

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review

1. PROJECT DATA				
		Review date:		
GEF Project ID:	218		<u>at endorsement</u> (Million US\$)	<u>at completion</u> (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	143	GEF financing:	2.50	2.50
Project Name:	A Highly Decentralized Approach to Biodiversity Protection and use: The Bangassou Dense Forest	IA/EA own:	0	0
Country:	Central African Republic	Government:	0	0
		Other*:	0.79	NA
		Total Cofinancing	0.79	NA
Operational Program:	3	Total Project Cost:	3.29	NA
IA	UNDP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	United Nations Office for Project Services	Work Program date		10/29/1997
		CEO Endorsement		09/05/1997
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		3/18/1998
		Closing Date	Proposed: 03/18/2000	Actual: 03/30/2004
Prepared by: Tarek Soueid	Reviewed by: Neeraj Kumar Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 13 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 61 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 49 months
Author of TE: Bob Konzi-Sarambo, Eduardo Quiroga		TE completion date: 05/2004	TE submission date to GEF OME: 7/29/2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 14 months

* Multilateral donors, in this case Canadian Centre for International Studies and Co-operation (CECI)

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS

GEF EO 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). GEF EO 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. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project outcomes	S	N/A	N/A	S
2.2 Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	U

sustainability				
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	N/A	N/A	MU
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	N/A	MS

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why?

Yes. Although it doesn't elaborate enough on some aspects related to sustainability and M&E, the TE should be considered a good practice because it provides a clear analysis of the project's management and implementation.

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.?

There is no follow-up issue noted in 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, the global environmental objective is to "ensure conservation and sustainable use of forest resources diversity and warrant the prospects to increase local community livelihood standards from these very forest resources through the promotion of methods, technologies and strategies of sustainable use of natural resources management".

But the TE mentions that there were changes in the project's objectives following recommendations made in the Mid-Term Review. The project's revised objective is "to contribute to the conservation, protection and sustainable use of the Bangassou Forest biodiversity by means of a highly decentralized approach".

• What are the Development Objectives? Any changes during implementation?

The Project Document lists the following development objectives:

- Make policies, legislation and practices conducive to sustainable development of renewable natural resources in the Bangassou dense forest.
- Strengthen local institutions and partnership in order to create opportunities for developing natural resources and improving ecosystems management
- Promote specific economic activities that will help to raise income levels, provide opportunities for gainful employment, improve living conditions for communities of natural resources users and lessen strains on the environment
- Promote traditional knowledge and scientific information in order to build capacity in grassroots communities for sustainable management of natural resources.

According to the TE, the new objectives after the Mid-Term Review are:

- Develop a Natural Resources Management Plan based on land and ecological use.
- Support the reform of Natural Resource Management regulations.
- Reinforce the capacity of local stakeholders to implement Natural Resource Management activities.
- Promote income-generating activities that contribute to the conservation of Bangassou's natural resources thru funds for Community Enterprises.
- Mediate and promote the cooperation at a national level for activities related to the project's Management of Natural Resources.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

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

Regarding the project outcomes and impacts, the TE and the 2004 PIR list the following environmental and related legal achievements:

- **On the environmental side:** Demarcation of protected areas has been proposed by the local communities: 1,384,700 hectares consecrated as National Park (NP); 534,300 hectares consecrated as village cynegetic zone (VCZ); 165,000 hectares consecrated as a controlled hunting zone (CHZ); also there has been a great improvement on the local communities' commitment to sustainable use of resources. Examples include 206,900 hectares consecrated as an Agriculture Development Zone (ADZ); 206,900 hectares consecrated as a Cattle Breeding Zone (CBZ);

<p>421,800 hectares consecrated as a Multipurpose Zone (MPZ); 300 hectares consecrated as a Sacred Site (SS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the legal aspect: Law establishing community-based (at the Ministerial Council level) participatory management of natural resources; Decree establishing the Bangassou Forest Decentralized Management Network (at the level of the Office of the Minister of Water, Wildlife, Hunting and Fishery); Master Plan for the integrated management of Bangassou Forest’s Natural Resources (under the responsibility of both the Ministry of Water, Wildlife, Hunting and Fishery and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development); 43 legal additions aimed at filling the legal vacuum related to certain innovative natural resource management practices, improving consistency between legal instruments as well as encouraging and protecting the participation of grassroots communities in the management and conservation of natural resources (under the responsibility of both the Ministry of Water, Wildlife, Hunting and Fishery and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development “Ref. Master Plan”) • On the employment and other benefits: The project created and supported income-generation activities that contributed to the conservation of natural resources. These activities created 4175 employments, and were financed by micro-credit and Community Enterprise Fund (CFE).

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes

A Relevance	Rating: S
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- **In retrospect, were the project’s outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain**

The project outcomes are relevant to and consistent with the OP3, whose objective is the sustainable use of forest management, sought by combining production, socio-economic, and biodiversity goals. Specifically this Operational Strategy calls for a range of uses “from strict protection on reserves through various forms of multiple uses with conservation easements to full scale use”.

B Effectiveness	Rating: S
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- **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)?**

Although the TE describes the project outcomes and makes a comparison between these and the expected outcomes described in the project document, it also acknowledges that the project’s lack of logical framework and M&E system makes it very difficult to assess the degree to which outcomes and objectives were realized. Having said that, the TE concludes that the available evidence suggests that the project reached most of the expected products that there is a “considerable potential” for the immediate objectives to be achieved.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: MU
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- **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 and did that affect cost-effectiveness?**

The TE says that, with the available information, it is not possible to analyze the optimal transformation of the inputs into products, since only expected costs of the activities was available for the mission (Action plan 2002-2003) and not the final cost. The TE consultants did not receive the necessary information from the project team in order to assess its financial status. However, the TE does mention several factors such as the country’s political-military instability and the obstacles to project activities created by private interests, which had negative effects on the implementation of the project.

Impacts

- **Has the project achieved impacts or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts?**

According to the TE and PIR, the project has achieved and is still expecting to achieve impacts on 1) expanding protected areas; 2) improving management effectiveness of protected areas; 3) improving practices of sustainable use of biodiversity resources; 4) creating changes in sectoral policies, laws and regulations to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. (included in section 3.2)
But it is important to note that the TE clearly specifies that without further support the results achieved are likely to have a very limited impact in the long term.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of **risks** to sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE.

A Financial resources	Rating: U
As donors' strong support is still necessary to consolidate achievements and avoid regression, the financial risk remains high. The TE includes no signs that donors will accept the additional activities recommended and support them financially. While some limited but sufficient internal resources are available, the sustainability risk is high.	
B Socio political	Rating: U
A major political risk identified is that the current political instability of the country, especially over the last two years, and the direction to which this political crisis is heading. The security situation isn't any better, and this constitutes a major threat to all the achievements and expected outcome that the project hopes to generate in the future.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: L
According to the TE and PIR, the inputs of the project allowed the Government to change the basis of the natural resources management law and rule in favour of the local communities and to reinforce local institutions in order to set up the best conservation system. In addition, the private sector and NGOs are involved in the local natural resources management plan and encouraged to promote sustainability.	
D Environmental	Rating: L
The project tested highly decentralized and participatory approaches to the sustainable management of the Bangassou Dense Forest region of southern CAR. This area has high species and ecosystem diversity, and an unusual blend of forest and savanna flora and fauna, including threatened populations of forest and savanna elephants, and the northernmost population of chimpanzees in central Africa. Fire, land-use changes and over-hunting are degrading the Bangassou ecosystems. The project tested community-based management approaches to making local resource use more sustainable, along with policy and tenure reform to protect and support local conservation. According to the TE, these tests for resource sustainability proved to be successful and without major environmental risks, except the risk to decentralize natural resource management skills due to political instability, which might reflect on the environmental sustainability.	

Provide only ratings for the sustainability of outcomes based on the information in the TE:

A Financial resources	Rating: U
B Socio political	Rating: U
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: HL
D Environmental	Rating: L

4.3 Catalytic role

1. Production of a public good
A communication strategy used in the area has been built on several channels namely rural broadcasting, workshops, video presentation, pictured books, training sessions, newspaper, sketch etc. The PIR2004 says that these efforts to disseminate lessons and transferring knowledge had and are expected to have demonstration and replication effects.
2. Demonstration
No
3. Replication
No.
4. Scaling up
No

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

<p>A. In retrospection, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient? (Sufficient and practical indicators were identified, timely baseline, targets were created, effective use of data collection, analysis systems including studies and reports, and practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, when for the M&E activities) Rating: MU</p>
<p>The Project Document included a description of outputs, activities and indicators for each objective identified, but it failed to create specific targets. Due to the lack of a useful baseline, it did establish a plan for data collection, but as stated in the TE, this plan did not specify the practical organization and logistics involved.</p>
<p>B. Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards projects objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure? Rating: MU</p>
<p>According to the TE, the M&E plan was not implemented. The TE suggests that the M&E plan was not implemented because “the relevant parties maybe considered that the project is more like rural development and that it has no real negative effect on environment (p.33)”,. Furthermore, the TE says that the project had its “own limited” M&E system that did not follow the plan.</p> <p>Despite that M&E information was obviously not used throughout the project, and that TE does not mention whether the project provided proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure, TE and PIR2004 both list some M&E actions carried out by the team. Among these were: a field visit, the results of which have given the model of local grass root communities’ experience, a UNDP GEF field visit, a Tripartite Review, a Mid-Term Evaluation and a Final Evaluation.</p>
<p>C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was it properly funded during implementation? Rating: U</p>
<p>The TE mentions that M&E was not sufficiently budgeted or properly funded. The TE says that an elaborate discussion of the cost that should be allocated to M&E was ignored due to the limited budget, so the limited measures of M&E actions were carried within this context.</p>
<p>Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? No. The project M&E system cannot be considered a good “practice” because it was not “practiced” per se but remained on paper. It gives unconvincing arguments on why an M&E plan that is already identified and that includes all elements of a good plan was not implemented.</p>

4.5 Lessons

Project lessons as described in the TE

<p>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?</p>
<p>The TE and last PIR list the following lessons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">It is important to identify and strengthen the involvement of constructive leaders in the establishment of community management bodies, so as to avoid instances where individuals make their private interests prevail over the collective concern of the populations targeted by project interventions.No matter whether it is established through a democratic process involving grassroots populations or its members benefited from training and appropriate guidance, a community eco-development organ reaches a degree of autonomy (good governance, appropriate management) only after several years of learning (at least 4 to 5 years) marked by 3 to 4 election cycles including penalty votes against administrator-elect members.An eco-development organizational structure with several governance or consultative and action levels (regional, prefectorial, sub-prefectorial, municipal and local) and organized into community spaces must emerge from regions and draw its primary components (members) from within each of the contemporary socio-professional and socio-cultural interest groupings. The representation and legitimacy of those elected to these positions are thus recognized and respected by members of the community at large.

- d. The participation of rural women in any important initiative can be triggered only through awareness raising, information and training campaigns. It also involves concrete catalytic actions to be taken advantage of through leading women and the latter's willingness to share experience with the other women. The actions that must be taken in favor of these women must necessarily be presented as a support to improve the welfare of their respective households, in particular, and local communities, in general. In addition, the husbands of targeted women must endorse these actions, which must reinforce cohesion within the said-households rather than destabilize them.
- e. The technical team of a project must only be interested in stimulating through training and information, the emergence of a democracy, good governance and self-monitoring culture within grassroots communities. It must refrain from taking positions when a choice is made or when a member of a community eco-development body is removed from office or otherwise cause trouble or compromise the smooth operation of project. The populations must also assume responsibility regarding both the choices of their representatives and the subsequent consequences. It is only through this learning exercise and permanent questioning that an efficient community dynamic focusing on democracy and good governance can emerge.

4.6 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.

4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings

In some cases the GEF Evaluation Office may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office. If additional relevant independent information has been collected that affect the ratings of this project, included in this section. This can include information that may affect the assessment and ratings of sustainability, outcomes, project M&E systems, etc.

No additional information was available.

4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
<p>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? Yes, the report contains a thorough assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives. Unlike most TEs though, the report does not distinguish these in clearly separate sections, but made sure to list them all within the text.</p>	5
<p>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? To a certain extent, the report was internally consistent, the evidence is not always complete and convincing, such as why costs efficiency was not reflected or why M&E system was not implemented. No IA ratings were mentioned in the text.</p>	3
<p>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? The report somehow assesses project sustainability, and allocates a separate section for it, but without elaborating on all its aspects. It does not identify all risks that such project can encounter. More importantly, an exit strategy was not considered in the TE.</p>	3
<p>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Yes, the lessons learned were sometimes supported by the evidence presented within the context of the entire evaluation, and not all but most aspects were covered with regards to comprehensiveness. Most importantly, they do not come following an M&E that evaluates the project and generates lessons that are reliable.</p>	4

<p>E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? No, the report does not include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used. It mentions very occasionally a cost item generating from an activity or financing source.</p>	2
<p>F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? The report fairly discusses project M&E issues, and allocates a separate section for it, yet without covering all its aspects.</p>	4

4.7 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: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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Explain: Yes, a technical assessment of the project impacts described in the TE is recommended because does not elaborate on this area, but rather makes occasional allusions to technical issues with linking them to project impact.

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

Project Document, PIR 2004.