

GEF IEO Terminal Evaluation Review form (retrofitting of APR2004 cohort)

This form is for retrofitting of the TERs prepared for APR2004. While several topics covered in this form had already been covered in the earlier form, this revised form adds several other performance and impact related concerns.

1. Project Data

Summary project data		
GEF project ID	23	
GEF Agency project ID	197	
GEF Replenishment Phase	GEF-2	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)	UNEP	
Project name	Promoting Best Practices for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity of Global Significance in Arid and Semi-arid Zones	
Country/Countries	Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico	
Region	Global	
Focal area	Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives	OP1- Arid and Semi-Arid zone ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved	Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement	Lead executing agency	
Private sector involvement	No involvement	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)	8/11/1999	
Effectiveness date / project start	08/1/2000	
Expected date of project completion (at start)	11/30/2002	
Actual date of project completion	12/31/2002	
Project Financing		
	At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	
	Co-financing	
GEF Project Grant	0.75	0.75 (Trustee data)
Co-financing	IA/EA own	
	Government	
	Other*	0.15
Total GEF funding	0.75	0.75 (Trustee data)
Total Co-financing	0.15	N/A
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)	0.9	N/A
Terminal evaluation/review information		
TE completion date	12/1/2003	
TE submission date	12/11/2003	
Author of TE	William Critchley	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) preparer	Siham Mohamedahmed	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) reviewer	Aaron Zazueta	
Revised TER (2014) completion date	06/03/2014	
Revised TER (2014) prepared by	Nelly Bourlion	
TER GEF IEO peer review (2014)	Neeraj Negi	

*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	—	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	L	ML	—	MU
M&E Design	N/A	N/A	—	HU
M&E Implementation	N/A	S	—	S
Quality of Implementation	N/A	N/A	—	U/A
Quality of Execution	HS	S	—	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	N/A	N/A	—	MS

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

According to the TE, the global environmental objective of this project is to uncover, document and disseminate successes in protecting, while sustainably utilizing biodiversity of global significance in arid and semi-arid ecosystems in developing nations.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The developmental objectives of the project are to (TE, pg.8):

- (1) Identify, collect and disseminate best practices for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of global significance in the arid & semi-arid ecosystems of Southern nations.
- (2) Increase the cooperation between centers of excellence in biodiversity of drylands by facilitating exchange of information, cooperation and coordination in research, and sharing lessons and best practices.
- (3) Assist local populations in dryland regions in managing and sustainably utilizing the fragile ecosystems.

The outcomes of the project are (TE,pg.8):

- (1) Increased availability of and access to information on best practices
- (2) Increased awareness of local populations of lessons and best practices
- (3) Increased awareness of the values of the biodiversity of global significance in arid and semi-arid ecosystems
- (4) Increased coordination between institutions resulting in turn in more effective programming of scarce resources
- (5) Increased partnership of institutions of excellence in the South working on similar issues resulting in increased capacity

And, finally, the activities of the project are (TE,pg.8):

- (1) Preparation by centres of excellence of case studies
- (2) Convening of four regional meetings to share best practices

- (3) Convening of one global meeting in Egypt to share experiences, identify best practices and ensure effective coordination of networks
- (4) Catalysing the establishment of a network of relevant institutions
- (5) Compiling and analysing the best practices and the development, publication and wide dissemination of these practices

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

According to the TE, there was no change in project objectives, even though the development objective three of the project was unrealistic in its scope and has no specific activities or expected outcomes. The TE points out that this objective is included because the GEF secretariat insisted, at the time that all projects directly benefit land users and include explicit objectives to achieve those benefits.

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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According to the PIR, the project idea emanates from an early STAP workshop on land degradation that identifies the lack of documented best practices for management of biodiversity in semi-arid and arid ecosystems as one of the main barriers to sustainable management of drylands..

The project on promoting best practices for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity of global significance in arid and semi-arid zones was designed to uncover, document and disseminate successes in protecting, while sustainably using, biodiversity of global significance in arid and semi-arid ecosystems in Southern nations (TE.pg.8). Therefore, the project refers to the UNEP programme of work 2000–2001, and its subprogramme on sustainable management and use of natural resources. The project also supports the GEF Operational Strategy in which “GEF activities will be designed to support capacity building, human resource development and skills that are necessary to achieve global environmental objectives”, and the GEF Operational Programme on Arid and Semi-Arid Zone Ecosystems and its emphasis on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Therefore, the overall objective of the project is relevant to the Focal Area Biodiversity, and the Operational Program on Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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According to the TE, the project built strong library of biodiversity experiences by collecting a large number of case studies of best practices and by disseminating them in regional workshops and international conferences. The plan was to collect 35 cases, but ultimately 53 cases were collected, where the top 35 cases were published on Kluwer book and the remaining 21 cases were summarized in TWNSO monograph to be published by UNDP. Also a list of 950 destinations has been prepared to ensure that the information reaches its primary targets. Moreover, an informative but relatively basic website was developed for exchange of information among project participants.

A large number of institutions (55 in total) were contacted and their cooperation was utilized to spread information and experiences and to establish bilateral partnerships and networks.

However, most of the case studies are site specific and are not of broader applicability. According to the TE, the case studies that were not included in the Kluwer book constitute good practice for natural resources management and have only indirect connection to biodiversity. Moreover, all written documents are in English with no abstracts or summaries in other languages potentially limiting the spread of information to broader audiences and leading to language marginalization and exclusion of local populations.

Finally, the development objective 3 (“Assist local populations in dryland regions in managing and sustainably utilizing the fragile ecosystems”) was not achieved because it was not realistic due to time and money constraints and also because no activities or outcomes were attached to it. According to the TE, there may have been some attendance of local land users at the regional workshops. They may also have been some limited participatory analysis of field experiences in the preparation of case studies. But local populations have hardly been made more aware of biodiversity and the management of their natural resources in this light.

Therefore, the overall effectiveness of the project is Moderately Satisfactory.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
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According to the TE (pg.15) “the project has been value for money”. Below are some examples of the cost effectiveness of the project given in the TE:

- (1) Case study costs were economized upon greatly as the case study authors felt that publication of their work was rewarding enough to stimulate them to write.

- (2) It was even possible to reallocate (through an officially approved project revision) costs away from case studies towards an all-participant meeting.
- (3) Moreover, Kluwer was prepared to publish, without the project promising a buy-back arrangement, meant a very considerable cost saving.
- (4) The advisory board of distinguished scientists was very valuable, and their services were rendered on a voluntarily basis.
- (5) In each of the workshops – international and regional – there was a cost-sharing arrangement. Workshop reports, for example, were produced in each case by the hosts, at their own expense.

According to the TE, the project management thinks that there has been economical use of funds throughout the project. However, the project was not finished when the TE was prepared, therefore, detailed information that would allow verification of the management’s statement was not available.

Overall, given the information presented in the TE and the last PIR, the efficiency is Satisfactory.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Unlikely
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The sustainability of the project is Moderately Unlikely, because there are high doubts on whether the project will be able to continue without external supports. According to the TE, the project did not include an exit strategy, and therefore external support is unlikely to materialize (TE.pg.18).

The TE mentioned that formalized network arrangements have not been set up during the project and this could hinder project sustainability. However, according to the TE, it is being considered a future funding activity. At the time of the TE, TWNSO was preparing a proposal for the continuation of its networking activity with the partners. Moreover, another risk for project sustainability is that local land users were not involved in the project except for the few who attended the regional workshops.

In terms of socio political sustainability, 15 institutions were originally planned to participate in the project, but ultimately 55 institutions from 33 countries participated in the project. The presence of the large number of institutions is expected to help dissemination of information. Additionally, the workshop resulted in several partnerships and coordination efforts between institutions and individuals. The TE also indicated that there was a strong sense of Southern ownership of the project and there was a strong relationship between all parties involved in the project. Therefore, this strong ownership and participation could help project sustainability. The TE, however, points out that it is too early to assess their sustainability without financial support.

Overall, the project sustainability is Moderately Unlikely.

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?

According to the PD, the total cost of the project was \$900,000, of which the proportion to be financed by GEF was 83.3 per cent (\$750,000), with TWNSO supplying 8.9 per cent (\$80,000) and "participating institutions" the remaining 7.8 per cent (\$70,000). The co-financing from TWNSO and participating institutions was earmarked for personnel (\$50,000) and training and workshops (\$100,000).

However, at the time the TE was prepared, the project was not finished, and therefore the actual figures at project completion were not available.

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?

Project implementation – through TWNSO in collaboration with centres of excellence throughout the South – was expected to start in 1999, but it actually began in August 2000. This delay was due to the late appointment of the lead project consultant, and though it was designed to be a two-year programme, the project had not ended at the time of the terminal evaluation in December 2003.

No additional information is given on the reasons for the delays, and how it affected project outcomes.

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:

The country ownership was strong in this project.

The number of institutions worked with rose from the planned 15 to 55, from 33 countries. This was largely because of the attraction of the regional workshops, combined with an intentional effort by TWNSO management to increase participation. This demonstrates the involvement of a wide range of academic stakeholders. There were several researchers involved in each of the institutions.

According to the TE, the project has been fortunate in having dedicated professionals at TWNSO, supported by a highly proficient secretariat

On the other hand there is very little evidence of any local land-user involvement, other than some mention of limited attendance at regional workshops, and indirectly through participation in a few of the cases studied – though this, of course, cannot be claimed as a project achievement.

The TE states that (pg.16) "there is certainly a strong sense of Southern ownership of the project".

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: Highly Unsatisfactory
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The project Document is not available for this review. Therefore, the information comes from the TE, and the last PIR.

The TE mentions (pg.13) that in the different documents available to its review, the logical framework is not consistent, one activity is added (“refine draft communication strategy ...”) and one is left out (“compile best practices”). Likewise, the framework can also be illogical as in the case here, where no specific activity is attached to objective 3. This objective was considered to be totally unrealistic by all project partners interviewed by the Terminal Evaluator.

Therefore, the M&E design at entry is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory..

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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Management has fulfilled its reporting obligations to UNEP-GEF, though the TE mentions that the demands for quarterly, half-yearly and, in particular, programme implementation reports “have been something of a chore”(pg.17).

Recording of distribution of documents is in progress. An internal evaluation was carried out and used to inform the TE. This was a spontaneous initiative rather than a mandated requirement. Moreover, the secretariat has an organized digital database and hard-copy archive on the project. Quarterly and half yearly reports have been produced. The project commissioned an internal mid-term evaluation, which according to the TE, proved to be very useful in focusing the remaining part of the project.

Therefore, the M&E implementation is Satisfactory.

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: Unable to Assess
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According to the TE, the project had a well-functioning management structure with a steering committee as well as a technical advisory committee that met on a regular basis.

There have been two UNEP-GEF project task managers assigned to the project during the nearly five years from project design to the time of TE. From neither the TWNSO nor the UNEP-GEF side has this been viewed as a difficult relationship. STAP personnel have been little involved other than through attendance at the Morocco conference.

There is no other information available on the quality of project implementation in the TE and in the PIRs. Therefore, performance on this parameter is difficult to assess.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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Project execution was realized by the Third World Network of Scientific Organizations (TWNSO) based in Trieste, Italy, in collaboration with institutions throughout the South.

According to the TE, TWNSO has not directed with a heavy hand, but sensitively managed and facilitated from Trieste. Credit should be given for setting up an advisory board, and for delegating much of the organizational work for the regional and international meetings to the collaborating hosts. There appears to have been excellent structure, planning and relationships between all parties directly involved (TE, pg.17).

The Executing agency has concentrated on the first objective. The TE justifies this by (pg.12): "It needs to be emphasized that the current project was funded to support the writing and dissemination of case studies from research already completed, and to support project workshops and conferences".

Additionally, the TE says that the project has been fortunate in having a nucleus of dedicated professional personnel at TWNSO to guide and manage the programme, supported by a highly proficient

secretariat. There was a high degree of enthusiastic collaboration by partners in the various countries. Part of this latter phenomenon resulted from the delegation of responsibility to project partners in the field.

Therefore, the overall project execution is Satisfactory.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

Not applicable due to the nature of the project.

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

No socio economic changes are reported in the TE and the last PIR.

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) Capacities

The project has achieved its major goal with the completion of three regional workshops (Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean; Africa and the Middle East) and two international conferences (in Egypt and Morocco) and the publication of associated print products and minutes.

The target number of case studies or "best practices" originally set was 30, yet the final total documented was 56, with only a few rejected.

A website was built, according to the TE it is informative, but relatively basic.

According to the last PIR, the project built capacity of third world institutions in sustainable use of dryland biodiversity through promoting south-south exchange of experiences and best practices.

b) Governance

No governance impact was reported.

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

No unintended impact was reported.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

At the point terminal evaluation was prepared, a full version of the case studies was expected to be published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. In addition, a “popular” version of selected case studies was planned for distribution to a broader audience.

Additionally, according to the TE, there were several examples of coordination or partnership between institutions and individuals that have occurred and which continue on a case-by-case basis:

- (1) A joint proposal for GEF has been developed from institutions in Bolivia, Chile and Peru to “conserve biodiversity through sustainable utilization of fragile high-elevation drylands of the Andes”, building on the current project’s case studies from these countries. The proposal also focuses on development of a regional network for capacity building and scientific training in collaboration with TWNSO and other relevant existing institutions;
- (2) Potchefstroom University, South Africa, has used the project’s experiences and findings to foster cooperation with other institutions and colleagues (for example in Kenya, Zimbabwe and several West African countries). In addition, the published case studies are now being used in the training of graduate students;
- (3) The Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Brazil, has stated that the TWNSO project has increased collaboration with other biodiversity and semi–arid sustainable development centres. For example, in June 2003 the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte and Brazil’s Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente organized a state meeting in order to

- discuss some of the TWNSO case study findings. Joint projects are being developed with research centres in Brazil and Italy focusing on biodiversity in semi-arid regions of Brazil;
- (4) According to the Executive Director, Centre of Environmental Issues and Regional Development, Alakhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco, the TWNSO project has helped in various ways. Specifically, exchange of views is taking place with the Desert Research Centre in Egypt, the American University in Beirut, the University of Jordan, and the Pennsylvania Consortium for Interdisciplinary Environmental Policy;
 - (5) The Director, Centre for Environmental Studies and Research, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, is collaborating with institutions in North Africa and the Middle East to publish and disseminate studies on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity stemming from the TWNSO project's findings

However, on the other hand, many of the case studies appear to be highly site-specific and therefore broad replicability is not guaranteed.

9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The following lessons are given in the TE:

- (1) Project proposals should be evaluated to make certain that targets are achievable and goals are realistic, and also to make sure that stakeholders will have reasonable expectations.
- (2) Terminology used in relatively new scientific disciplines such as " biodiversity of global importance" need to be clarified and defined early in GEF projects.
- (3) Dissemination strategies for knowledge sharing projects should be developed early in the project, including definition of information content and determination of targeted recipients.
- (4) Powerful visualization tools, such as maps, images, and tabular overviews are indispensable in understanding and drawing attention to the importance of biodiversity conservation.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The following recommendations are given in the TE:

- (1) A website with charts, maps and photographs should be developed to disseminate project impacts and record hits on the website.
- (2) The popular book should be used to improve and complement collected materials by concentrating on lessons and by using visual tools to put biodiversity of arid and semi-arid lands into context.

- (3) A hand out that summarizes the project with simple matrix or tables presenting case studies should be considered for printing in different languages in collaboration with partners in the region to reach a wider audience.
- (4) Efforts should not be allowed to wither, but should be supported by the development of a broad-based, funded network as part of a follow-on project. Furthermore, TWNSO should be supported in its plan to hold a separate workshop to plan a project for pilot activities at the local land-user level.
- (5) It is recommended that UNEP-GEF encourages and supports, in whatever ways possible, proposed continuation activities by TWNSO, even if UNEP-GEF is unable to be the source of funding.
- (6) With respect to project design and implementation it is recommended that UNEP-GEF looks afresh at objectives, logframes, monitoring and evaluation, and aspects of time contingency planning in its projects.

10. 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 TE provides a reasonable picture of the project's achievements and shortfalls. Since at the time of TE, the project was not closed yet, the TE recommended that assessment of outcomes should be revisited again and that the TE should be updated accordingly.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is to some extent internally consistent and most evidence is complete and convincing. However, there are some discrepancies (e.g. in number of Monograph copies). Also not all ratings are given and they are based on a scale of 5.	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The project discusses the relevant aspects of sustainability and cites the lack of an exit strategy as one of the shortcomings of the project.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Some recommendations and lessons are related to the unfinished part of the project for which funds are still available.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE does not provide any information about project costs distribution, neither does it state the amount of the remaining funds. This is possibly due the fact that the report was completed before project's closing.	U
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The assessment of the M&E system is not assessed with enough details. There is no information about the M&E design, and the M&E implementation assessment is very brief.	MU
Overall TE Rating		MS

$$(5+4)*0.3 + (5+5+2+3)*0.1 = 2.7 + 1.5 = 4.2$$

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