

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2013

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		1907	
GEF Agency project ID		TA 4541 - AFG	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		Asian Development Bank (ADB)	
Project name		Natural Resources Management and Environmental Protection Project	
Country/Countries		Afghanistan	
Region		ASIA	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP 1,2,3,4	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Agriculture and Husbandry (MoA)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Beneficiaries	
Private sector involvement		None	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		23-Dec-2004	
Effectiveness date / project start		11-Jan-2005	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		30-Nov-2006	
Actual date of project completion		30-Nov-2007	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	-	
	Co-financing	-	
GEF Project Grant		0.975	0.755
Co-financing	IA/EA own	0.75	0.258
	Government	0	0
	Other*	0	0
Total GEF funding		0.975	0.755
Total Co-financing		0.750	0.258
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		1.785	1.013
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		02-Jun-2009	
TE submission date			
Author of TE		Joji Tokeshi (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	S	MS	NA	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	HS	NA	NA	UA
M&E Design	NA	NA	NA	MU
M&E Implementation	S	NA	NA	UA
Quality of Implementation	S	NA	NA	MS
Quality of Execution	S	NA	NA	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report			NA	MU

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

GEO (ProDoc): To conserve globally significant biodiversity in Afghanistan. The key reserves targeted by the project were selected for their globally unique ecosystems and for the presence of endangered species. The valuable biodiversity and environmental services supported by these reserves are threatened by the increasingly impoverished human populations living adjacent and the absence of government capacity to manage the reserves. The project aimed to prevent further degradation of these reserve areas.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

According to the Project Summary document, the Developmental Objective of the project was to adopt a participatory approach involving government, communities and NGOs in order to:

1. Advance conservation of ecosystems and wildlife resources in key protected areas
2. Promote human resource development through capacity building and institutional strengthening
3. Promote environmental management and awareness
4. Reduce poverty among communities residing in PA buffer zones by introducing renewable energy technologies

Expected Outcomes/Outputs:

1. PA Management Plans developed and implemented
2. Enhanced capacity for PA management and protection
3. Improved infrastructure for PA management and protection
4. Micro-credit program to support alternative and conservation compatible livelihoods and enterprises

Key activities to support achievement of the outcomes and outputs noted above were:

- (i) Rapid biodiversity assessments to update available data at each site.
- (ii) Training and study tours for PA management.
- (iii) Participatory needs assessments conducted in the communities, followed by provision of pilot activities to address those needs.
- (iv) Development and implementation of an integrated package of assistance for local communities, including skills training coupled with opportunities for income generation.
- (v) Pilot-test assistance to improve food security and access to health and education.
- (vi) Implementation pilot activities including greenhouses for food security, aquaculture, a community center that is solar heated and enables livelihood activities (carpet weaving and handicrafts), health and veterinary clinics, horticulture, beekeeping, propagation of medicinal plants.
- (vii) Contracting with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) specializing in microfinance services.

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.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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The project was relevant at the time of project design (2004) when political stability seemed more likely than is currently the case. The project design was consistent with the GEF Biodiversity focal area strategies. The objectives conform to GEF Operational Programs 1-Arid and Semi Arid Zone Ecosystems; 2-Freshwater Ecosystems; 3-Forest Ecosystems; and 4-Mountain Ecosystems; and in particular with the GEF Strategic Priority #1-Sustaining Protected Areas. The project was also consistent with the Asian Development Bank Country Strategy and Program for Afghanistan, which identifies promotion of environmentally sustainable development as a key goal. The project was relevant to national priorities at the time, particularly efforts to rebuild capacity in the Ministry of Agriculture and manage growing human settlements in and around Afghanistan’s protected areas. Afghanistan endorsed the CBD in 2002, and thus the project was consistent with national strategies to conserve biodiversity in protected areas.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The project has had mixed effectiveness. PA management plans and management capacity were developed at one PA site (Band-e-Amir National Park), infrastructure was built or improved at 4 sites, and institutional capacity in the Ministry of Agriculture and Husbandry was strengthened through training sessions and study tours. A national PA Strategy/System, Ecotourism Strategy, and Social and Gender Strategy were designed. Biodiversity assessments and socio-economic surveys were carried out, and community education activities were held.

However, alternative livelihoods activities and a microcredit facility never got off the ground due to low government capacity and the lack of capacity within the communities themselves. The TE report notes that this component “failed to implement pilot alternative livelihood schemes, pilot social protection measures, and microcredit through NGOs. While guidelines were prepared for protection of the park and related livelihood opportunity for the community, and discussions with Microfinance Investment and Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) have taken place for formulation of microcredit and income generation scheme were held, no microcredit facility, pilot alternative livelihood schemes or food security measures were established.”

Aside from the shortcomings of the poverty alleviation component, the TE report finds that the project was effective, noting that the government was “satisfied” with the results.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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Despite a year-long extension intended to ensure achievement of project outcomes, the project utilized only 57% of the allocated budget and was unable to make any progress on the poverty alleviation component or the micro-credit program to support alternative livelihoods. Based on information in the TE report, project inputs in terms of number of consultant months utilized and ADB technical assistance were close to what was expected at the start of the project.

There is no clear evidence in the TE report or PIRs indicating why the project’s funding allocation was underutilized or how this led to underachievement of outcomes. The TE report does raise a concern about project management noting that “an audit conducted in mid-2007 and early 2008 found that overall project (TA) management was deficient” with regard to procurement and budget allocation. Without any specifics, it seems that poor project management, and inadequate oversight by ABD, both contributed to poor efficiency.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Unable to Assess
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There is insufficient information on financial or institutional sustainability in the TE report and in the final PIR to assess overall sustainability. The only mention of risks to outcomes in the TE report notes “the lack of alternative income generation initiatives supported by microcredit constrained the possibilities of the TA’s beneficiary communities to properly implement adequate natural resources management measures. There is a risk that the communities in the Project sites could further harm the natural environment in their pursuit of income generation activities despite the existence of a natural resources conservation strategy.”

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

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

ADB co-financing of US\$0.75 was expected, but it’s not clear from the TE report how much was provided. The TE report only provided information on total project costs, and does not provide a breakdown by funding source.

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 was extended by one year due to logistical and security issues during the implementation period. The extension was beneficial to the project in allowing more time for achievement of outputs and outcomes.

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:

The TE report does not provide any evidence of strong country ownership over the project. The Gov of Afghanistan was not a co-financier of the project and there is no evidence that it provided funding to sustain project outcomes. The final PIR indicates that there was some local-level interest and engagement with the project, reporting that “many meetings [were] held with the stakeholders including NGOs, the relevant communities and private sector participation has made the project activities transparent and proactive.” The TE report indicates that MoA staff participated in the trainings and notes that “the Government was satisfied with the TA’s results and found them

useful in demonstrating the usefulness of solar power as a renewable energy alternative.” Despite this engagement most of the TA’s outputs (surveys, plans, strategy documents) appear to have been produced by the project staff/external consultants, and the project seems to have been largely donor driven.

6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

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

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The M&E plan at entry was very simple and specified only (i) periodic monitoring of the project by the PIU, MIWRE and MWP and (ii) that monitoring would conform to “standard ADB procedures” (supervision missions, tripartite review, midterm review, and final review). The project design did not include a standard logical framework. The project design did specify indicators at the objective and outcome level but the indicators were imprecise (no targets set) and focused on outputs (i.e. number of trainings, numbers trained, number of recommendations). The budget in the Project Summary document (Section H) does include a line for ‘Evaluation Mission’ but there was no separate budget indicated for ongoing monitoring of project implementation.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Unable to Assess
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There is no information in the TE report on the implementation of project M&E, but the TE report does note that a “TA audit conducted in mid-2007 and early 2008 found that overall TA management was deficient.” The deficiencies were apparently overcome through closer oversight by the ADB, but since the project closed in Nov. 2007, this was of little use to the project in terms of implementation. There was no independent evaluation of the project at mid-term or at termination.

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

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

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The project design was relevant and tried to be responsive to needs on the ground, but based on information in the TE report, the design was too ambitious in attempting to launch a micro-grant program to support alternative livelihoods (see lessons learned below). The selection of the Ministry of Agriculture and Husbandry (MoA) as the official executing agency is also questionable, given the weak capacity of the Ministry at the time (the Project

Summary documents notes on multiple occasions that MoA capacity was weak). However, one of the goals of the project was to enhance capacity in the MoA, so the choice of MoA as executing agency may have been part of the approach to achieving this goal.

The implementing agency, ADB, provided the normal level of oversight for technical assistance projects, but additional supervision and support would have been beneficial given the logistical challenges, political insecurity, and lack of capacity in Afghanistan during the implementation period. According to the TE report “an audit conducted in mid-2007 and early 2008 found that overall project (TA) management was deficient. In some cases, procedures for consultant selection and contract variations, approval for changes in budget allocation, procurement of goods and services, and submission of Back-to-Office Reports were not strictly followed. Also, deficient documentation and inadequate recordkeeping rendered monitoring and follow up of TA activities difficult.” The TE report notes that following the audit ADB increased supervision, however project implementation was already completed at that point.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The Project Summary document indicates that the Ministry of Agriculture and Husbandry (MoA) was the executing agency for the project, however based on information in the TE report, the project was largely executed by a team of 15 international consultants and 5 local consultants hired by ADB. The MoA was reorganized during the lifetime of the project and renamed Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). The TE report notes that “an audit conducted in mid-2007 and early 2008 found that overall project (TA) management was deficient. In some cases, procedures for consultant selection and contract variations, approval for changes in budget allocation, procurement of goods and services, and submission of Back-to-Office Reports were not strictly followed. Also, deficient documentation and inadequate recordkeeping rendered monitoring and follow up of TA activities difficult.”

But, according to the TE report “the quality of inputs into various activities and the on-going technical guidance and supervision provided by ADB through the consultants to the Government and stakeholders were found to be satisfactory. The Consultants were able to work in a challenging situation, and enhance the viability of the TA. They were also instrumental in providing advice to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) leadership on strategic issues pertaining to natural resources management issues in Afghanistan.”

The TE report notes that a “consultative and skills transfer approach was adopted in each activity to ensure the ownership of key stakeholders of the outputs and outcomes,” but presents no evidence to suggest that stakeholders actually took ownership.

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.

The TE report finds that the main lesson from this project is that the viability of alternative income generation activities as a component under this project (TA) must be weighed against the financial and human resources available and the timeframe for implementation. The project was too ambitious in assuming that communities had understood the sorts of income generation activities that might be financed by microcredit; in retrospect, extensive skills training was required but was not contemplated under the project. Income generation activities including the provision of microcredit should probably be considered as a standalone project and not mixed with other activities if there are financial and technical resource constraints.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE report encourages the Government to adopt the policy recommendations provided by the various strategies under the project, and that some pilot Community Forestry programs be taken up in the buffer zones of the protected areas followed by more land use planning of the protected areas. For that purpose, it is recommended that the Department of Forest and Range Management and the Afghan Tourist Organization (ATO) explore possible donor support through the concerned Ministries.

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 report contains a brief assessment of outcomes relative to project objectives, but there is little discussion of impacts.	MS
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	No inconsistencies were noted and the evidence presented supports the conclusions. No ratings were presented in the report.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	There is no assessment of sustainability or project exit strategy since this project was not a stand-alone project, but rather an input into a larger initiative.	N/A
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are supported by the evidence presented, but cover only implementation issues.	MS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Only total grant disbursement amounts are presented. No project costs are detailed.	U
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report does not evaluate the project's M&E system.	U
Overall TE Rating	The TE report (Technical Assistance Completion Report) provides an adequate assessment of project outcomes and implementation. However there is no assessment of the project's M&E system, project impacts, sustainability, or costs and cost-effectiveness.	MU

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

No other documents consulted.