

## GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
		Review date:		9/1/08
GEF Project ID:	2263		<u>at endorsement</u> (Million US\$)	<u>at completion</u> (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	3065	<b>GEF financing:</b>	\$6,000,000	UA
Project Name:	Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project	IA/EA own:	\$0	UA
Country:	Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine	Government:	\$5,332,106	UA
		Other*:		UA
		<b>Total Cofinancing</b>	\$5,332,106	UA
Operational Program:	OP8	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	\$11,332,106	UA
IA	UNDP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	Black Sea Commission (BSC), other advisory groups	Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date Project began)		November 1, 2004
		Closing Date	Proposed: 6/30/07	Actual: 04/30/08
Prepared by:	Reviewed by:	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing (in months): 36	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing (in months): 42	Difference between original and actual closing (in months): 6
Josh Brann	Neeraj Negi			
Author of TE:	Alan Fox  Paul Buijs	TE completion date:	TE submission date to GEF EO:	Difference between TE completion and submission date (in months): 2 months
		June 23, 2008	August 2008	

\* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

### 2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS AND KEY FINDINGS

Please refer to document GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for terminal evaluation reviews for further definitions of the ratings.

Performance Dimension	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office evaluations or reviews	GEF EO
.1a Project outcomes	S	S		MU
.1b Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	MS		MU
.1c Monitoring and		MS		S

evaluation				
2.1d Quality of implementation and Execution	NA	NA	NA	MS
2.1e Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	MU	S

**2.2 Should the terminal evaluation report for this project be considered a good practice? Why?**

No. The terminal evaluation does a good job of presenting evidence, discussing relevant aspects of the project and meeting the standards of the GEF Evaluation Office. It does have some minor shortcomings that do not allow it to be used as an example on which other terminal evaluations could be modeled. Effectively covering and presenting evaluation evidence for such a large project in less than 50 pages is always challenging. The terminal evaluation does an excellent job of focusing on larger strategic and big picture issues, rather than spending too much time covering individual project outputs and activities. The terminal evaluation is sometimes internally inconsistent, for example in alternately laying responsibility for project shortcomings in the hands of the IA/EA vs. the low level of country ownership and responsibility taken by the countries involved. The project also does not include an overview of project financing (expected vs. actual), though the evaluation does clearly state that it was exceedingly difficult for the evaluation team to determine whether promised co-financing were achieved or exceeded.

The terminal evaluation also uses a four point rating system, which is difficult to translate to the six point system used by the GEF Evaluation Office. The terminal evaluation states that this is based on the guidelines in the evaluation TORs.

**2.3 Are there any evaluation findings that require follow-up, such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, mismanagement, etc.?**

None identified by the terminal evaluation.

**3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

**3.1 Project Objectives**

**a. What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?**

According to the project document, the global environmental objectives of the project were “to reinforce regional cooperation under the Black Sea Convention, to set up institutional and legal instruments and define the priority actions according to the BSSAP at regional and national levels to assure sustainable coastal zone management, the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems and habitats in order to secure sustainable use of coastal and marine resources.” To do this, the project will build up on the results of Tranche I.

There were some changes in implementation approach throughout the project, based on recommendations from the mid-term evaluation and other factors, but there were no changes to project objectives.

**b. What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?**

According to the project document logframe, “The long-term development objective of the proposed Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project (BSERP) is to contribute to sustainable human development in the Black Sea area through reinforcing the cooperation and the capacities of the Black Sea countries to take effective measures in reducing nutrients and other hazardous substances to such levels necessary to permit Black Sea ecosystems to recover to similar conditions as those observed in the 1960s.”

There were some changes in implementation approach throughout the project, based on recommendations from the mid-term evaluation and other factors, but there were no changes to project objectives.

Overall Environmental Objectives	Project Development Objectives	Project Components	Any other (specify)
		According to the TE, there was adaptive management	In 2004 UNDP and UNOPS made the decision

		to “Downgrade of certain activities where there was not enough financial weight to have much impact, for instance concerning air-borne dispersion of nutrients.” In addition, according to the TE, “The team considerably reduced Output 3.1 activities focused on economic analysis, yet with a very limited budget still indicated several deliverables.”	to link the Danube and Black Sea projects through appointing a Regional Manager. Coupling of the BSC Commissioner and BSERO Steering Committee Member roles during the project second phase; organizing back-to-back Commission meetings nad Project Steering Committee meetings. This change helped forge closer cooperation between the project and Commission, and reduced steering meeting time and cost.	
<b>If yes, tick applicable reasons for the change in objectives</b>				
<b>Original objectives not sufficiently articulated</b>	<b>Exogenous conditions changed, causing a change in objectives</b>	<b>Project was restructured because original objectives were over ambitious</b>	<b>Project was restructured because of lack of progress</b>	<b>Any other (specify)</b>
			X	

#### 4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

##### 4.1.1 Outcomes (Relevance can receive either a satisfactory rating or a unsatisfactory rating. For effectiveness and cost efficiency a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU will be used)

<b>a. Relevance</b>	<b>Rating: S</b>
A.1. What is the relevance of the project outcomes/results to:	
(i) the national sustainable development agenda and development needs and challenges?	
<p>The project was a regional project, but responded to the development needs and challenges of each of the individual countries. For the countries bordering the Black Sea, securing the quality and productivity of the Black Sea ecosystem is important for many reasons. These are extensively outlined in the 2007 TDA for the Black Sea, developed with the input of all the relevant countries. The project focused on a number of key issues including eutrophication due to agricultural nutrient runoff, and fisheries.</p>	
(ii) the national environmental framework, agenda and priorities?	
<p>As described by the TE, “The emphasis was on regional, overarching action plans and protocols rather than national policies and legislation. There were some activities designed to assist with defining priority national and local actions, for instance ICZM strategies and demonstration projects and feasibility studies for treatment works investments...”</p>	
(iii) the achievement of the GEF strategies and mandate?	
<p>The project was relevant in supporting the GEF IW focal area strategies. According to the project document, “The approach is fully consistent with the guidance for GEF Operational Programme Number 8, “Waterbody-based Operational Programme.” The goal of this Operational Programme is to assist countries in making changes in the ways that human activities are conducted in different sectors so that the particular waterbody and its multi-country drainage basin can sustainably support the human activities. Projects in this OP focus mainly on seriously threatened waterbodies and the most imminent transboundary threats to their ecosystems as described in the Operational Strategy. Consequently, priority is placed on changing sectoral policies and activities responsible for the most serious root causes needed to solve the top priority transboundary environmental concerns.”</p>	
(iv) the implementation of the global conventions the GEF supports (countries obligations and responsibilities towards the convention as well as the achievement of the conventions objectives)	
<p>Although the GEF is not the designated financial mechanism for a specific convention related to International Waters, it supports various international and regional conventions relevant to this focal area. For this specific project, the following conventions and agreements are identified as being relevant to the project’s objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Bucharest Convention (“Convention for Protection of the Black Sea” – 1992)</li> <li>- The Odessa Declaration</li> <li>- The Black Sea Strategic Action Plan</li> <li>- The Black Sea Environmental Program</li> </ul>	
A2. Did the project promote of International (Regional and / or Global) Cooperation and Partnership <sup>1</sup>	
<p>Yes – by nature of the fact that it was a regional international waters project, the project promoted cooperation and partnership between the relevant countries that are signatories and partners to the Bucharest Convention, and members of the Black Sea Commission. Project activities required communication and cooperation between individuals and institutions in each of the countries. During the implementation period there was some friction and tension between the Black Sea Commission and the project (Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project – BSERP), but changes were made during implementation by the IA to help address these issues.</p>	
<b>b. Effectiveness</b>	<b>Rating: MS</b>
<p>The project did eventually at least partially achieve many of the activities and outputs set out in the project document. However, there were numerous shortcomings and issues throughout the project’s implementation period, and the achievement of project outputs did not necessarily translate to achievement of project objectives. Some key project objectives were achieved after a delay (a revised TDA/SAP), while others were not achieved, such as the negotiation of a fisheries agreement. The evidence for a marginally satisfactory rating is found throughout this TER in numerous excerpts from the TE.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Please consider for regional and global project only

The terminal evaluation identifies multiple positive outcomes of the project, such as the fact that “the project succeeded to advance an improved understanding of the status and trends in Black Sea ecosystem health, and the establishment/re-establishment of linkages amongst the region’s scientific community.”

At the same time, the TE clearly outlines the fact the broad objectives of the project have not been achieved. As stated in the TE, “Wider project objectives including policy reforms and improved collaboration amongst the Black Sea coastal country governments to deal with shared problems in fisheries, land based sources of pollution, and coastal biodiversity protection/planning, did not advance as far as expected during the project period and will face continuing difficulties to achieve in the future.” In addition, the TE notes, “Some of the key indicators for BSERP success were related to regional and national policy and legislative developments. These were based on technical assistance to the Black Sea Commission and the six countries to establish a land based activities protocol, a negotiated fisheries agreement, and coastal zone management strategies. The progress made in these policy areas was significantly less than had been expected at project inception.”

Of the project’s 16 sub-components, the TE rates 11 of them S or HS, four MS, and one U. However, based on the evidence presented in the TE, it appears that multiple ratings in the TE would have been different if a six point rating scale had been used.

**c. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)**

**Rating: U**

The TE is succinct but direct in its assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the BSERP: “The BSERP has taken 6 years and cost GEF \$ 10.3 million. An additional \$9 million is the estimated co-financing, although the participating countries have not estimated their in-kind contribution at project end, so these numbers are speculative at best. As noted in the above sections discussing each of the project outputs, there is a decided lack of success in meeting the verifiable indicators of environmental and policy reform progress as a result of this project.” This assessment pertains to the entire duration of the project – both first tranche and the second tranche. During the second tranche the actual GEF disbursement for the project was \$6 million and, according to the project appraisal document, an additional \$ 5.3 million was expected through cofinancing.

**d. To what extent did the project result in trade offs between environment and development priorities / issues (not to be rated)**

This was not a major outcome of the project, although there might have been if project outcomes had been fully realized. According to the TE, among lack of project impacts were the following: “no areas have been set aside as no fishing zones or marine protected areas; no changes have been made to fishing quotas or restrictions in the catch of any specific species; no particular industrial projects have been altered or closed down as a result of project efforts; no revisions to agricultural policy have been instituted to reduce non-point source runoff...”

**4.1.2 Results / Impacts<sup>2</sup> (Describe Impacts) (please fill in annex 1 – results scoresheet and annex 2 – focal area impacts (against GEF Strategic Priority indicators, where appropriate and possible)**

**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. Use a four point scale (4= Likely (no or negligible risk); 3= Moderately Likely (low risk); 2= Moderately Unlikely (substantial risks) to 1= Unlikely (High risk)). The ratings should be given taking into account both the probability of a risk materializing and the anticipated magnitude of its effect on the continuance of project benefits.

**a. Financial resources**

**Rating: MU**

Based on the information presented in the TE, there is a significant risk (as a result of low country-ownership) that financial resources will not be available to continue the benefits of the project. The Black Sea Commission (BSC) is the primary remaining transboundary institution with a mandate to continue implementing project activities and benefits, and the financial resources of the BSC will apparently be severely limited in the future.

According to the TE, “Despite [the effort to develop an institutional review and exit strategy], at the conclusion of the BSERP, the future viability of the BSC and its PS are at risk. Funding provided by the countries is likely to be insufficient for the Secretariat to carry out its expected assignments. Future advisory group meeting are in doubt due to a lack of funding, as are future efforts to promote the Black Sea Day.”

<sup>2</sup> Please consider direct and indirect global environmental results; any unexpected results; local development benefits (including results relevant to communities, gender issues, indigenous peoples, NGOs and CBOs)

In addition, “Current financial contributions to the BSC merely allow for running a Permanent Secretariat with several staff members and without funding for expert/advisory groups, further joint research and monitoring efforts or public awareness activities.”

“This level of increased funding that the authors [of the exit strategy] suggest to achieve by 2010 is unrealistic given the low level of country ownership and the difficulties faced by the Commission to build a regular budget.”

**b. Socio political**

**Rating: MU**

According to the TE, some of the most successful aspects of the project are in danger of discontinuation after the project finishes. In general, the low level of country-ownership (as commented on in various aspects of the TE), indicate that there is significant risk that the project stakeholders will not be able to sustain the project benefits. The public and stakeholder awareness that was developed during the project is in danger of being lost as a result of discontinuation of the major effort behind the highly successful Black Sea Day initiative. The threat to socio-political sustainability is also based on the lack of future funding support for the small grants program.

“The small grants effort holds out hope of sustainability, as the effort enabled more than 30 NGOs to participate and it can be expected to have a successful impact in terms of building public awareness. What is unknown at this point is the extent to which the BSERP small grants effort has enabled involved NGOs to increase their success in obtaining funding and public support for their work.”

“Black Sea Day is in danger of receding back into the background of events – or then to become more of an NGO driven, localized effort. Inexplicably, the BSC Secretariat has so far chosen not to follow up with the offer from Coca Cola to continue supporting the Black Sea Day effort, and they have not solicited funds from other sources, so the means to organize events establish a media presence and deliver branded items is not there.”

“The sustainability of ICZM efforts in the region has benefits from the BSERP efforts together with the ECBS (EU) project. The ICZM pilot in Turkey is creating interest there for additional coastal zone planning activities...Based from interview comments of several Black Sea Commissioners, there are likely to be difficulties getting coastal zone protocol through the Black Sea Commission at this juncture...”

**c. Institutional framework and governance**

**Rating: MU**

Some of the institutional frameworks and governance issues addressed by the project have been mostly successfully implemented, but this does not ensure their sustainability once the project comes to a close. Due to a low level of country ownership, the prospects for sustainability are quite low. Without the full buy-in and commitment of the countries involved, the institutional and governance initiatives developed through the project are not likely to be carried forward once the project support is gone. The TE includes the following commentary on some of these issues:

“The lack of progress made on the first SAP and the slow pace of approval and ratification of the Biodiversity and LBA Protocols suggest that agreement and then implementation of common policies are likely to remain very difficult.”

“The draft revised Land-based Activities Protocol is likely at some point to be approved at the Commission level, given the significant amount of effort put in. The greater question and concern is whether it will succumb to the fate of the Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Protocol, which was signed in 2002 but remains not in force, with only two of the six parties having ratified it.”

**d. Environmental**

**Rating: L**

The evidence cited by the TE indicates that the environmental quality of the Black Sea is improving as far as can be discerned. This is apparently primarily a result of the economic downturn in the 1990s post-Soviet era, which resulted in a lower rate of agricultural discharge into the Black Sea watershed. At this point there is no evidence that project-related initiatives have directly impacted the environmental conditions of the Black Sea, but this was not envisioned in the original project document. As noted in the TE, “From the standpoint of environmental improvement, the impacts of the BSERP are at this point difficult to discern, although it must be acknowledged that the BSERP project had neither the expectations nor the financial resources for measures directly reducing pollution loading from municipal and agriculture resources.”

Given this approach and level of impact on ecosystem status, the prospect for environmental sustainability can be considered satisfactory.

**e. Technological**

**Rating: L**

Three key project-supported technologies are the BSIMAP, BSIS and VTOPIS. It is anticipated that these technologies will be carried forward by the BSC, and the involved countries. The VTOPIS requires some technical capacity by the implementing organization (the Bulgarian Marine Administrations, in Bulgaria), but this is not seen as an impediment to sustained use going forward.

“The Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BSIMAP) holds out promise for sustainability..... Full implementation of BSIMAP by all countries is not something to be expected in the short term.”

“The formal turnover of the Black Sea Information System (BSIS) to the BSC Secretariat took place after the evaluation... It can be assumed that the database will be utilized by the Secretariat, especially for updating of information for the TDA and SAP.”

“The VTOPIS (Vessel Traffic Oil Pollution Information System) software has been installed on computers in the Bulgarian Marine Administrations in Burgas and Varna in the autumn of 2007. The Marine Administrations are said to use the system on a daily basis and to be happy with the system.”

### 4.3 Catalytic role<sup>3</sup>

#### **a. INCENTIVES: To what extent have the project activities provide incentives (socio-economic / market based) to catalyze changes in stakeholders**

The project document mentions economic incentives multiple times in terms of fines or taxes etc relating to agricultural practices and water pollution. It is not clear in what way or if they were addressed or actually implemented by the project.

Objective 5 of the project included the implementation of a small grants program, which, according to the TE, was highly successful. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the small grants program distributed \$308,802 through 36 projects to NGOs and other organizations.

#### **b. INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: To what extent have the project activities changed institutional behaviors**

This appears to be a shortcoming of the project. With regard to both nutrient loading and fisheries the TE states at various points and with multiple examples that the project had limited results.

#### **c. POLICY CHANGE: To what extent have project activities led to policy changes (and implementation of policy)?**

Policy changes resulting from the project have also been extremely limited. As previously mentioned, according to the TE,

#### **d. CATALYTIC FINANCING: To what extent did the project led to sustained follow-on financing from Government and / or other donors? (this is different than co-financing)**

As previously discussed under financial sustainability, there are insufficient financial resources to continue the benefits of the project, particularly with regard to the ongoing viability of the Black Sea Commission. Bulgaria and Romania’s membership in the EU will help secure continued EU support for Black Sea environmental initiatives, such as ICZM.

#### **e. PROJECT CHAMPIONS: To what extent have changes (listed above) been catalyzed by particular individuals or institutions (without which the project would not have achieved results)?**

The TE did not identify any particular individuals that catalyzed project achievements.

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

#### **a. M&E design at Entry Rating (six point scale): S**

The project document clearly lays out the M&E procedures that the project will follow, which cover the minimum requirements for GEF-funded project M&E systems (although the project was approved long before the current

<sup>3</sup> Please review the ‘Catalytic Role of GEF: How is it measured and evaluated – A conceptual framework’ prior to addressing this section.

<p>GEF Evaluation Policy was in place). The identified procedures include: Quarterly progress reports, Annual program report, annual project implementation reviews, a mid-term evaluation, a terminal report, and a final evaluation, as well as other reporting activities.</p> <p>The original TDA/SAP provided, to some extent, a baseline of environmental data against which the project's environmental impacts can be measured. However, the quality of data in the initial TDA was not sufficient, as recognized during project development, hence the revision of the TDA as one of the key project activities.</p> <p>The TE does not comment specifically on the M&amp;E design at project entry.</p>
<p><b>b. M&amp;E plan Implementation                      Rating (six point scale): S</b></p>
<p>There do not appear to have been any problems with the implementation of the project M&amp;E plan.</p> <p>The TE does not specifically comment on M&amp;E implementation, but no deficiencies can be identified from the information presented in the TE. The budget for the M&amp;E plan implementation appears to have been sufficient, the mid-term evaluation was carried out and provided recommendations which influenced the project implementation.</p>
<p><b>b.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&amp;E in the budget included in the project document?</b></p> <p>Yes. The funding appears to have been sufficient. The project document does not specifically identify the M&amp;E budget within the budget for the project implementation unit.</p>
<p><b>b.2a Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&amp;E during project implementation?</b></p> <p>Yes. According to the information presented in the TE, this was not a problem.</p>
<p><b>b.2b To what extent did the project monitoring system provided real time feed back? Was the information that was provided used effectively? What factors affected the use of information provided by the project monitoring system?</b></p> <p>According to the TE, the M&amp;E measures were useful, although not necessarily used in a timely manner. In addition, IA oversight could have been stronger, which may have helped avert some of the project management issues that were faced. However, as the TE also points out, many of the problems resulted from lack of country ownership, and therefore it is not known how closer supervision might have improved this situation.</p> <p>The mid-term evaluation provides the clearest example of this. The mid-term evaluation was conducted and provided useful recommendations for the project implementation. However, according to the TE, "The project tranche 2 ProDoc was approved prior to conducting a mid term evaluation of the project. This was an error in process and necessitated another project revision once the MTE recommendations came out. As noted in the mid term evaluation, closer oversight by UNOPS and UNDP could have helped to identify and rectify problems in project management at an earlier stage during the project first phase."</p>
<p><b>b.3 Can the project M&amp;E system (or an aspect of the project M&amp;E system) be considered a good practice? If so, explain why.</b></p> <p>No. The project M&amp;E system was sufficient, but does not present an outstanding example to be emulated by other projects.</p>

**4.6 Assessment of Quality of Implementation and Execution**

<p><b>a. Overall Quality of Implementation and Execution (on a six point scale): MS</b></p>
<p><b>b. Overall Quality of Implementation – for IA (on a six point scale): S</b></p> <p><b>Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as quality of the project design, focus on results, adequacy of supervision inputs and processes, quality of risk management, candor and realism in supervision reporting, and suitability of the chosen executing agencies for project execution.</b></p> <p>The terminal evaluation notes numerous issues with the first phase of the project, which had negative consequences for Phase 2. The TE states: "In general the BSERP faced major difficulties in its implementation and management. At one point just prior to the launch of Phase 2 it was at risk of being cancelled due to performance problems." However, "During the project second phase, changes in personnel of the Project and BSC contributed to a significant improvement in cooperation and a significant improvement in project implementation."</p>

The project design was too ambitious. As noted by the TE the project had, “an overly ambitious array of expected outputs and activities, each of which was important, but each of which was given insufficient financial support to have a real and lasting impact.”

In general, the TE rated the project implementation approach marginally satisfactory on a four point scale. According to the TE, “A rating of marginally satisfactory is indicated for the implementation approach. The implementation approach refers both to how the project was conceived and then how it was managed – and the adaptive management that occurred. Some of the problems experienced during project implementation had their germination in the project formulation phase, resulting from an overly ambitious ToR, under-resourcing to meet the ToR and a failure to agree with the Black Sea Commission on project priorities. The PIU operated under difficult circumstances, in particular, the strained working relationship between the Project team and Secretariat through the beginning and middle period of the project was a critical problem that took several years to resolve. Staff turnover was clearly a factor, especially during the BSERP 1st phase but also continuing through the second. There was a strong rebound in the later stages of the project in terms of PIU/Secretariat cooperation and the achievement of outputs. Stakeholders gave high marks for the management of the small grants program, and the Black Sea Day campaigns (especially 2006) as well as the management of various seminars and workshops.”

Adaptive management measures were taken at various stages of the project implementation which improved the effectiveness of the project. For example, “In 2004 UNDP and UNOPS made the decision to link the Danube and Black Sea projects through appointing a Regional Manager (the DRP CTA). Under the circumstances this decision made good sense.” Also, “The BSERP can point to successful adaptations, for instance in the decision to couple the BSC Commissioner and BSERP Steering Committee Member roles during the project second phase and organizing back-to-back Commission meetings and Project Steering Committee meetings. This change helped forge closer cooperation between the project and Commission, and reduced steering committee meeting time and cost. The decision to hire Country Team leaders was also a successful adaptation. Adaptive management is also evident in the decision to downgrade certain activities where there was not enough financial weight to have much impact for instance concerning air-borne dispersion of nutrients.”

Based on the conclusions of the terminal evaluation, it appears as though the project reporting was not fully realistic. There is no indication that the reporting was done in an intentionally obfuscating manner. However, the fact that the 2007 PIR rates all project components as satisfactory (which was not at all the conclusion of the terminal evaluation 9 months later), indicates that there was not sufficient realism in reporting. Granted, the terminal evaluation notes that there was improvement in project implementation following the mid-term evaluation.

**c. Quality of Execution – for Executing Agencies<sup>4</sup> (rating on a 6 point scale): UA**

**Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as focus on results, adequacy of management inputs and processes, quality of risk management, and candor and realism in reporting by the executive agency.**

The terminal evaluation does not specifically discuss the role of UNOPS as the executing agency other than in conjunction with UNDP as the implementing agency. A few times when the TE talks about project management and implementation decisions that were made it refers to “UNDP/UNOPS.”

There was at least one UNOPS specific issue that negatively impacted the project. According to the TE, “The BSERP was also hit with unforeseen UNOPS headquarters charges (in this case for ASHI – After Service Health Insurance, for long term UN employees). These charges were assessed after project approval and on top of the expected UNDP administrative fee.”

These fees should have been foreseen, and could have altered the decision about the suitability of UNOPS as an executing agency. However, this issue did not fundamentally alter the capacity of UNOPS as an executing agency to potentially successfully implement the project.

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<sup>4</sup> Executing Agencies for this section would mean those agencies that are executing the project in the field. For any given project this will exclude Executing Agencies that are implementing the project under expanded opportunities – for projects approved under the expanded opportunities procedure the respective executing agency will be treated as an implementing agency.

## 5. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assess the project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

### **a. Briefly describe the key lessons, good practice or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects**

For IW projects in particular: “The TDA/SAP approach in the GEF IW Program has proven its value across many projects. Lessons from the BSERP suggest that the process of revising TDAs and SAPs should not be the rationale for a continuation project. TDA revisions and SAP updates should be periodic/ongoing activities managed by the transboundary waters commissions, with project PIUs playing a supporting role. Taking this responsibility to an internationally funded project runs the real risk of lowering country ownership and responsibility.”

Another lesson identified in the terminal evaluation that should be considered for replication in other projects was the use of an independent scientific body (the BSERP International Study Group). “An ISG enables top scientists in the region to engage with the project, and ensure that applied research efforts are science rather than policy driven.”

One key project lesson centers on the potential use of Country Team Leaders (CTLs) for large regional projects. The terminal evaluation notes that in the case of the BSERP the CTL approach helped ensure that national level activities were continuously pushed forward, and helped facilitate coordination with the project implementation unit. At the same time, the TE identified numerous potential negative risks of using this approach, including the high administrative costs involved, and the challenges to sustaining project activities once the project comes to a close.

### **b. Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation**

The terminal evaluation contains numerous extensive recommendations, targeted at both the Black Sea Commission, and the GEF and UNDP.

For the Black Sea countries and Commission:

- Agree to allow international/regional organizations into the Commission, paving the way for membership of the European Commission, to enable negotiation of Black Sea fisheries policies
- The work plan for the Black Sea Commission should be drastically pared down, commensurate with the extent of interest and support being shown by the participating countries
- Revise the Black Sea Convention, SAP and other instruments to eliminate the role of Regional Activity Centers which function poorly or not at all; future BSC and country decisions on granting contracts for carrying out research should be done on a case by case basis, using standard TORs and RFPs
- Regionally focused GEF support should be put on pause until the Black Sea Countries show a good faith effort in achieving their SAP and other policy targets
- There may be opportunities for funding at the national level, in particular with regard to ICZM and in relation to climate change adaptation
- There should also be further support for small grants programs at the national level
- Reducing non-point source environmental stress will require assistance aimed at farm management

For the GEF and UNDP:

- Guidance on the timing of mid-term evaluations should be met, and the approval of Phase 2 of a project should come after the mid-term evaluation has been completed
- Annual project monitoring reports should include an accounting from project partners of their in-kind and cash contributions to date
- A preliminary TDA should be part of the ProDoc development exercise, with a SAP already outlined as part of the project objectives; a revised and expanded TDA and SAP can then form part of the mid-term deliverables, with another set of revisions forming the final project deliverables; in this way the SAP can avoid being construed as a one-off negotiated agreement
- During the project design phase there needs to be consideration given to whether the main focus is on the resource, or the regional body (Commission) set up to protect that resource. Will success be measured by the number of outputs completed? Or whether the effort has helped to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the Commission/Secretariat. This decision needs to be clarified upfront and stated clearly in the ProDoc.
- Interministerial coordination should be included in project expectations, and commitments for such involvement should be secured prior to project approval
- Given that research cruises can present a large number of challenges, the two main aims of these types of activities should be a) to develop as informative source of knowledge in areas where historical environmental monitoring has been weak, and b) to enhance communications strategies by providing another platform for media, public awareness and education

## 6. QUALITY OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

### 6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings based on other information sources such as GEF EO field visits, other evaluations, etc.

No additional external information available.

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 document GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for terminal evaluations review for further definitions of the ratings. Please briefly explain each rating.

<b>6.2 Quality of the terminal evaluation report</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
<b>a. To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</b>	6
<b>b. To what extent the report is internally consistent, the evidence is complete/convincing and the IA ratings have been substantiated? Are there any major evidence gaps?</b>	5
<b>c. To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</b>	6
<b>d. To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</b>	5
<b>e. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?</b>	2
<b>f. Assess the quality of the reports evaluation of project M&amp;E systems?</b>	5

**7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE PRERATATION OF THE TERMINAL EVALUTION REVIEW REPORT EXCLUDING PIRs, TERMINAL EVALUATIONS, PAD.**

Final Evaluation, Black Sea Ecosystem Recovery Project, June 23, 2008  
Project Implementation Report (2007)  
Project Implementation Report (2006)  
Project Appraisal Document, May 23, 2004