GEFM&E Terminal Evaluation Review Form

			Review date:	10/11/05
GEF ID:	197		at endorsement (Million US$)	at completion (Million US$)
Project Name:	Integrated Biodiversity Protection in the Sarstun-Motagua Region	GEF financing:	4.0	3.91
Country:	GUATEMALA	Co-financing:	6.7	4.98
Operational Program:	OP3	Total Project Cost:	$10,70	$8.89
IA	UNDP	Dates		
Partners involved:	Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas (CONAP)	Work Program date		05/01/95
		CEO Endorsement		11/30/1996
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		1997
		Closing Date	Proposed: 06/01/2001	Actual: March 2005
Prepared by: Antonio del Monaco	Reviewed by: Claudio Volonte	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 4 ½ years	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 8 years	Difference between original and actual closing: 3 ½ years
Author of TE: Eduardo Fuentes[1] Ileana Catalina López Georg Grünberg		TE completion date: Nov. 23, 2004	TE submission date to GEF OME: 7/7/2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 8 months

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 impacts	N/A	Not available	N/A	Satisfactory
2.2 Project outcomes	S	Not available	N/A	Satisfactory
2.3 Project sustainability	N/A	Not available	N/A	Moderately likely
2.4 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	Not available	N/A	Unsatisfactory
2.5 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	N/A	Highly Satisfactory

---

[1] Eduardo Fuentes used to be the UNDP/GEF/New York biodiversity team leader.

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why? Yes. The TE can be considered best practice (refer to section on quality of the TE)

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

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

According to the project document: To preserve the integrity of ecosystems vital to the survival of RECOSMO's (Sarstún-Motagua Coservation and Sustainable Development Region) biodiversity in the context of sustainable human development.

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

According to the project document:

1) Develop and implement a strategic plan (to the year 2005) of nine protected areas interconnected by biological corridors in an area of 12,000 Km^2. This plan will include an evaluation of biodiversity richness and abundance and conservation of a minimum of 95% of vegetation cover.
2) Reduce habitat loss and erosion of biodiversity by integrating at least 30% of the local population using and benefiting from RECOSMO's natural resources into economically productive activities and sustainable use practices in the second year.
3) Establish the technical and administrative infrastructure necessary to coordinate and support conservation and sustainable development activities in RECOSMO, and ensure their continuity beyond the life of the project.

The TE indicated that there were no changes.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

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

The TE indicates that there are some relatively objective indicators that allow verifying that the project contributed to improve the management of the protected areas by strengthening the institutions responsible for conservation and sustainable uses, reducing deforestation especially in the key areas, and maintaining environmental conditions in the region. The TE indicates that the project reduced the immediate threats to the protected areas by reducing the advancement of the agriculture frontier in key areas and buffer zones, improved the overall management of the protected areas by transforming the institutions responsible for their management, and contributed to converting 5 of the 9 intended protected areas of the project from paper parks to parks with an acceptable level of management. Regarding institutional capacity building, the project implemented a payment system for environmental services where private water utilities paid a fee or the salaries of park rangers to ensure conservation of the watersheds. The TE indicates that the project developed effective conservation initiatives that integrated sustainable uses of natural resources and alternative livelihoods for the population building on the existing experience of diverse NGOs operating in the area. According to the TE, the economic and social benefits of the project have reached a significant portion of the population living around and in the protected areas. The project also worked on increasing awareness about the value of conservation among the people. However, the TE indicates that of the six biological corridors expected to be established by the project, only three were designed and partially implemented.

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**

Yes. The outcomes are in line with the focal area/operational program strategies. There are also very relevant to Guatemala in light of its Protected Areas Law, Commitments under the Biological Convention, National Strategy for Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity, the Peace Accords, etc.

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)?**
The end of project situation as described in the project document was quite ambitious including land ownership studies completed and titles granted in critical biodiversity conservation areas; master plans for 4 protected areas designed, legally declared and implemented; six biological corridors defined, demarcated, approved and legally declared; ecological-economic zoning for the project area implemented; M&E system established and operational; socio-economic study of the project area conducted; study and implementation of tourism investment program involving local communities and national and international investors; establishment of a revolving fund to finance pilot projects; an advisory council for the area established and operational; an capacity strengthened in communities, government and NGOs, municipalities, etc.   The TE indicates that the project underwent some activity changes during implementation but that the objectives remained the same. This makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness in light of those expected outcomes because some may have change during project implementation. However, based on the project objectives and the outcomes described in the TE, it can be concluded that the GEF intervention has been effective despite sustainability shortcomings as described below.

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?**
The TE indicates that the project did not use an incrementality criterion for the allocation of resources[2] nor was there an accounting that allowed separating the sustainable development costs from incremental costs that the GEF is supposed to fund[3]. The TE indicates that this may have compromised several activities related to conservation and sustainable development which did not materialize[4]. However, the TE indicates that using several criteria to assess cost-effectiveness, that this project was cost-effective when compared to similar projects in the region and other areas of the world[5]. The TE also presented an interesting assessment of incrementality and it determined that the GEF contributed twice as much to incremental activities producing global environmental benefits than it did to local sustainable development ones.

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

A Financial resources	**Rating: ML**
The TE indicates that financial sustainability is precarious given that CONAP has traditionally depended mostly on foreign aid for conservation activities or has delegated these activities to other entities such as NGOs or universities which have to raise their own funds. The project began creating some opportunities for self financing through payment for environmental services (several towns water services paid amounts ranging from $1000/month to the salaries of park rangers to ensure watershed protection, environmental education to avoid deforestation and soil erosion, etc. This positive experience has contributed to the current Water Law discussion being undertaken in congress) and ecotourism which has created some hope for partial financial sustainability of some areas. The project failed to develop the revolving fund as was one of the expected outcomes. Thus financial sustainability is moderately likely.	

B Socio political	**Rating: ML**
Regarding CONAP, a key stakeholder, the TE indicated that their involvement and level of project ownership was below expected. The involvement of UNDP was adequate initially but weakened during later stages of	

---

[2] Informe de Evaluación Final del Proyecto: "REGIÓN DE CONSERVACIÓN Y DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE SARSTÚN-MOTAGUA-RECOSMO". Nov. 23, 2004. pp. 37.

[3] Ibid. pp. 5

[4] Ibid. pp. 43

[5] Ibid. pp. 5

project implementation. However, the participation of the six executing organizations and the NGOs was high as was their level of commitment. Specifically, the involvement of indigenous and other local organizations increased during the second phase of the project. Nevertheless, the TE indicates that socio-political sustainability is precarious because Guatemala just came out of a civil war, and it is going through many socio-economic changes, including land ownership conflicts, unresolved land uses issues and other uncertainties that are beyond the scope of the project.

C Institutional framework and governance	**Rating: ML**

The TE indicates that although the project contributed to strengthen the capacities of NGOs and CONAP to plan and implement activities in the project region, the project fell short of achieving institutional sustainability mainly because of the issues mentioned under socio political sustainability. Nevertheless, the TE indicates that having invested to strengthen the capacity of NGOs that have been working with communities in environmental protection may have been the right solution in a climate of socio-political instability.

D Ecological (for example, for coffee production projects, reforestation for carbon sequestration under OP12, etc.)	**Rating: ML**

The TE indicates that environmental sustainability is also precarious because it is compromised by a rapid population growth, needing more soils and other subsistence resources, and there are still too many unsustainable uses and land conversion such as timber harvesting, cattle ranching, and urban development by groups with more influence and resources than the GEF intervention.

E Examples of replication and catalytic outcomes suggesting increased likelihood of sustainability	**Rating: L**

The TE indicates that several aspects of the project are being replicated in other areas of the country such as the policies toward environmental services, subsidy programs to conserve and maintain protected areas, and improvements in the curricula of elementary and high school education to instill the importance of conservation. The project created a forum of directors that has allowed to exchange successful experiences between protected areas management and some replication by the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) in other regions.

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

A. Effective M&E systems in place: What were the accomplishments and shortcomings of the project's M&E system in terms of the tools used such as: indicators, baselines, benchmarks, data collection and analysis systems, special studies and reports, etc.?	**Rating: U**

The TE indicates that the project lacked a good and widely accepted M&E system that allowed measuring progress towards the expected results including the biodiversity results of the project.

B. Information used for adaptive management: What is the experience of the project with adaptive management?	**Rating: U**

The TE indicated that the project did not have an M&E system that allowed effective feedback to the project management.

Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? No

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?

- Environmental, social and political sustainability of GEF projects cannot always be achieved in 6-8 years and with an investment of $5-8 million in countries with low governability, high levels of poverty and serious social conflicts as left after a civil war. In such cases, strengthening civil society institutions such as regional NGOs, can be the best strategy to achieve environmental results and increase the likelihood of their sustainability.
- The IA could better perform its functions and fulfill its commitments to the GEF by having workshops at project inception with stakeholders to agree on project expected outcomes, the global environmental benefits and incremental costs that GEF will fund. A handbook could help stakeholders to identify their roles and responsibilities. This will also maintain the balance between fund allocations and prevent funds initially allocated for conservation and sustainable

development from being spent in development projects alone with little global environmental benefits. In this regard, also strong project management leadership is required to ensure that all project objectives are addressed as opposed to just the "easiest" ones such as information dissemination and research as opposed to more challenging ones such as management agreements for soils and water use. Also, to maintain institutional memory and better management, IAs should strive to maintain the same people in charge of the implementation throughout the project, for example, by avoiding JPOs for Project Official posts.
- Solving land tenure issues could improve the dialogue with local indigenous communities but long term conservation achievements also require strong local NGO and government involvement.

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.
N/A

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?** Yes, the report also presented an assessment by the expected outcomes as indicated in the project document. The assessment was very candid with the successes and shortcomings of the project.	HS
B. **Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?** Yes the statements were substantiated by examples and data and when the data provided to the TE team had not been independently verified, this was raised as an issue and not taken at face value. No ratings were provided.	S
C. **Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?** Yes, very comprehensive assessment.	HS
D. **Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?** Yes.	HS
E. **Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?** Yes, the information was broken down by activity with actual expenditures up to the project closing. The final numbers were not available yet when the TE was done because this took place before the project financial closing.	S
F. **Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems?** Yes	HS

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: X**	**No:**
Explain: Given the results that the project has begun to show, it would be valuable to conduct an assessment to verify them and assess the continuation of project benefits. This could be done before the potential follow on project financed by the Netherlands.		
Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds,		

etc.? None mentioned

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

2004 PIR, Project Document