

GEFM&E Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA					
				Review date:	11/2/05
GEF ID:	209		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)	
Project Name:	Creating Protected Areas for Resources Conservation (PARC) in Vietnam Using a Landscape Ecology Approach	GEF financing:	\$6.041	\$5.806	
Country:	Vietnam	Co-financing:	\$0.655	\$2.753	
Operational Program:	3	Total Project Cost:	\$6.696	\$8.559	
IA	UNDP	<u>Dates</u>			
Partners involved:	United Nations Office for Projects Services; IUCN-Vietnam; GTZ; Forest Protection Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Scott Wilson International Consultants	Work Program date		October 1995	
		CEO Endorsement		?	
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		June 1999	
		Closing Date	Proposed: April 2004	Actual: December 2004	
Prepared by: Josh Brann	Reviewed by: A Zazueta	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: Slightly less than 5 years.	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 5.5 years	Difference between original and actual closing: 7.5 months	
Author of TE:	Eng. Tran Quoc Bao; Eng. Vu Van Dzung; Dr. Phillip Edwards (Team Leader); Dr. Josef Margraf	TE completion date: March 2005	TE submission date to GEF OME: June 21, 2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 3 months	

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS

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	N/S		U/A
2.2 Project outcomes		N/S		S
2.3 Project sustainability	N/A	N/S		MS
2.4 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	N/S		S
2.5 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A		HS (5.5)

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? YES. Why? Despite some important omissions (overall ratings on the above aspects; discussions on cost-effectiveness; and a description of actual project costs by activity), this TE is very insightful and balanced. The TE clearly identifies which components of the project were successful, and also highlights the shortcomings, all within 30 pages. A number of important “bigger picture” lessons are identified, and the evaluators demonstrate a good cognizance of many of the issues involved in such a complex project, from project management and administrative aspects to ecological aspects. On the whole this is a very useful TE, and hopefully it will be used to improve future project design in GEF projects.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

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

Immediate objectives:

To improve operations capacity at the two sites in order to efficiently and sustainably manage and maintain the respective protected areas.
To reduce external threats to biodiversity, through integrating conservation and development objectives and activities at the local level.

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

To provide for effective biodiversity conservation in Vietnam’s anthropogenically impacted and fragmented habitats, through application of a landscape ecology approach to protected area management at Yok Don National Park and the Ba Be National Park/Na Hang Nature Reserve complex.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

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

Conservation Management

- The project facilitated the expansion of some of the protected areas, although it failed in its attempt to use the Landscape Ecology approach to effectively create a single multi-provincial park out of the Ba Be/Na Hang conservation complex.
- Operational plans have been developed for all three original project sites. Emphasis was placed on providing guidance and assistance for the Management Boards to produce Operational Plans leading to investment plans. In the new protected areas community representatives were included on the management boards for the first time in Vietnam.
- Institutional presence has been strengthened at the three sites.

Environmental Education and Ecotourism

- “Training attempted to reach all parts of society at both formal and informal levels, and there is no doubt that an overall awareness of the need to protect natural resources has been achieved. One notable success of the project was the development of nine environmental education courses for primary and secondary schools of the project areas. These have been accepted as a model for the GOV to mainstream environmental education into the national curriculum.”
- “There is one big problem still to be overcome at the project sites, and perhaps more

widely across Vietnam and Southeast Asia as a whole, and that is the major difference in the concept of eco-tourism as understood by GEF and developed countries and what is being developed. This leads to singularly inappropriate development such as plans for big hotels/restaurants; concrete lakes, road bridges, rather than as small-scale naturally-based facilities.”

Community Development

- According to the TE, “This is the most successful part of the project. ...PARC attempted to relieve pressure on the forests by introducing agricultural improvements largely through conventional ways of farm modernization, such as the introduction of high-yielding rice varieties, improved livestock breeds, and intensified vegetable production. Farmers visited claimed a two to three fold increase in their levels of income.”

Land-use Planning and Forestry

- “The project has succeeded in the introduction of a trend away from forest utilization practices toward controlled production under modernized schemes.”
- “The fire-control system at Yok Don is wholly unsympathetic to biodiversity conservation and requires immediate changing. This was recognized by the PARC project and specialist forest ecologists were consulted in a bid to improve it. Unfortunately, the time lost at the beginning of the project meant that this aspect was never completed.”

IMPACTS – There is no specific discussion in the TE about environmental changes measured quantitatively by the project. An impact monitoring system was established in the first half of the project, but according to the TE, “its late introduction certainly meant that it has been of little direct use to the project per se.” The impact monitoring system is further discussed later in the M&E system section of the TER.

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

The project outcomes were very much in line with the focal area and operational program strategies of the GEF. The focus on an important part of the system of protected areas in Vietnam was especially important, as well as the attempt to consider the broader landscape in which the protected areas are located. The successful establishment of two new protected areas is also an important contribution to the GEF’s strategies.

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)?

Table 2 in the TE provides an overview of the success of each outcome expected at project end. The majority of expected project outcomes were successful, at least to some degree. According to the TE there were three outcome that were unsuccessful: “The incidence of fire will have been reduced at Yok Don;” “Conservation objectives will be integrated into regional policies and plans for attaining development;” A mechanism for coordination and management of protected areas which cross Provincial boundaries will be in place. This is a necessary step towards establishing a mechanism for managing protected areas which transcend international borders.” The last of these quoted deficiencies seems the most serious since the development of a trans-provincial PA management mechanism was one of the main objectives of the project. There were other difficulties encountered by the project as well, in particular some problems with the initial project sub-contractor in one of the project sites, and GOV pressure to build a dam and a road that would have had a negative impact on the project and the relevant protected area. For a project of this size and complexity however, the project was successful on the whole in meeting its objectives.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?
<p>There is no real discussion of cost-effectiveness in the TE. The TE doesn't identify any problems with the financial management of the project. However, the project was delayed approximately 10 months due to administrative problems with part of the project in the second year. This later translated to a 7.5 month extension, which allowed the project to complete most of the activities that had been delayed by this administrative problem. The rate of disbursement was much higher than the GEF average, but it does not appear that this caused any particular problems for the project.</p>

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: 4
<p>According to the TE, "Financial sustainability is difficult to assess, but does not look strong." Further, "it is clear that there is no interest (or politically approved opportunity) in promoting self-sustainability of Pas in financial terms and that they will remain funded directly through central or provincial government for the foreseeable future." In other words, there are some resources that will continue to come from the government, but the PAs are not as yet self-sustaining.</p>	
B Socio political	Rating: 5
<p>The TE highlights the fact that the communities focused on by the project face the generic problem of urban-migration by young people, which diminishes the communities' ability to take advantage of economic opportunities that might be developed in relation to the protected areas, such as eco-tourism. Other than this larger context problem, the agricultural improvements implemented by the project are likely to continue benefiting the beneficiaries.</p>	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating:3
<p>This was one of the weakest aspects of the project. There are a number of complex issues involving different levels of government and country ownership of the project. According to the TE, "the project has been nationally executed only in name" with the Forest Protection Department managing only about 20% of the overall budget. Another important issue was the structure of the National Steering Committee, which according to the TE, "proved too innovative under Vietnamese Law." In addition, because the project was implemented by large international consulting firms that only had contract obligations to fulfill, "opportunities to complete the whole picture, particularly the follow-up necessary to obtain government ownership and impart policy change, were lost." On the other hand, institutional capacity at the site level has been greatly improved.</p>	
D Ecological (for example, for coffee production projects, reforestation for carbon sequestration under OP12, etc.)	Rating:4
<p>The project took pains to ensure that the alternative livelihoods and improved agricultural practices did not negatively affect the environmental status. The fire control practices at Yok Don NP are of primary concern and have not been dealt with by the project.</p>	
E Examples of replication and catalytic outcomes suggesting increased likelihood of sustainability	Rating: 5
<p>In general, multiple aspects of the project approach are identified as potentially replicable, but examples of actual replication are not given. The TE reports that "With regard to project conservation management, it is heartening to be able to report that several aspects of the project are already being replicated as pilots or tests elsewhere. In particular the idea of using conservation Operational Plans to determine financial priorities for investment in Pas rather than vice-versa is a huge step forward and much will depend on the success of this idea being introduced at the [new protected areas]."</p>	

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:4
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The project did eventually have sufficient M&E systems in place, both at the project level and at the impact level, but these were not introduced from the start of the project. The project has made progress in the area of impact monitoring, although the baseline was not developed at the start of the project, so it is difficult to determine what the actual impact the project might have had on environmental status at the end of the project. However, the work conducted in establishing a baseline by the end of the project makes it possible for changes to be measured in the future. According to the TE, "What is clear, however, is that great care has been taken to ensure that, as far as possible, indicators have now been selected that strive to distinguish project-derived improvements from background changes, and where this has not been possible they are used to describe trends which have been reported carefully and conservatively to avoid making unsupported claims of project success."

B. Information used for adaptive management: What is the experience of the project with adaptive management? Rating: 6

The project had to adapt to changes at the macro and micro levels. According to the TE, "the project has had to adapt to significant changes during its lifetime, firstly as a result of the termination of GTZ/WWF's contract at Yok Don and secondly as a result of the somewhat unexpected appearance of major infrastructure projects at the project sites... In addition, the project has made minor changes and gone beyond its brief in a number of areas. This adaptive management has been very successful given the scale of the problems encountered." There is more detailed information in the TE on how the project adapted to the challenges it faced, but on the whole it is clear that the project successfully worked within a dynamic environment and was not inflexible in its implementation approach.

Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? In the long run, yes, but not for measuring results at the end of the project.

4.4 Quality of lessons

Weaknesses and strengths of the project lessons as described in the TE (i.e. lessons follow from the evidence presented, or lessons are general in nature and of limited applicability, lessons are comprehensive, etc.)

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?

Some of the best and most insightful lessons are found throughout the body of the report, rather than in the Lessons Learned section at the very end. For example, one important lesson is that when possible sub-contracts to parties responsible for project implementation should be allocated to entities that have an ideological interest in fulfilling the spirit of the project, and not just the letter of the contract, as long as there is sufficient technical capacity within such entities. For example, in this project the main subcontractor was the international consulting firm Scott Wilson, which fulfilled its contractual obligations, but did not pursue additional follow-up that would have been beneficial. WWF and IUCN were also involved in the project at some level, and since the "bigger picture" goals of these organizations are in-line with the objectives of the project, they might have been a better choice for project implementation as long as it was determined that they had the technical capacity.

In the lessons learned section of the report, a few relevant lessons include:

"Biodiversity protection and park management cannot be seen as independent from the country's overall land-use and urban policies, particularly in times of urban migration, climate change, and WTO-induced changes."

“Conflicts between national development interests and global conservation priorities still tend to leave globally important sites degraded and globally threatened species under increased pressure. Therefore, future projects need to be anchored not only within a single Ministry (or Provincial body) but require increased awareness and representation within higher advisory and decision-making bodies.”

A few of the other “lessons learned” are more along the lines of statements about project status or end conditions. For example, “Much care has been given to improve the situation of local farmers, recognizing the link between poverty and environmental dependence. Consequently, the project’s relationship with farmers is excellent, serving as a good basis for environmental education and technical innovations.”

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.

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? As discussed under the section describing this TE as good practice.	6
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? Also, see the section describing this TE as good practice.	6
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?	5
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? The number of insightful lessons and evidence presented in a TE of this length is remarkable.	6
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The TE only gives a breakdown of final project financing by source (GEF and partners) in the project summary in Annex I which is the TOR for the TE.	3
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? Yes, but the breakdown of the levels of monitoring under the project (progress monitoring, internal activity monitoring, and impact monitoring) is a little bit confusing and seems inconsistent with standard practice.	5

4.6 Is a technical assessment of the project impacts

Yes:

No: X

described in the TE recommended? Please place an "X" in the appropriate box and explain below.

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Explain: The TE has done a comprehensive job of reviewing project impacts.

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.? Not specifically in relation to the project. It would be interesting to know what the final outcome is regarding the infrastructure projects in the area, as well as the long-term prospects for eco-tourism.

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

GEF online database.