GEFM&E Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
			Review date:	
GEF ID:	17		at endorsement (Million US$)	at completion (Million US$)
IA ID	859	**GEF financing:**	0.75	0.75
Project Name:	Conservation of Globally Significant Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes through Conservation Farming	IA/EA own:		
Country:	South Africa	Government:		
		Other*:		
		Total Cofinancing	0.965	0.65
Operational Program:	1	**Total Project Cost:**	1.715	1.40
IA	WB	Dates		
Partners involved:	National Botanical Institute	Work Program date		NA
		CEO Endorsement		07/13/1999
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		02/05/2000
		Closing Date	Proposed: 03/31/2003	Actual: July 2004
Prepared by: Neeraj Negi	Reviewed by: DRAFT	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 37 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 53 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 16 months
Author of TE: NA		TE completion date: March 2005	TE submission date to GEF OME: Sept 2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 6 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

GEFME Ratings for project impacts (if applicable), outcomes, project monitoring and evaluation, and quality of the terminal evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), not applicable (N/A) and unable to assess (U/A). GEFME Ratings for the project sustainability: Highly likely (HL), likely (L), moderately likely (ML), moderately unlikely (MU), unlikely (U), highly unlikely (HU), not applicable (N/A), and unable to assess (U/A).
Please refer to document “Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems” for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. OED)	GEFME
2.1 Project outcomes	S	NA	NA	S
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	NA	NA	L
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	S	NA	NA	S
2.4 Quality of the	N/A	N/A	NA	S

evaluation report				

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

The information presented in the TE is patchy. Financial issues have not been adequately addressed.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

- **What are the Global Environmental Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**

According to the TE the project goal was, "*to evaluate conservation farming practices in four regions in South Africa that have globally significant levels of biodiversity so that these practices can be more widely applied as part of an overall conservation strategy.*"

The TE does not discuss whether there has been any change in the global environmental objectives of the project during its implementation. The project appraisal document submitted for CEO Approval is not accessible so no original document is available for verification. In absence of PAD, the PIR documents have been relied upon and it was found that the PIR 2001 and PIR 2002 list a slightly different version of the Global Environment Objectives. They describe the global environmental objective as:

"Contribute to sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity by evaluating conservation farming practices in SA that have globally significant biodiversity so that these can be more widely applied."

While there are differences between the global environmental objectives listed in TE and PIR 2001 & 2002, with reference to GEF mandate the differences are only semantic in nature.

- **What are the Development Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**

The TE lists following as project development objectives:

"a) To identify and evaluate the economic and ecological costs and benefits (in terms of biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and ecosystem stability and resilience) of conservation farming practices compared with more widespread land use and management practices.
(b) To develop and compare ecological economic models for land use and management practices included in objective (a).
(c) To synthesise information on conservation farming in South Africa and develop a database of information.
(d) To evaluate the role of conservation farming as part of national and regional strategies to conserve biological diversity in South Africa.
(e) To transfer information to targeted user groups (farmers, agricultural departments, nature conservation agencies)".

The 2001 & 2002 PIRs list the project development objectives as:

- *"Identify and evaluate the economic costs and benefits in terms of biodiversity and carbon sequestration of conservation farming practices as part of wider conservation strategy.*
- *Database and knowledge management system on impacts of selected land use on biodiversity and the ecological benefits of conservation farming.*
- *Ecological economic models for different land use.*
- *Database on carbon sequestration for different land uses.*
- *One model farm in each of the 4 selected regions.*

- *Capacity amongst agricultural extension officials to support conservation farming.*
- *Assessment of the value of conservation farming to biodiversity conservation farming in SA."*

These objectives are less specific than those listed in the TE. Thus, during implementation project development objectives were redefined to make them more specific. This has not been elaborated upon in the TE.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

- **What were the major project outcomes and impacts described in the TE?**

TE attributes following outcomes/outputs to the project:

- The project was successful in identifying and evaluating the economic and ecological costs and benefits (in terms of biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and ecosystem health) of conservation farming practices compared with more widespread land use and management practices. These components were measured across 4 sites, 27 farms and 18 land uses.
- The project was successful in developing and comparing ecological economic models for land use and management practices. Two methods were used for modeling, and in each case 7 to 10 days were spent in developing the initial model, which was then evaluated, tested and refined. The models help assess the implications of conservation farming.
- The information on conservation farming in South Africa has been successfully synthesized through creation of a database that has been posted on the project website and through a book that presents the results of the project. An historical perspective on development of conservation farming and its achievements was completed as a contribution to a World Bank publication on mainstreaming biodiversity.
- The project was able to provide a sound basis for evaluating the role of conservation farming in strategies to conserve biological diversity. It showed how and where conservation farming can make a contribution.
- Information from Conservation Farming Project has been transferred to target groups through workshops with stakeholders, presentations in scientific meetings, reports, maps, and a project website. As a result of the project twenty technical reports were completed, 20 scientific papers were published, and 10 academic theses (Hons., M.Sc. and PhD) were completed.

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes and impacts **Rating: S**

A Relevance

- **In retrospect, were the project's outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain**

Based on the information provided in the TE, the project outcomes have been consistent with the focal area/operation program strategies. The focus of the project was to evaluate conservation practices in South Africa and disseminate the information generated from the evaluation exercise to various stakeholders to promote biodiversity conservation. This is very relevant to the biodiversity focal area priorities and strategies.

S

B Effectiveness

- **Are the project outcomes as described in the TE commensurable with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (i.e. original or modified project objectives)?**

Given the nature of the project it is difficult to establish whether additional knowledge created by the project will eventually facilitate biodiversity conservation. However, based on the evidence cited in the TE, it could be inferred that since project has more or less achieved its intended outputs/outcomes it has been effective in accomplishing its development objectives.

S

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)
• **Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost – effective? How does the cost-time Vs. outcomes compare to other similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative or political problems?** This issue has not been addressed in the TE.
UA

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE.

A Financial resources **Rating: L**
The project was focused on knowledge generation and making the knowledge accessible to the key stakeholders. According to TE the National Botanical Institute (now South African National Biodiversity Institute - SANBI), which was the executing agency for the project, is continuing activities that are consistent with the objectives of the project. Thus, there is low likelihood that there are financial risks involved in project achieving its goals.
B Socio political **Rating: L**
The TE has not addressed this issue directly. However, since South Africa has been politically stable for past decade or so, especially political support for environmental activities has been stable, the risk on this front is low.
C Institutional framework and governance **Rating: L**
The TE has not addressed this issue directly. TE, however, informs about the recent move by the government to increase the mandate of SANBI (earlier known as National Botanical Institute) to include responsibilities covering the full diversity of South Africa's fauna and flora. This suggests the follow up on this project will have adequate institutional and governance support. Therefore the risks on this dimension could be considered to be very low.
D Environmental **Rating: UA**
The TE has not addressed this issue directly

A Financial resources	**Rating: L**
B Socio political	**Rating: L**
C Institutional framework and governance	**Rating: L**
D Environmental	**Rating: UA**

1. **Production of a public good.** According to the TE, the project generated new knowledge on conservation farming practices across 4 sites, 27 farms and 18 land uses.
2. **Demonstration**
3. **Replication.** According to the TE, the methods developed during the project are already being used with minor adaptations for new projects in this field. An example is a Working for Water funded project in the Succulent Thicket vegetation examining carbon-sequestration and rehabilitation of degraded vegetation.
4. **Scaling up.**

4.3 Assessment of the project's monitoring and evaluation system based on the information in the TE: MS

A. In retrospection, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient? (Sufficient and practical indicators were identified, timely baseline, targets were created, effective use of data collection, analysis systems including studies and reports,

and practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, when for the M&E activities) Rating: NA
This issue has not been addressed in the TE. Also since the original project documents are not accessible, a fair assessment on this dimension can't be done.
B. Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards projects objectives? Rating: S
According to the TE, the overall monitoring of the project was carried out by a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from a wide range of stakeholders. There was also a system for peer review of the work in place. To involve all the project research participants in evaluating the work being done by their colleagues, three research workshops were conducted. The researchers found that exchange of ideas with colleagues to be both supportive and helpful. The evidence cited in the TE suggests that the M&E system of the project operated smoothly during the conduction of the project.
C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was there existing capacity or was this capacity built to implement the M&E plan? Rating: NA
The TE does not discuss whether M&E was sufficiently budgeted. Since this was a targeted research project the outputs of the overall project must have been in congruence with the M&E system. For example the surveys to generate information on conservation farming must have also provided information for monitoring and evaluation of the project. Thus, it could be inferred that the M&E activities must have been sufficiently budgeted. The TE informs that a closure workshop to share was not budgeted for and was, therefore, not conducted. It, however, does not tell us
Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? The information on this front is very patchy and it is difficult to gauge whether project's M&E system could be considered as a good practice.

4.4 Lessons

Project lessons 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?
The major lessons listed by the TE are: • It is important to develop objective criteria for assessments because factors such as land use history and the location of the farm (e.g. heterogeneity) can obscure the impacts of current land use. • When developing enabling mechanisms for mainstreaming of biodiversity in the agricultural sector the fact that land use decision making is a complex process influenced by a variety of needs and satisfiers needs to be factored in. • A review of past successes in conservation farming showed that enabling mechanisms (extension services, research) were more effective at achieving a change in behavior than legal instruments, which were seldom applied. Many other lessons were listed in the TE but they may not be considered as major lessons as they were very narrow, project specific or were merely unsubstantiated opinions.

4.5 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 the "Criteria for the assessment of the quality of terminal evaluation reports" in the document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

4.5.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings

In some cases the GEF Office of M&E may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office of M&E. If substantial independent information has been collected, then complete this section with any comments about the project.
No such information was available to the reviewer.

4.5.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	**Ratings**
A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	S
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? Barring minor inconsistencies, report is satisfactory on this front.	S
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?	S
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Some lessons were too specific and most were unsubstantiated opinions.	MS
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? Information has not been provided.	U
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? M&E planning and budgeting has not been assessed. It does provide sufficient information on actual implementation of the M&E system, however.	MS

4.6 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**
Explain: The outputs/outcomes of the project are simple and verifiable. Also, the project does not claim any higher order direct global environmental impacts.		
Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.? No such issues have been flagged in the report.		

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

PIR 2001, 2002 & 2003