

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2013

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		2037	
GEF Agency project ID		82599	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF 3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation	
Country/Countries		Tajikistan	
Region		Europe and Central Asia	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP4 –Mountain Ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		Republican Environmental Association "Noosfera"	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Lead Executing Agency, "Noosfera", is an NGO	
Private sector involvement		Beneficiaries involved in the sub-projects through the small grants program	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		7/22/2004	
Effectiveness date / project start		8/20/2004	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		11/30/2007	
Actual date of project completion		06/30/2008	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.025	N/A
	Co-financing	U/A	U/A
GEF Project Grant		0.750	0.750
Co-financing	IA/EA own	0.038	0.049
	Government	0.051	0.066
	Other*	0.103	0.145
Total GEF funding		0.775	0.750
Total Co-financing		0.192	0.262
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		0.942	1.012
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		Not provided	
TE submission date		Not provided	
Author of TE		German Kust	
TER completion date		12/06/2013	
TER prepared by		Inela Weeks	
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	S	Not reviewed	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	MS	ML	Not reviewed	MU
M&E Design	Not rated	Not rated	Not reviewed	MS
M&E Implementation	S	Not rated	Not reviewed	MU
Quality of Implementation	Not rated	S	Not reviewed	S
Quality of Execution	S	S	Not reviewed	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	N/A	N/A	Not reviewed	S

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

According to the Implementation Completion Report (ICM) the global environmental objective of the project was to demonstrate and provide for replication of in situ conservation of globally significant biodiversity of the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik (species management area).

The Dashtidzhum territory contains various endemic, rare and endangered flora and fauna species of regional and global significance. The proposed project focuses on the Dashtidzhum Zakaznik because the unsustainable management of the productive landscape and the increasing trend of socio-economic pressures threaten its globally significant biodiversity.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

In support of this objective, the project was to assist in: (i) supporting protected areas management planning and monitoring activities; (ii) strengthening capacity to protect globally important flora and fauna species and ecosystems; (iii) supporting local population in the Zakaznik surroundings to adopt environmentally friendly economic activities compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives; (iv) raising public awareness on conservation issues; and (v) involving local communities and NGOs in the decision making process. Specifically, the project was to have the following outcomes:

- *Improved status of threatened biodiversity.* The project was to increase the quality of the ecosystems (2- 3 indicator species of flora and fauna were to be identified as part of the baseline survey soon after implementation commences).
- *Strengthened institutional and technical capacities for protected area management.* The project was to assist in the adoption of a protected areas management plan based on broad consensus and support from local communities and in the establishment of effective protected areas management administration, with staff capable of implementing the protected areas management plan in close collaboration with local communities, public sector institutions and NGOs. By working closely with the State Forestry Department Tajikless, the National Biodiversity Conservation Center, and the

State Committee for Environment Protection – all part of a larger effort to secure sustainable biodiversity conservation, and by developing and disseminating best practices, the project was to support the Tajikistan’s national protected area system.

- *Improved sectoral integration.* The project was to contribute to the establishment of effective replicable models of integrated and participatory natural resources management within the national protected areas system.
- *Improved adoption of sustainable use of natural resources.* The project was to increase public awareness and support for adoption of sustainable agriculture and land use practices at the local and national level.

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

As per the ICM, **no changes** have been made to the project’s design, scope, scale, funding allocation and implementation arrangements. The project was to be implemented over a period of 3 years: between July 1, 2004 and June ^{[[]]}_{SEP}30, 2007. In fact the project started in November 2004 and finished in June 2008. These delays were connected with the initial delay in payments that caused seasonal (climatic) difficulties to start the necessary research and follow-up actions.

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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Project activities under Components A and B were to promote the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s (CBD) work program on mountain biodiversity. Further, by supporting afforestation activities and environmentally friendly economic activities, the proposed Project was to create synergies between various GEF focal areas, including biodiversity (by promoting conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in agriculture), sustainable land management (by reducing land degradation), and climate change mitigation (by increasing vegetative cover).

The Project Document reports that conservation of Tajikistan’s biodiversity is a stated national priority

for the Government of Tajikistan (GoT). The activities included under the Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project were in alignment with the goals and strategic directions of the following national strategy documents: (1) Poverty Reduction Strategy Program; (2) Country Assistance Strategy; and (3) National Action Plans and Programs. The national strategy for biodiversity conservation as documented in the 2003 National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan and related documents (i.e., State Ecological Program for 1998-2008, the 2002 National Strategy for Combating Desertification, the 2003 National Action Plan for Climate Change Mitigation) calls for afforestation, improved pasture management, strengthening of protected areas management, as well as for fulfilling of obligations under international agreements to which Tajikistan is a signatory, such as the Convention on Biodiversity Conservation (1997), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (1997), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (1998), the Convention to Combat Desertification (1997), and the Convention on Wetlands (2000).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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Based on the information in the ICM, the project achieved significant successes completing most of the planned outputs. On the other hand, several planned outputs that the project was unable to achieve may have a long-term negative implication for sustainability. The ICM rated all three of the project components as satisfactory and had also rated all individual sub-components as satisfactory. The overall achievement of project objectives had also been rated as satisfactory in the ICM with three outcomes rated as satisfactory and one outcome, “improved status of threatened biodiversity”, rated as moderately unsatisfactory.

Specifically, the project achieved the following outcomes:

- **Strengthened institutional and technical capacities for protected area management:** the project initiated a number of important modern international approaches to biodiversity conservation in Tajikistan that have never been used in this country during or after Soviet time such as:
 - development of the biodiversity monitoring system, including: performing field work on baseline establishment; building of the Zakaznik GIS system; preparation of a biodiversity monitoring plan; and constructing the biodiversity database. This was the first time that a multifunctional biodiversity database was developed in the country. Additionally, at least 20% of the completed study tours, seminars and trainings were devoted to biodiversity monitoring, enabling the local specialists and foresters to gain new knowledge in areas which they have never been previously exposed to such as the objectives and methods of monitoring, GIS application for biodiversity conservation and for Leskhoz management;
 - elaboration of the protected area management plan and its adoption at the level of the national coordination committee and the responsible governmental authority;
 - providing assistance, based on project experience, with the development of indicators

- in the chapter on “Biodiversity” as part of the national report “Agenda 21”; and
 - substantially changing the way that the protected area gets managed, such as moving away from the strategy of ‘nature protection’ towards one of ‘sustainable social, environmental ^[SEP]and economic development’; changing the management approach from ‘governmental’ to ‘participatory’ and from the ‘island’ to ‘network’ approach. ^[SEP]
- **Improved sectoral integration:** in addition to the information already outlined above, the project contributed to the establishment of effective replicable models of integrated and participatory natural resources management within the national protected areas system. At the time of the ICM writing, the Dashtidzhum project was used as a model approach for the development of projects for other protected areas in the country such as Tigrovaya balka and Gissarskie gory.
- **Improved adoption of sustainable use of natural resources:** ^[SEP]Public awareness and support of the methods and technologies of sustainable agriculture and land use practices was very high. After workshops were held to train small grant beneficiaries some 600 proposals were submitted for such activities as cereals and vegetable-growing (onion, potatoes), horticulture, bee-keeping, plant nurseries, forest rehabilitation, and also relevant local traditional crafts and single activities: mill work, blacksmith work, vaccination of animals, timbering, growing of medical plants. All proposals were technically evaluated and feasible sub-projects presented to the evaluation committee. A total of 280 project proposals were selected and financed during project implementation. Thus, the Small Grant Program has been implemented, including: (1) Creation of plant nurseries (8,35 ha; more than 117,000 saplings alive), (2) Beekeeping (666 bee families); (3) Rehabilitation of forests (27 ha, more than 13,500 young trees alive); (4) Horticulture (about 40 ha, about 17000 young trees alive); (4) Potatoes growing (about 12 ha, average yield – 9 t/ha); (5) Onion growing (about 2,5 ha, average yield – 15 t/ha); and (6) Cereals production (24,5 ha, average yield – 1 t/ha). This program had a big support from local communities. Almost all subprojects (started in 2007) had financial profit. But, unfortunately, the sustainability of implemented activities is not clear.

Important shortcomings include:

- **Improved status of threatened biodiversity** (planned outcome)- the project did not create any system that would allow an assessment of the increase in the ecosystem quality. Indicator species were not identified. Additionally, there was no evidence of habitat improvement for species in the IUCN Red Book of animals (*Capra falconeri*) and IUCN’s Red Book of plants (*Swida darvasica*, *Malus sieversii*). However, the project did prepare a monitoring system and had carried out some of the relevant research, which provides for a possibility to track and monitor these changes in the near future.
- Even though the public support for the sustainable agriculture and land use practices was high, the financial and economic mechanisms to support and prolong such activities have not been elaborated, which brings the long-term sustainability of their use into question.
- A long-term plan for this protected area’s financial sustainability was not established. This new financial mechanisms was planned to cover up to 70% of the annual budget through payments

by visitors and/or natural resources user fees. Even though the prepared management plan contains the calculations of the economic and financial resources required for the sustainable development of the Dashtidzhum zakaznik and although these mechanisms were tested, they were not established. The government still remains one of the main sources of financing of zakaznik due to political and economical situation and legislation in the country.

- Several smaller outputs have not been implemented such as: (a) the rebuilding of the lodges of Botanical Institute as the base station of the institute has been relocated from Dashtidzhum by the governmental decree; and (b) publishing of the general Report on Zakaznik’s biodiversity – although a part of it has been published on the www.zakaznik.tj, as well as in national scientific magazines and books. A big part of it has been located in the management plan.
- The project did not develop the operational system for monitoring and evaluation of the project outcomes and outputs. According to the ICM, this presented a number of difficulties during preparation of the final report and systematic assessment of the project results, sustainability and effectiveness.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
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The project was implemented according to the agreed timetable, with the exception of the start and closing dates, which had to be extended due to the delay with the start of the project and delays with the beginning of the subproject implementation (due to seasonal reasons). According to the ICM even though the delays were caused by the peculiarities of the local climate, these did not affect the effectiveness of the project. The project successfully achieved most of its planned outputs and outcomes, but shortcomings were noted.

The project’s accounting system was set up with the help of WB country office; annual financial audits were conducted in a timely manner. All project funds have been distributed to the planned activities. The project received higher than planned co-financing bringing the total cost of the project to US\$ 1,012,216. Out of this the GEF funds of US\$ 750,000 were used as planned. The ICM also makes note that several economical evaluations have been performed for the model activities of the small grants program. All of the model activities showed high rate of economic and financial returns, which led the ICM to assess this part of the project as efficient.

As already noted the project did not have an operational system for monitoring and evaluation of the project outcomes and outputs which provided a number of difficulties during preparation of the final report and during the systematic assessment of the project results, sustainability and effectiveness.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Unlikely
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Sustainability of project outcomes faces substantial risks, the primary of which are financial and socio-political ones. Specifically, the key source of funding for the PA remains the government, as the project

failed to introduce alternative financial mechanisms to cover the PA's operational costs. Additionally, local communities still have no obvious incentives to improve the quality of ecosystems.

Financial resources – moderately unlikely: the project was to develop the long-term plan for financial and fund-raising strategy as well as the legal basis for the protected area (PA) management administration to generate its own revenues. This new financial mechanisms was planned to cover up to 70% of the annual budget through payments by visitors and/or natural resources user fees. The main reasoning for the establishment of the new mechanisms was outlined in the Project Document, which noted that PAs in Tajikistan cannot depend entirely on government funds and that park administrations will need to develop the necessary skills to raise funding from the donor community on the basis of progress on their performance. However, the long-term plan for this protected area's financial sustainability was not established during the project. Mechanisms were tested but were not established, bringing the long-term financial sustainability into question. The government still remains one of the main sources of financing of zakaznik due to political and economical situation and legislation in the country. Further, according to the ICM, the sources of funds required for the implementation of the Management plan are not clear enough nor are the technical sources needed to sustain the buildings and facilities that have been repaired under the project.

According to the Project Document the financial feasibility of the SDCGP sub-projects was to be one of the critical eligibility criteria for their selection. Almost all selected subprojects (started in 2007) were financially profitable, according to the ICM. However, the sustainability of implemented activities is not clear as the ICM claims that the sources of future investments are not clearly defined for all types of activities especially under the conditions of unstable market prices for various products and the presence of different risks and threats. Additionally, the efficiency of these activities on the biodiversity conservation in the area has not been analyzed yet.

Institutional sustainability- moderately likely: The project had carried out various capacity building seminars and workshops. It had also contributed to the establishment of effective replicable models of integrated and participatory natural resources management within the national protected areas system. The ICM notes that the work on the management plan elaboration assisted local communities, project partners and stakeholders to better understand the main threats to biodiversity of the area, difficulties and problems in management, as well as to reveal main directions to improve management. But it did not identify clear mechanisms or assessed the time and resources for the implementation of the plan to overcome these threats and difficulties. Other risks remain, including the PA personnel still having relatively low skills and the fact that there are no settled relationships around land ownership and shares of the participatory management of the resources within protected areas.

Nationally, the long-term educational and training program on biodiversity conservation in Dashtizhum has been taken as a model for the preparation of the National Program of Ecological Education for 2010-2020 (under UNDP/GEF project "Enabling potential of three conventions). The Dashtizhum management plan has been used as a basic approach for the preparation of the system of management plans and biodiversity monitoring for the protected areas in Tajikistan (supported by the national government).

The experience of Dashtizhum project is used to enable activities on the transboundary biodiversity conservation issues. The work for joint Afghan-Tajik mission on protected areas management practices and the exchange of experience had started. The next round of discussions was expected in early 2009.

Environmental sustainability – moderately likely: The biodiversity monitoring system is new and not well established, which presents risks to its sustainability. At the international level the agreement with the Russian Academy of Sciences has been signed to provide follow-up research on Dashtizhum’s plants and vegetation. For the application of the best practices of the WB-GEF project "Biodiversity Conservation of Dashtijum Zakaznik" NGO “Noosfera” received a grant from the Global Forest Coalition to organize a national workshop “The root causes of deforestation” that was held at Dashtijum forestry and local jamoats Yol and Dashtijum. Noosfera also started to implement the UNDP-GEF project "Supporting Country Action on the CBD Program of Work on Protected Areas". This project is based on the results of the WB-GEF Dashtijum project and aims to assess the economical value of biodiversity resources. A new project for the conservation of agro biodiversity in the context of climate change in Dashtizhum has been initiated by Noosfera and supported by the UNDP Tajik Country Office. The new project proposal has been designed, endorsed by the National Coordinator of GEF and submitted to GEF for approval.

Sociopolitical – moderately unlikely: The project increased public awareness and support for adoption of sustainable agriculture and land use practices at the local and national level. But, local communities have not had enough time to be convinced that new practices are sustainable in their environmental, political and financial aspects. Additionally, the communities have not had many examples that showed how their nature protection activities lead to biodiversity conservation. People have no obvious sustainable incentives (incl. financial and economic) to improve the quality of ecosystems. Further, the role of the local communities in the implementation of the management plan is not well defined.

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?

Co-financing was higher than anticipated. All three sources of co- funding, NGO “Noosfera, the Government through Dashtidzhum Leshoz and the National Biodiversity Conservation Center, and grant beneficiaries, have contributed higher than planned co-financing as follows:

Co-financing Source	Estimated (in USD)	Actual (in USD)
NGO “Noosfera	38,000	49,916
Government	51,000	66,925
Grant Beneficiaries	103,750	145,375
TOTAL	192,750	262,216

The ICM does not explain why these higher levels of co-financing materialized.

The grant beneficiaries that participated in the sub-projects had to contribute their own funds towards these projects. Given that the ICM notes that most of the projects were profitable and had contributed to raising public awareness of and support for adoption of sustainable agriculture and land use practices, this co-financing clearly was highly relevant to achieving the project objectives (notwithstanding the long-term sustainability issues raised in the previous section).

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 to be implemented over a period of 3 years: between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2007. In fact the project started in November 2004 and finished in June 2008. The ICM attributes these delays to the initial delay in payments that caused seasonal (climatic) difficulties to start the necessary research and follow-up actions. However, the ICM also concludes that these delays did not negatively affect the project's outcomes or sustainability.

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 information provided in the ICM, the Leskhoz administration and local authorities were interested and actively involved in the project activities, as demonstrated by the additional financing and in-kind support they provided to different project areas.

Overall, based on the limited information presented in the ICM on this topic, it appears that the government is committed to their national protected areas. The result of the project, the Dashtizhum management plan, has been used as a model for the preparation of the system of management plans and biodiversity monitoring for the protected areas in Tajikistan- which was supported by the national government. Additionally, the government was using the experience of Dashtizhum project to work on the trans-boundary biodiversity conservation issues through the joint Afghan-Tajik mission on protected areas management practices and by exchanging experiences.

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 Satisfactory
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According to the Project Document monitoring and evaluation was one of the activities to be carried out under Component C of the project by Noosfera in collaboration with the SCEPF. A small Project Implementation Unit was to be established within Noosfera to handle procurement, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation functions. The detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was to be prepared in the first 3 months of project implementation with the performance indicators incorporated into the plan. The M&E plan was to include:

- Monitoring field visits which were to be carried out at least once a year jointly by the World Bank and Project Team.
- Quarterly project progress report to be submitted to the World Bank and PCC.
- Annual project reports, reflecting: (i) the status of project implementation, problems encountered, actions suggested for overcoming these problems; (ii) the current state of project indicators; and (iii) the costs incurred to date for each project component and estimated costs of completion.
- Procurement reports describing the progress of procurement activities against the procurement plan, deviations from this plan, reasons for them, and remedial actions.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation system, the project was to use the Protected Areas Management Effective tool.

It seems that most of the Component C was developed to focus on project management primarily ensuring smooth implementation and adherence to World Bank procurement, disbursement, financial management procedures and guidelines. The total budget allocated to the Component C (Project Management and Monitoring) was US\$101,500. However, even though the budget for the entire Component C is provided it is not clear how much of this budget was allocated to the actual monitoring and evaluation of the project outcomes. A review of Table 3 outlining the project implementation plan (on page 29 of the Project Document) reveals that there are no specified item lines for project outcome monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Only project management and audit are specified.

Other monitoring and evaluation actions seem underdeveloped and fairly vague. For instance, it is noted that the Project “will finance an independent final evaluation of project results, including household surveys and focus groups” but no details are provided of who, how and with what resources this is to be implemented. Further, the Project Document states that “throughout the project, efforts will be made to facilitate the effective monitoring and reporting of the project experiences and results, so as to provide a basis for lessons learnt and further replication of similar activities in other parts of Tajikistan.” However, no obvious and specific mechanism had been devised at entry to assist with this function.

The Project Document also stipulates that an Operation Manual for the SDCGP has been drafted that, among other functions, will guide the procedures for application and monitoring and evaluation of sub-projects. This Operation Manual has not been reviewed as part of this TER. The outcomes indicators

presented in the Project Document seem appropriate although not always SMART. Many indicators have not been sufficiently well developed and no baselines against which the changes could be measured were provided.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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A project accounting system has been set up with the help of WB country office; annual financial audits have been conducted in a timely manner. But, the project did not have an operational system for monitoring and evaluation of the project outcomes and outputs. The ICM notes that this provided a number of difficulties during preparation of the final report and during the systematic assessment of the project results, sustainability and effectiveness. The project developed a biodiversity monitoring system. But, the ICM notes that the project did not pay enough attention to the monitoring of indicators of the main project objective – biodiversity conservation. According to the ICM, there is currently no information about changes in the biodiversity in the area or about the reasons for these changes.

The project effectively monitored the small grant program and the ICM provides data on the types of projects implemented, the area under project implementation and yield/survivorship of planted trees and plants).

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: Satisfactory
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The World Bank’s overall performance for project implementation is rated ‘satisfactory’. The World Bank chose an appropriate implementation approach that, according to the ICM, was ‘straightforward and clear’. The Bank also incorporated lessons learnt from other projects into its approach. As reported by the ICM, the use of such a “straightforward” approach was especially important given the “dire state of the protected area (Zakaznik)” as well as the “low capacity” of the executing agency. Additionally, the quality of the Bank’s supervision missions and reporting was “adequate and informative” as well as verified, in most cases, through field visits, according to the ICM.

Minor shortcomings were noted in the delays on initiating community development activities (SGPs) due to the seasonal nature of the sub- projects, which led to unexpected extension of the project duration.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The quality of project execution by the Executive Agency is rated as satisfactory based on the information found in the ICM. No major shortcomings were reported - the EA performed the majority of its responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. The only two areas where the EA performed 'moderately satisfactory' were: (a) its role as the PCC's Secretariat; and (b) its preparation of project progress reports. The project achieved significant successes completing most of the planned outputs, although some shortcomings were noted (see section on effectiveness).

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.

- Projects such as this one can bring about changes in attitudes, perceptions, and awareness of the local population, PA workers, local administration and governmental authorities, and influence how they view PAs. For instance, through this project the PA started being viewed not only as a "closed zone" for animals and plants protection but as the special area with the purpose of using various natural resources in environmentally friendly way.
- Projects such as this one, can serve as effective models for broader PA development in a country, enabling governments to introduce new approaches to PA development and management, such as zonation, GIS application, management plan, monitoring of natural resources, and to apply it to other areas.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

- Recommendation to the Government and local authorities: regulate participatory management of the PA with multilateral agreement.
- Recommendation to the Recipient and the Government: prepare manuals for application of the new PA approaches and methodologies (including approaches to zonation, GIS application, management plan, monitoring of natural resources) to other areas.
- Recommendation to the Donor, the World Bank and the Government: prepare a new project on the trans-boundary Tajik- Afghan National park.
- Recommendation to the Government: support the newly developed biodiversity monitoring system and encourage various project partners to publish regular biodiversity reports. This is important, as little attention had been paid to the monitoring of indicators of the main project objective, i.e., biodiversity conservation, resulting in no information about the changes in the biodiversity in the area.
- Recommendation to the Donor and the World Bank: during supervisory missions/ procedures pay more attention to the indicators of the main outcomes of the project.
- Recommendation: in future projects pay more attention to the creation of the mechanisms to

support sustainability. The sustainability of the current project's outputs and outcomes is low and needs regular financial assistance from the government or international donors. Local communities do not have clear incentives for biodiversity conservation activities and the project created "very few new economic and financial mechanisms to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use in the area".

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 assesses the achievement of all of the relevant outcomes and impacts in a clear, systematic and sufficient manner. All project components, sub-components and project objectives were outlined and the associated achievements for each presented in a clear way. All of these are consistent with the approved Project Document. Importantly, the report openly discussed the sub-components and individual activities that have not been achieved as planned, providing the reasons for the lack of progress.	HS
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The evidence presented in the ICM is balanced and sufficient to justify the ratings. The report is internally consistent and the presented arguments are well substantiated. The ICM is well structured and systematic and it also includes Annexes that present a subset of some of the major outputs, such as the information on the workshops completed. On the other hand, more information on the project sustainability and on the project's M&E would have been constructive.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	There is no specific section that addresses sustainability or project's exit strategy. Rather, this information is presented piecemeal throughout the report in various other sections. The report describes the methods developed by the project that could be replicated (nationally and internationally) and it provides the details of where these have been or are planned to be used going forward. It also specifies the details of several relevant future projects. Social, institutional, environmental and other risks to development outcomes are presented in table. When read in its totality the report offers enough information to deduce what the likelihood is for the project sustainability, but this information is not provided in a systematic manner.	MS
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learnt and recommendations are provided, and they are based on the evidence presented in the report. However, the section on lessons learnt could have been more substantial. At times, the language used in this section is somewhat unclear; making it hard to understand the intended meaning of the provided lessons learned.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The report provides actual project costs and the actual co-financing used in the project. It provides these details in a comprehensive manner, broken down by each component and in Annex 1 gives a detailed table on co-financing and leveraged resources. The information provided is sufficient	MS

	<p>to get an adequate overview of project costs.</p> <p>However, there are inconsistencies between the figures provided in Annex 1 and the figures provided on page 1 of the ICM. Namely the figures for the IA's proposed budget do not match and the figure for the total Government proposed budget seems to be wrong. Additionally, on page 11 of the ICM, the total for grant beneficiaries is listed as US\$262,216, which is wrong.</p> <p>It would have been informative for the ICM to provide more reasoning and details of why the amount of co-financing was higher than anticipated and what effect did this have on the project.</p>	
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	<p>The project's M&E system was not adequately assessed in the report. Only activities carried out as part of project monitoring (supervision mission, audit etc) are presented while very little information is given on project evaluation. As part of the M&E system, the project was to use the Protected Areas Management Effectiveness tool, but the ICM does not elaborate on if the tool had been used and, if not, why not.</p> <p>The ICM criticizes the project for not having an operational system in place for monitoring and evaluation of the project outcomes and outputs, noting that this caused a number of difficulties during preparation of the final report and during the systematic assessment of the project results, sustainability, and effectiveness. The ICM then proceeds to outline, what appears to be, quite a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the project outcomes without actually identifying the sources for the information used. So, it must be inferred that this information existed somewhere in the system and was collected, but unfortunately the ICM does not provide any additional insight on the matter.</p>	MU
Overall TE Rating		S

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

1. Global Environment Facility, Medium Size Project Proposal Document "Dashtidzhum Biodiversity Conservation Project", June 25, 2004. Retrieved from the GEF PMIS on 12/06/2013.
2. World Bank, Progress Report (Grant Reporting and Monitoring [GRM] Report), October 20, 2008. Retrieved from the GEF PMIS on 12/07/2013.