

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID: 1705		Review date:		
IA/EA Project ID: 2255	GEF financing:		0.97	0.97
Project Name: Carpathian Mountains Grasslands	IA/EA own:			
Country: Czech Republic	Government:	9.27	19.72	
	Other*:	1.09	0.11	
	Total Cofinancing	9.38	19.83	
Operational Program: OP#4 – Mountain ecosystems; Focal area: Biodiversity	Total Project Cost:	10.35	20.08	
IA: UNDP	<u>Dates</u>			
Partners involved: Environment Ministry (MoE), Agriculture Ministry (MoA)	Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		08/29/2005	
	Closing Date	Proposed: 08/31/08	Actual: 08/31/08	
TER Prepared by: Pallavi Nuka	TER peer reviewed by:	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing (in months): 0	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing (in months): 0	Difference between original and actual closing (in months): 0
Author of TE: Josh Brann, Miroslava Cierna-Plassman		TE completion date: 01/27/2009	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	S	S	-	S
2.1b Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	ML	-	ML
2.1c Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	MS	-	MS
2.1d Quality of implementation and Execution	HS	HS	-	HS
2.1e Quality of the evaluation report	-	-	-	S

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

Yes, the TE report presents a comprehensive overview of implementation, outputs, and achievement of objectives. The report includes detailed information on project costs, the M&E system, and prospects for sustainability of outcomes and impacts.

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 project objective (from the ProDoc) was:

“To strengthen the conservation management of globally significant biodiversity in species-rich mountain grassland habitats (grasslands and pastures) in two Protected Landscape Areas (PLAs) in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic.”

There were no changes to global environmental objectives 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 project’s development objectives (described as the end of project situation in the ProDoc) were two-fold:

1. To make the PLAs capable of working “effectively with private, communal and state landowners (farmers, local authorities and statutory agencies such as the Forest Administration) through training, joint management and collaborative monitoring activities towards the goal of conserving mountain grassland biodiversity.”
2. To bring in support from newly available EU funding opportunities for integrated rural development and “make the lessons learned and best practices developed widely available for replication throughout the Czech PLA system and the Carpathian Eco region as a whole.” The project was also supposed to provide tangible results enabling the EU financial support mechanisms “to be fine-tuned at a national level to strengthen their applicability for mountain grassland conservation.”

The project had four expected outcomes, which corresponded to project components:

1. Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000.
2. Farmers’ capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands are improved.
3. Monitoring and evaluation program for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place.
4. National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience.

There were no changes or revisions to project objectives, outcomes, or components. There was some revision and clarification of indicators and targets in the log-frame “to better specify the objectively verifiable impact and targets values, and to measure the progress and the success of the project.”

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
Project outcomes are consistent with GEF OP#4 and the aims of the Biodiversity focal area in supporting the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in mountain ecosystems.	

Outcomes are also relevant to national priorities and policies on environment and sustainable management of areas with important biodiversity. The project developed the capacities of a broad group of stakeholders and strengthened conservation management in two Protected Landscape Areas (PLA), Bile Karpaty and Beskydy (total area 13,360 ha). Landscape-scale conservation is a national priority governed by the Nature and Landscape Conservation Act, which established the national administrative system for a nation-wide system of PLAs. These two PLAs are included in the Czech candidate list of Special Protection Areas under the EU Habitats Directive. Outcomes are consistent with the aims of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the State Program for Nature and Landscape Protection (1998) in conserving and expanding mountain grasslands. The project outcomes directly contribute to the overall objective of State Environmental Policy (200) in improving environmental quality and implementing the principles of sustainable development. The project is also relevant to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Horizontal Rural Development Plan (HRDP), and the Operational Programme on Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture.

This project also enabled the Czech Republic to begin meeting its obligations under the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified 1993), in terms of preventing further loss or degradation of mountain grasslands and their biodiversity, developing local capacity and increasing awareness among farmers and the wider community of the biodiversity value of species and habitats under their management or use.

UNDP efforts in the Czech Republic have concentrated on building support for the application of sustainable development and environmental management, through capacity building for environmental planning and management. UNDP is helping to strengthen the country's capacities to comply with global environmental commitments, including those in the area of biodiversity protection. This project represented a significant government priority and was therefore an important intervention for UNDP support.

b. Effectiveness

Rating: S

The project has largely succeeded in realizing the development objective of strengthening conservation management in the Czech Republic's Carpathian Grassland ecosystems, and specifically within the two target PLAs. This was accomplished through extensive stakeholder involvement and consultation. The project has achieved the expected outcomes. The PLAs management capacities were significantly enhanced. The project implemented new incentives and participatory mechanisms to ensure sustainable use of grasslands by farmers. Human-ecosystem interactions in the grasslands were documented through biological surveys and impact monitoring, and a biodiversity monitoring system put in operation. And, the project has attempted to improve the national agri-environmental policies, which is a key step to improving biodiversity conservation in the PLAs.

Institutional capacity

Activities implemented under this component led to expected outcomes. The capacity of the administrative units of the two PLAs increased by 44% (12% targeted increases) as measured by METT scores. Training and tools developed by the project contributed to improving GIS capacity at the PLAs as well as the scientific basis for decision-making. For local farmers, the project provided extensive consultancy services and training on a variety of topics including (i) preparing and submitting proposals under the new agri-environmental program, (ii) cross-compliance with EU requirements on environmental quality of agricultural lands and (iii) feasibility research and marketing.

Incentives for conservation

As small and medium size farmers are crucial to the conservation of grasslands, activities under this component promoted the incentives available for extensive grazing and increased understanding of biodiversity protection among farmers. The Grassland Management Advice Units (GMAUs) established in each PLA office played an important role by improving communication between farmers and conservationists, and providing agricultural extension type services for farmers. The project carried out studies, trainings and workshops promoting sheep/goat grazing systems and traditional farming methods, and highlighting their benefits to biodiversity, rural development, and local economy. The project also developed guidelines providing farmers with information on EU technical standards for farming, the funds available for small and medium sized farms, and directives for processing of agricultural products. The project also tried to integrate regional branding with extensive farming. As a result, the number of certified organic farms has increased, and increasing numbers of farmers are taking advantage of subsidies for agri-environmental measures.

M&E program

A program to monitor and evaluate mountain and grassland biodiversity conservation and management has successfully been implemented and is contributing to policy making. The project conducted a comprehensive survey of grasslands species and undertook monitoring of the impact of farming practices on biodiversity. From research on impacts of various agricultural practices from six monitoring plots (3 sites in each PLAs), it was possible to determine the optimal extensive grazing intensity and patterns for different types of grassland ecosystems. While the data collected on grassland species, habitats and site management, is not yet integrated with information on farm structure, livestock and land use, the M&E system has already proved very useful in improving the overall quality of management and

decision-making within the PLAs. The results from the M&E program have also highlighted the urgent need for better integration of biodiversity conservation into agricultural policy at the national level.

National Agri-environmental policy

While a coherent, national, agri-environmental policy integrating biodiversity conservation was not achieved, several key measures have been implemented that laid the foundation for this outcome. A Memorandum of Understanding defining the roles and sharing the competencies related to agri-environmental schemes has been signed and endorsed between the MoA and MoE. The project reviewed the existing web of policies and defined several major deficiencies in the targeting of subsidies and on-the-ground implementation of agri-environmental measures in mountains areas. The project proposed a method of supporting small farmers as fundamental biodiversity enablers through environmentally friendly farming. While the majority of modifications to agri-environmental policy proposed by the project have not yet been accepted and integrated by the MoA, the project has contributed to better overall targeting of agri-environmental measures for management of high nature value areas.

c. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)

Rating: S

The project successfully completed all the planned activities within the 3-year timeframe and was able to leverage extensive co-financing (largely attributable EU accession). Project outcomes were achieved, as was the objective of strengthening conservation management in the Czech Republic’s Carpathian Grassland ecosystems, and specifically within the two target PLAs. The TE report notes that the project was “implemented in a highly efficient and cost-effective manner.” The project significantly enhanced local stakeholder capacity in the region, and according to the TE report “the project outputs are commensurate with the resources allocated.” The evidence provided in the TE report and the PIRs supports this assessment.

However, in assessing the cost-effectiveness of this project, it is important to keep in mind that the project’s targets were set low, essentially at the existing baseline. This was a departure from many GEF MSP which tend to set overoptimistic targets. Given the project’s low targets, it is not too remarkable that these targets were met or exceeded.

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: ML
There are limited financial risks to sustainability, but the financial sustainability of the local NGO formed as a result of project efforts, and the long-term financial sustainability of the regional branding and trademark associations are not yet certain. The project implementation approach of sub-contracting partners means that the individual and institutional capacity developed under the project will remain in place.	
b. Socio political	Rating: ML
The project has significantly strengthened the marketing and technical performance of extensive grazing practices through better targeting of agricultural funding and various marketing strategies, but there remain many socio-economic aspects that influence farmers’ livelihoods. The most important risks are the decreasing number of small-scale farmers (those often on the edge of economic viability), and inappropriate urban planning in protected landscapes.	
c. Institutional framework and governance	Rating: ML
The institutional framework for nature protection in the area is well set, with multiple institutions that have clearly defined roles – the MoA, MoE, PLA administrations, and other stakeholder organizations, such as the Sheep farmers’ association. Risks to institutional and governance sustainability are generally low, but, as mentioned previously, there are not yet clear directions about future biodiversity conservation measures in agri-environmental policies in the Czech Republic. Government and institutional bureaucracy remains a major hurdle to effective environmental and agricultural management.	
d. Environmental	Rating: ML
The main environmental risks are long-term, and will require ongoing efforts by concerned citizens, local organizations, and the PLA administrations to eventually overcome successfully. The primary environmental threats continue to be those present before the project. There are no identified acute risks to environmental sustainability in the Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy PLA regions.	

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?
Project cofinancing exceeded what was initially planned at the time of project approval, primarily due to a much larger amount of agricultural subsidies than anticipated disbursed to the region following EU accession. Central government cofinancing (grant amount only) was \$18.16 M, more than double the \$7.7 M committed in the ProDoc. This co-financing was in the form of subsidies and grants to the stakeholders throughout the project area to support project related activities. The actual total of local government grants was \$1.53 M, as proposed. NGOs and other sources contributed a total of \$0.11 M of in-kind and cash cofinancing; this was in line with the amounts committed in the ProDoc. The government co-financing was clearly essential for achievement of project outcomes with a co-financing ratio of close to 1:20.
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?
There were no delays in implementation and completion.
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.
This project benefitted from a high degree of country ownership that will help ensure dissemination and sustainability of project outcomes. The project implementation approach was predicated on strong collaboration among governmental bodies (MoA, MoE), research institutes, PLA administrations, NGOs, and farmers' groups. At the national level, the MoE was the MoA was main project coordinator as it is responsible for the PLA system, but the MoA was the main contributor of co-financing through support for agriculture related activities. MoE and MoA jointly chaired the Project Steering Committee and provided strategic oversight for the project. Project outcomes have been recognized at the highest levels of the MoE and MoA, ensuring that future development of national agri-environmental policy will incorporate biodiversity concerns. There was extensive local stakeholder (farmers, municipalities, farmers' associations) involvement in the development of the project concept and design, which resulted in a relatively smooth and efficient implementation since all parties understood the how and the why of the project. Local communities and farmers' associations were actively involved in the project's capacity building and demonstration activities. The active involvement of many small farmers and landholders in the project increases the likelihood that project outcomes will be sustained.

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): MU
The M&E system in the ProDoc includes an implementation timeline (work plan), a 'results framework' specifying project outputs or 'results indicators, and a 'monitoring plan' with indicators at component and outcome level as well as some baselines. The use of the term 'indicator' to mean both output and an outcome level indicator is confused. The ProDoc does <i>not</i> include a logical framework and does not specify the arrangements (monthly work plans, progress reports, PIRs, supervision missions, auditing, etc) for project-level monitoring and evaluation, which is normally included in a project's monitoring and evaluation plan.	
b. M&E plan Implementation	Rating (six point scale): MS
The M&E plan, as set out in the ProDoc, was not implemented. Instead, the inception period was used to develop a fresh log-frame and clarify the roles of project partners and the IA in monitoring and evaluation processes and progress towards objectives. The new log-frame and M&E plan were included in the inception workshop report, which noted that the log-frame would be further revised and submitted to the Steering Committee for approval by June 2006. The inception report log-frame did not include multiple baseline and target values for indicators, and the log-frame was revised three more times (2007 PIR). The indicators in the final log-frame meet some aspects of SMART criteria, but are often not directly relevant to the component's activities and expected outcome. Indicator targets for all aspects of the project were also quite modest, as they focused on maintaining the status quo rather than significantly improving the situation. Based on information in the TE report the log-frame served as a regular monitoring tool and was referenced by the project team and UNDP, to guide results-based management.	

4.6 Assessment of Quality of Implementation and Execution

a. Overall Quality of Implementation and Execution (on a six point scale): HS
b. Overall Quality of Implementation – for IA (on a six point scale): S
<i>Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as quality of the project design, focus on results, adequacy of</i>

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 IA for the project was the UNDP Country Support Team office in Bratislava (Slovakia). The project was designed through a participatory process that solicited input from local and national level stakeholders. Except for the incomplete M&E plan, project design was balanced and feasible. The choice of executing agency and the project manager, FOA, was appropriate. Based on the information in the TE report, supervision inputs and oversight by the UNDP was well managed and adequate given the experience and professionalism of the project team. During implementation UNDP developed an effective collaboration with the project team and with the executing agency, the MoE, despite not having a country presence in the Czech Republic.

Management by the IA was adaptive as evidenced by the revisions to the log-frame, the identification of risks, and prompt action in facilitating early closure of the project due to a plummeting exchange rate. UNDP also served on the Project Steering Committee and provided strategic guidance to the project. UNDP monitoring was conducted through annual supervisory field missions, annual audits and routine procurement reviews, as well as annual PIRs and the final evaluation. Based on the PIRs, supervision reporting was comprehensive and realistic.

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 Ministry of Environment (MoE) through its project partner the Foundation executed the project for Organic Agriculture (FOA). FOA, an NGO with over a decade of experience in supporting projects on organic agriculture and ecology, was contracted to implement activities and coordinate the project on behalf of the MoE. The project was arranged with FOA as a centralized node, and each of the partner organizations responsible for various elements of the whole project. This arrangement limited the need for a highly resourced project management unit, took advantage of expertise and contacts of people already in the field, and developed stakeholder ownership through participation in the execution of project activities and achievement of outcomes. The TE report notes that FOA successfully filled the role of central coordinator with a “high degree of professionalism.”

Project reporting and financial management were completed on time and without problems. The project management unit (PMU) followed all appropriate procedures in hiring and procurement of external consultants. Given FOA’s long experience in executing similar projects, there was relatively little need for UNDP input and support on the day-to-day operations of the project. The project duly filled reporting requirements and based on the PIRs reporting was detailed and accurate.

FOA was well able to adapt the project to changing circumstances and ensure project effectiveness. One adaptive management measure was the decision to eliminate the “Project Board,” which was considered unnecessary since the project also had a Steering Committee. Another instance of adaptive management was the move to (successfully) complete the project early due to budget shortcomings created by the fall in the value of the dollar.

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
Support to establish and expand priority locations biodiversity conservation in two PLAs and improve the management measures required for them.	Establishment of mountain grassland management advice units in the project PLAs with trained staff and adequate equipment	Strengthened management of globally significant biodiversity in two PLAs	Species levels maintained or increased and quality of habitats in grasslands improved.
Support to restore degraded habitats	Surveys and identification of priority mountain grassland sites	Institutional capacity in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands	Expanded area under PLAs management. Reduced threats to

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>Assistance for landowner-based management of mountain grassland biotopes based on newly available EU financial support mechanisms</p> <p>Activities to collect and disseminate lessons learned and best practices.</p> <p>Development of a biodiversity monitoring system and management tools for PLAs</p> <p>Analysis of existing agri-environmental policies to improve cross-compliance and integrate biodiversity concerns.</p>	<p>Training, seminars, workshops on land management techniques and funding opportunities</p> <p>Creation of a certified trademark for local organic and ‘green’ products</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of site biodiversity and economic benefits for landowners</p> <p>Annual publication on biodiversity status and ecologically sustainable uses of mountain grasslands</p> <p>Signed MoU between MoE and MoA to integrate biodiversity concerns into integrated agri-environmental policies</p> <p>European Conference on mountain grasslands</p>	<p>taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms</p> <p>Enhanced local stakeholder capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation oriented management</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation program for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management</p> <p>National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience</p>	<p>biodiversity on agricultural lands.</p> <p>Integration of biodiversity conservation into national agri-environmental policies.</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 already realized environmental impacts in terms of habitat restoration and reducing the rates of habitat loss. The majority of project indicator targets have been met, particularly those that can be actually linked to the project’s contributions. The project has almost tripled the area expected to be put under protection. 1,553 additional ha of grasslands are now included in the PLAs compared to the targeted 603 ha increase. 570 ha of formerly degraded land have been converted into biodiversity-rich grassland, which exceeds the target of 175 ha. Habitat degradation has been stopped or slowed over 981 ha (300 ha targeted) as measured by quality of vegetation. Biodiversity loss has also slowed based on the fact that populations of indicator species stayed constant or increased (with the exception of the Corncrake) over the implementation period. The effectiveness of PLAs in managing their sites increased by 44%, as measured by the METT scorecard, compared to the 12% targeted increase. And the biodiversity monitoring system developed by the project has improved the quality of decision-making within the PLAs and will ensure the sites’ ecological stability in the long term.

Stakeholder participation at the regional and local levels was excellent. The project was extremely effective in developing linkages among different stakeholder groups, such as conservationists and farmers. As a result of project activities, 327 farmers applied for grassland subsidies from EU programs and 1,030 applied for subsidies through national programs. The impact of support for organic farming exceeded expectations. By closure, 134 farms had shifted to organic production compared to a target number of 54. The project helped to develop and launch 3 regional product logos for traditional sheep and goat farming, organic products, traditional craft products, which will improve the economic viability of integrating conservation into the productive landscape. 8 other regions have followed the project’s example and registered similar product trademarks.

While the full extent of success of the project’s efforts to influence national level policy on agri-environmental measures remains to be seen, both the MoE and MoA have leveraged insights gained from the project and are working to develop a more integrated policy framework for biodiversity conservation. During its life, the project developed a wealth of ecological data and maps, which will continue to impact government policy.

Impact drivers: A key driver has been the good working relationships between project stakeholders. The project team cultivated strong communication and cooperation between and with national stakeholders (the MoA, MoE, FOA) and this made a tremendous contribution to achievement of the project outputs and efficient implementation of activities. Given that the project sought to influence the legislation process and improve the integration of biodiversity protection, which is still not fully recognized as an important issue by relevant ministries, this level of communication important for future realization of impacts. At the local level, the project engaged numerous stakeholders, notably farmers working in protected areas, site managers and researchers and as well active associations and non-profit organizations. Since the project was integrated into local institutional and social structures and addressed species protection in view of the needs of stakeholders concerned by nature protection, cooperation at the local level significantly facilitated project implementation and will contribute to further impacts.

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?

Based on the assessment of likelihoods, project impacts are likely to be sustained in the short-run. The strengthened PLAs will likely maintain biodiversity and sustainable management of the areas under their direct control. In the remaining productive landscape, the long-run flow of environmental benefits and maintenance of biodiversity will largely depend on (i) the market incentives for organic, extensive, farming methods and (ii) well planned development in the area that minimizes environmental impacts. Given the accession to the EU and the various EU funded rural development programs, it is more likely than not that these incentives and the appropriate planning framework will materialize.

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. Evidence presented on the increase in population for various species, and the number of farms shifting to organic production and extensive farming methods would indicate stress reduction.			
iii. Did the evaluation report stress reduction at the broader <u>systemic</u> level?		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. 570 ha of formerly degraded land have been converted into biodiversity-rich grassland.			
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.			
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. 370 farmers applied for EU subsidies, and another 1,030 farmers applied for national subsidies. Presumably this led to increased incomes, but the subsidies may have just offset the costs of <i>avoiding</i> intensive farming practices.			
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?			

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,

No negative impacts were noted.			
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		

5. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assess the project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

<p>a. Briefly describe the key lessons, good practice or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Carpathian Grasslands project implementation structure proved to be an effective and efficient means of mobilizing technical capacity already in place amongst stakeholders and building partnerships, while contributing to the sustainability of project results. The specific structure employed was a central coordinating organization, which subcontracted other stakeholders and partner organizations to carry out project activities. The most effective means of communicating with stakeholders is through one-on-one meetings. This is particularly true in the case of busy farmers. In the case of the Carpathian Grasslands project, the advisory units created to provide one-on-one advice to farmers through on-the-ground farm visits proved more useful than organized seminars or workshops for communicating critical information and raising awareness. Horizontal and vertical communication (within and between govt. departments) is critical for understanding of on-the-ground problems, and crafting policy to suit a variety of circumstances. In the Carpathian grasslands project stakeholders felt the most was accomplished when there were strong flows of information on scientific and socio-economic issues between the local and national levels. This point further speaks to the value of broad-based partnerships in tackling complex problems that affect a wide range of stakeholders. As has been seen in other parts of Europe, regional branding and trademarks can be valuable marketing tools to increase visibility of a region's sustainably created natural products, which in turn supports biodiversity conservation. In this project, regional trademarks have proven to be more useful in supporting the maintenance of cultural heritage and fostering regional pride rather than greatly expanding the market for regional products, which are mostly produced by hobbyists and individual producers rather than large-scale commercial ventures. Socio-economic monitoring can be difficult because of stakeholder concerns about the disclosure of personal financial information. Surveys of farmers conducted under the Carpathian Grasslands project were not fully successful in collecting and analyzing socioeconomic data because of farmers' reluctance to provide detailed information on the financial operations of their farms.
<p>b. Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Agro-environmental programs must be made more flexible and better adapted for biodiversity conservation in grasslands. Five-year contracts are restrictive in many ways, and a small number of landscape management titles broadly applied to the diversity of the Czech agricultural landscape is inhibiting; local environmental conditions and needs must be taken into account. A limitation on the "horizontalness" of measures does imply some increased administrative burden, but efficient management structures can limit this administrative increment. <i>[For MoA, VÚZE and MoE]</i> Ecological evidence shows that population numbers of many species reflect significant short-term natural fluctuations, which leaves short-term data on species level indicators with limited value in evaluating the long term effectiveness of conservation initiatives with time scales of two or three years. Either biodiversity monitoring data should be accounted for over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or some complementary data such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of biodiversity trends. <i>[For UNDP and GEF]</i> Central government can generate only so much change on the ground. Create change on the ground "ahead of the curve." Prioritize the education and awareness-raising of local resource users and local policy makers. Appropriately structuring financial incentives related to centralized resource disbursement does depend on national policy measures, but much good can result when local level stakeholders better understand the relationships between land management and environmental impacts. <i>[For FOA, regional NGOs, and PLA]</i>

6. QUALITY OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

6.1 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.

No other evaluations were available.

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.

6.2 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 TE report presents a comprehensive and detailed assessment of outcomes, impacts and achievement of objectives.</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> <p>No evidence gaps or inconsistencies were noted. TE ratings support IA ratings.</p>	S
<p>c. To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</p> <p>The report assesses sustainability of outcomes and impacts along five dimensions. The report includes a detailed exit strategy.</p>	S
<p>d. To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</p> <p>The lessons are comprehensive and well supported by the narrative on implementation.</p>	S
<p>e. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?</p> <p>Yes, actual costs and actual co-financing amounts are presented in total and per component.</p>	S
<p>f. Assess the quality of the reports evaluation of project M&E systems?</p> <p>The assessment of project M&E evaluates both the M&E plan at entry, implementation, and utilization.</p>	S

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE PRERATATION OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REVIEW REPORT EXCLUDING PIRs, TERMINAL EVALUATIONS, PAD.

No other sources were consulted.