

## Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2013

### 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		1870	
GEF Agency project ID		TA 6068-REG	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		ADB	
Project name		Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms (DSS) in Northeast Asia	
Country/Countries		China, Mongolia	
Region		ASIA	
Focal area		Land Degradation	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP 12	
Executing agencies involved		Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		None	
Private sector involvement		None	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		11-Dec-2002	
Effectiveness date / project start		18-Dec-2002	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		30-Jun-2004	
Actual date of project completion		28-Feb-2006	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	-	
	Co-financing	-	
GEF Project Grant		0.5	0.4
Co-financing	IA/EA own	0.5	
	Government	0.215	0.215
	Other*	-	0.3
Total GEF funding		0.5	0.4
Total Co-financing		0.715	0.515
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		1.215	0.915
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		19-May-06	
TE submission date			
Author of TE		Fei Yue (ADB)	
TER completion date		20-Dec-2013	
TER prepared by		Pallavi Nuka	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Joshua Schneck	

\*Includes contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development, cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and beneficiaries.

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The GEO of the project is to better conserve globally significant biodiversity and ecosystems in Mongolia and China. The project area ranges from the Great Gobi ecosystem in the west to grassland-steppes in the east. The area includes undisturbed steppe ecosystems that support endangered species. The project brief argues that in recent years human activity in the project area has intensified the processes of land degradation and ecosystem loss, and accelerated desertification, leading to more severe dust and sand storms (DSS).

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The overall project objective as noted in the Project Brief (pg. 7) was to “promote establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism to facilitate the cooperation and coordination of the interventions by the major stakeholders in Northeast Asia (the region) to address the transboundary environmental problem of dust and sandstorm (DSS).” The semi-arid and desert areas of Mongolia and China (including the Gobi and surrounding steppes) are the primary sources of enormous dust and sandstorms (DSS). These two countries were the sites of project implementation. However DSS have severe environmental and economic impacts in Korea and Japan also, and these countries were project stakeholders. The project brief indicates that there is some scientific evidence that the severity and frequency of these storms have increased in recent years due in part to human activity (overgrazing, over-reclamation, deforestation, and over-exploitation of water resources) in the source areas.

The DO was to reduce the frequency, severity, and damage of the transboundary environmental problems of dust and sandstorms (DSS) in Northeast Asia through regional cooperation. The immediate objective of the project is to promote the establishment of a regional cooperation mechanism to facilitate cooperation and coordination of interventions by the major stakeholders of the region at a regional level.

### Expected Project Outcomes:

1. An initial institutional framework established to coordinate the interventions on DSS at a regional level
2. A regional master plan for regional cooperation on combating DSS, which will be supported with, *inter alia*, the following
  - a. a phased development program for establishing a regional monitoring and early warning network for DSS
  - b. an investment strategy including recommendations for sustainable financial mechanism and identification of eight priority demonstration projects for mitigation measures in the DSS originating areas

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

No changes noted in the TE report.

#### 4. GEF EO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>4.1 Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project is directly linked to the PRC-GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems, and is consistent with ADB's country strategies and programs for PRC and Mongolia (Project Brief, pg. 5). The project also contributes to efforts undertaken by the governments of PRC and Mongolia under their respective national action programs to combat desertification under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The major sources of DSS are the desert and semi-desert areas of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Mongolia. Despite continued programs and efforts made in PRC and Mongolia to combat desertification, the frequency and severity of DSS have increased. This project launched a joint, coordinated intervention among the DSS-affected countries (PRC, Mongolia, Korea and Japan) through a regional cooperation mechanism. The project's objectives were also relevant to GEF's strategies in the Land Degradation and Multi-Focal Areas under GEF-3. The project supported SLM consistent with OP 15 and also ecosystem management consistent with GEF OP12 – Integrated Ecosystem Development.

<b>4.2 Effectiveness</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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Based on information in the TE report and final PIR, the actual project outputs and outcomes were commensurate with expectations. The TE report notes that the Project has "achieved its goals and objectives in an innovative way through collaboration and participation of all the major DSS-related stakeholders in Northeast Asia. ...The regional framework established under the Project was shown to be a practical and effective mechanism to address the policy, institutional, and technical barriers to the regional cooperation against DSS. This framework will continue its function beyond the completion of the Project."

A regional steering committee comprising officials and representatives from 4 DSS affected countries (PRC, Mongolia, Japan, and Republic of Korea) and 4 partner international institutions (ADB, UNEP, UNESCAP, and UNCCD) was established as the regional coordination mechanism to guide DSS reduction activities.

The Regional Master Plan for Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms in Northeast Asia (the Master Plan) met all the targets and specifications set in the TA Report. The Plan includes a phased program for establishing a regional monitoring and early warning network for DSS, and an investment strategy including recommendations on sustainable financing mechanisms and identification of nine priority demonstration project sites to pilot and disseminate the best practices in addressing the causes of intensified DSS. In addition to the requirements of identifying 8 pilot demonstration project areas, 4 in PRC and 4 in Mongolia, the Master Plan identified one more project located in an area crossing the borderline between PRC and Mongolia as a joint project for collaborative

implementation by both PRC and Mongolia. The Master Plan was endorsed by the Steering Committee, and endorsed by the governments of the participating countries through official statements including the Communiqué of the Tripartite Environment Minister Meeting (of PRC, Japan, and Republic of Korea). The Master Plan has also been published and disseminated both in the participating countries and various international conferences including Fifth Ministerial Conference of Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (Seoul, March 2005) and Seventh Conference of Parties of UNCCD (Nairobi, October 2005).

<b>4.3 Efficiency</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The Project has been implemented in a cost-effective way by utilizing in-house capacity to manage day-to-day operation, mobilizing staff support from participating UN agencies, and substantially engaging national experts financed by Japan and Korea as their in-kind contributions. As a result the project was able to realize \$180,000 savings out of \$500,000 from GEF co-financing available. The project completion date was extended from 30 June 2004 to 28 February 2006. The no-cost extension was needed to accommodate (i) the postponement in project commencement due to the outbreak of SARS in 2003, and (ii) the requests for translation and publication of the Master Plan in the national language of all the four participating countries.

<b>4.4 Sustainability</b>	Rating: <b>Likely</b>
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No major risks to sustainability were identified in the TE report or in the final PIR. The assessment below is drawn from the final PIR.

**Financial Sustainability (L):** Regional interventions proposed and planned under the regional master plan rely mainly on existing facilities and programs in the participating countries with adequate financial support for implementation. Efforts were made to mobilize bilateral financial support among the participating countries. The exception is Mongolia where financial support is needed for both incremental cost and a substantial part of base cost. Japan has already approved a \$1.8 million grant for Mongolia to support capacity building in the area of DSS monitoring and early warning. PRC has committed \$400,000 as a cash contribution for follow-on activities to establish the regional monitoring and early warning network. Korea has committed to provide bilateral assistance to PRC to improve DSS monitoring capacity. Japan and PRC have been working on a bilateral program to strengthen the DSS monitoring network in PRC.

**Institutional Sustainability (L):** The Steering Committee, including representatives of four countries (Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and PRC), has been established with sufficient coordination and decision-making capacity for both internal coordination within the national government, and cross-country coordination. It has proven an effective mechanism to ensure institutional sustainability. The regional master plan was endorsed by the Steering Committee and the Communiqué from the 2005 Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting of PRC, Japan, and Republic of Korea.

**Socio-Political (L):** Representatives of academic institutions, NGOs, private sector, and communities of the four countries were invited to participate at the workshops organized in PRC, Korea, and Mongolia to provide inputs for development of the regional master plan. Active stakeholder participation through in-kind support for the project has contributed to the success of the project.

**Environmental (L):** No environmental risks were noted in the final PIR or the TE report.

**5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes**<sup>5.1</sup> Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

All expected co-financing amounts materialized, and the planned inputs from ADB's in-house team, the UN agencies, and governments' in-kind contributions were provided on time. The in-kind contributions from Japan and Korea, particularly the scientific staff seconded to work on this project, were crucial to achievement of project objectives and facilitated engagement of a broad range of stakeholders.

**5.2** Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project completion date was extended from 30 June 2004 to 28 February 2006. The extension was needed to accommodate (i) the postponement in project commencement due to the outbreak of SARS in 2003, and (ii) the requests for translation and publication of the Master Plan in the national language of all the four participating countries. The extension did not affect project outcomes and probably helped to ensure sustainability since documents are now available in national languages.

**5.3** Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

According to the TE report and the final PIR, this was a highly country-driven project involving four countries and four international institutions. Representatives from the eight parties were actively involved in all aspects of the project. Government officials were directly involved in formulation of the master plan through participation in the joint meeting of the Steering Committee and Technical Committees. Although the participating countries have very different views in terms of their perception of the environment problem and their expectation from the regional cooperation due to their geographic location relative to the original source of DSS, the TE report notes that the "engagement of all 4 DSS-affected countries as equal partners through frequent regional interaction at both government and expert levels has proven to be an appropriate and effective vehicle to further the regional cooperation against DSS." In accordance with the regional master plan, the Government of Japan has already approved its technical assistance for Mongolia to strengthen its capacity for DSS monitoring. PRC's Central Government has already committed \$400,000 cash support to shoulder part of the incremental cost for establishing the regional monitoring and early warning network. The country ownership and country confirmation of the success of the project has been documented in the communique of 2004 and the 2005 Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting that included PRC, Japan and Republic of Korea.

## **6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system**

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>6.1 M&amp;E Design at entry</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The version of the project brief reviewed for this report included only a brief mention of a M&E plan and provided a timeline for key activities. There was no logical framework, but some broad indicators (essentially outputs) were noted for the project activities and outcomes. No separate budget was indicated for project M&E activities. The M&E plan only stipulated that the Project Secretariat prepare monthly progress reports, and that the project would be supervised according to standard ADB monitoring procedures and processes.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Unable to Assess</b>
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An ADB technical assistance completion report was submitted for the project terminal evaluation report. No independent terminal evaluation appears to have been conducted. The GEF-PMIS contains only one PIR (2005) for the project.

There is no information in the TE report on implementation of project M&E .

## **7. Assessment of project implementation and execution**

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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Based on the information in the terminal evaluation report (ADB Technical Assistance Completion Report), the project implementation by ADB has been adequate. The ADB-led partnership of the international institutions including UNEP, UNESCAP, and UNCCD supported by GEF enabled the Project to benefit from the latest knowledge on DSS management and a strong network of advocates for positive changes at both the national and international levels. UN partner agencies and the governments of the 4 participating countries have all provided counterpart staff as committed during project development. This has ensured a smooth implementation of this regional cooperation project. Adaptive management was sound, particularly in dealing with the challenges posed by the SARS outbreak in 2003. ADB probably could have allocated more time to accommodate the technical complexities in publication of the translated versions of the project report, such as availability of layout artists for the translated editions of the report, and software availability in the other countries.

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project executing agency was ADB, which, according to the TE report, effectively procured and managed all project inputs and activities including (i) international consultants, (ii) services of national experts provided by the governments of Japan and Republic of Korea, and (iii) counterpart staff of UN partner agencies and the 4 participating governments. All these inputs were organized and coordinated by ADB project team, with administrative support of a project secretariat established at the Regional Coordination Unit for Asia, UNCCD.

The TE report notes that the “involvement of experts from Japan and republic of Korea as the national experts is

innovative. They provided background information and data concerning programs to combat DSS in their own countries, undertook critical review of the draft reports prepared by the consultants, and participated in all the workshops and technical committee meetings as both professionals and the stakeholders from DSS-affected countries to ensure a participatory consensus building process.” The TE report further notes that the governments of the 4 participating countries and the UN partners expressed satisfaction with ADB in its capacity as the Executing Agency of the Project.

## **8. Lessons and recommendations**

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

1. DSS is a complex transboundary environment problem of both regional and global concerns. Engagement of all 4 DSS-affected countries as equal partners through frequent regional interaction at both government and expert levels has proven to be an appropriate and effective vehicle to further the regional cooperation against DSS.
2. The ADB-led partnership of the international institutions including UNEP, UNESCAP, UNCCD supported by GEF has enabled the Project to benefit from the latest knowledge on DSS management and a strong network of advocates for positive changes at both the national and international levels.
3. More time should have been allocated to accommodate the technical complexities in publication of the translated versions of the project report, such as availability of layout artists for the translated editions of the report, and software availability in the other countries.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

1. At the request of the four participating countries, a follow-up regional technical assistance on support for establishing a regional DSS monitoring and early warning network is already under processing.

## 9. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF EO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	The TE report contains an overview of project relevance, outputs and activities, and outcomes.	<b>S</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	No inconsistencies were noted in the report.	<b>S</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The report does not assess sustainability, but does indicate that limited follow-on funding has been provided. It also presents recommendations for follow-up	<b>MU</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are brief and focused, but draw directly on the project's experiences during implementation.	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	No cost information is provided in the report; only grant amount disbursed. Actual cash and in-kind co-financing is provided for some partners.	<b>MU</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report does not assess arrangements for M&E, M&E design, or implementation.	<b>U</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MU</b>

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