did the evaluation provide evidence of any negative impacts (on drivers toward the projects intended impact, environmental status, socioeconomic status)? Describe the impacts that were documented and how severe were these impacts?			
e. Monitoring of impacts			
i. Are arrangements/institutions in place to monitor stress reduction/improvement in the environment and/or socio-economic conditions at the local level after project completion?	X		
ii. Are arrangements/institutions in place to monitor stress reduction/improvement in the environment and/or socio-economic conditions at the systemic level after project completion?		X	

² Stress = Pressure on the environment caused by human activities; Reduction=decrease of this pressure

³ Scope refers to the broadness of results against original objectives.

6. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assess the project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

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

1. Effective mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns at the regional or local level requires a sustainable mechanism by which the primary actor (project manager, park director, etc) can interact on a regular basis with key stakeholders to develop effective relationships.
2. Two mechanisms designed under this project provide concrete examples of how biodiversity concerns can be incorporated into economic development processes. One is to make park approval part of the construction permitting process. The second is to create a seat for the parks administration on the county technical commission responsible for environmental impact assessments of proposed developments.
3. The MMNP scientific council, consisting of highly technically qualified individuals, plays an important role in park administration. The separation of the scientific council from the park administration facilitates “unbiased” and transparent park management decision-making based on solid technical grounds. At the same time, this structure provides the park administration with an institutional buffer for potential stakeholder backlash to any particular decision.

b. Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation

1. The park administration and involved stakeholders should work to reduce the potential for single points of failure in the park management regime. For example, MMNP should hire an assistant park manager or train current staff to support this role in a practical manner. Specific attention should go toward the building of relationships between all park staff and regional and local government officials relevant to successful park management and administration.
2. MMNP should place a priority on increasing capacity to collect and manage environmental monitoring data, with the ultimate objective of implementing a regular and comprehensive and cost-effective monitoring system. Relatively current, quality data is critical for effective management in the long-term. The well-qualified staff currently in place to manage such a program should be further supported in this role. Examples of cost-effective community based monitoring techniques include examples such as community-based water quality monitoring, and an annual or bi-annual community bird species counting event.
3. With the goal of supporting a cost-effective environmental monitoring system, MMNP should explore the feasibility and utility of community-based water-monitoring programs (e.g. water keepers, adopt-a-stream, etc). Such programs also help increase community awareness and can be integrated with environmental education programs. This would also support a watershed management approach to environmental conservation.
4. MMNP should explore the possibility of partnering with local producer groups and tourism associations to develop and regional trademark or ecolabel for Maramures.
5. UNDP should institute an agency wide system for tracking in-kind co-financing in GEF projects in a systematic and well-documented manner (for example UNEP’s South China Sea project). This would bring accountability and transparency to the in-kind co-financing figures reported and demonstrate that much greater in-kind co-financing is actually committed in GEF projects than currently credited

7. QUALITY OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

7.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings based on other information sources such as GEF EO field visits, other evaluations, etc.

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 terminal evaluations review for further definitions of the ratings. Please briefly explain each rating.

7.2 Quality of the terminal evaluation report	Ratings
<p>a. To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</p> <p>The report contains a detailed and comprehensive assessment of outcomes and progress towards objectives and impacts.</p>	HS
<p>b. To what extent the report is internally consistent, the evidence is complete/convincing and the IA ratings have been substantiated? Are there any major evidence gaps?</p>	S

The report is internally consistent and complete; no evidence gaps were noted. Ratings are consistent with the PIR ratings.	
c. To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?	HS
The report assesses sustainability along four dimensions and discusses the potential for replicability and scaling up.	
d. To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	S
The lessons learned are well supported by the evidence presented on project implementation, although more lessons could be drawn highlighting why this project was so successful.	
e. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	S
Actual total costs and actual co-financing amounts presented.	
f. Assess the quality of the reports evaluation of project M&E systems?	S
The evaluation of the M&E system covers M&E design and implementation.	

8. SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE PRERATATION OF THE TERMINAL EVALUTION REVIEW REPORT EXCLUDING PIRs, TERMINAL EVALUATIONS, PAD.

No other sources were consulted.

The project is rated HS based on the outstanding impact of the project at the local, and possibly regional, level. The project objective is to effectively conserve the protected area through an effective management model – and the objective was fully achieved.

After four years of implementation, the project created, officially gazetted and supported the capacity building of the MMNP – the largest protected area within the network of Romanian protected areas managed by NFA .

The project implementation has successfully developed a model for an effective management through: (i) a detailed management plan with due budgetary considerations and action plan; (ii) an interrelational database, which constitutes the foundation of the day-to-day management decisions in the PA; (iii) through effective biodiversity and cultural values mainstreaming into local development planning; and (iv) through strong local support. In the long-term the project should also have a positive impact on the local poverty and other socio-economic issues through the demonstration of sustainable income generation activities such as ecotourism

The project has been implemented using an adaptive management extensively to secure project outcomes while maintaining adherence to the overall project design; this is especially important in the context of Romania that is going through numerous changes such as the recent legislative ammendment regarding the issuance of permits for local development initiatives in the park area (described in the DO rating). The project has developed management tools and a management model that has a real impact on the management of the other protected areas in the national network managed by NFA and on local smaller protected areas in Maramures county (on 34 protected areas at local level, out of which MMNP is managing 13). The MMNP has an already proven potential for replicating best practices in the region (i.e. the potential for creating a transboundary biosphere reserve). In December 2009, the MNNP and the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve in Ukraine have signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of the transboundary biosphere reserve and the set-up of the largest ecological corridor in the Northern Carpathians (aprox. 250 ha).

The MMNP administration exercised an effective management, backed up by a strong support from local authorities and NGOs and a continuous open dialogue with the new forest owners in order to promote sustainable forest harvesting. More than 50% of the forest area in the park has been restituted- approximately 43,000 ha. It is noteworthy that mainly during the last year, significant progress has been made in changing the local mentality on forest harvesting methods. Nearly 20 local forest owners are currently being assisted in the development of forest management plans, and illegal clearings have significantly decreased. The replication of the lessons learned and the best practices are embedded into the design of the project and the management model developed under this project will be replicated throughout the protected area system in Romania.