

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID: 245		Review date:		
IA/EA Project ID: 243		GEF financing:		at endorsement (Million US\$)
Project Name: Conserving Mountain Biodiversity in Southern Lesotho		IA/EA own:		at completion (Million US\$)
Country: Lesotho		Government:		
		Other*:		
		Total Cofinancing		9.91
Operational Program: OP 4		Total Project Cost:		12.42
IA	UNDP	Dates		
Partners involved:		Work Program date		11/01/1997
		CEO Endorsement		02/23/1999
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		11/05/1999
		Closing Date	Proposed: 06/2005	Actual: 12/2004
Prepared by: Divya Nair	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 66 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 60 months	Difference between original and actual closing: -6 months
Author of TE: Oliver Chapeyama Taelo Letšela		TE completion date: 12/01/2006	TE submission date to GEF OME: 07/12/2007	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 7 Months

* 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

Please refer to document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" 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		U		U
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	U		U
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation		U		MS
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	NA	S

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

No. The overall TE is clear and comprehensive, and appears to make the most of the information/data available. However, the TE does not appear to make use of previous reports such as PIRs – for example, it makes no mention of the Threat Index used for monitoring biodiversity.

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.? No

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES**3.1 Project Objectives**

<p>What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?</p> <p>According to the Prodoc, the overall objective is to “ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of unique alpine and montane landscapes in Lesotho.”</p> <p>No changes were made.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation? <p>Original Objectives in Prodoc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: To establish a planned and rational network of small protected areas which adequately protect the full range of Lesotho’s mountain biodiversity. • Objective 2: To create an environment supportive of improved resource management systems such that the rate of biodiversity loss outside formal Protected Areas is reduced. <p>Adjustments made two years into project implementation lead to the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. A planned and rational network of Protected Areas is in place, which adequately covers the extent of Lesotho’s biodiversity. B. Improved grazing and resources management systems resulting in reduced rate of biodiversity loss outside formal Protected Areas. C. An integrated bioregional approach (also trans-border) to biodiversity conservation and watershed management is established. D. A functional project organization, management and co-ordination system for the implementation of biodiversity conservation programs established at central, district and community levels.
<p>3.2 Outcomes and Impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What major project outcomes and impacts are described in the TE? <p>The TE rates the project achievements as unsatisfactory on objectives A, B and C and “moderately satisfactory” on objective D:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No functional protected areas in all the project sites • No functional Range Management Areas established or assisted by the project in all the project sites • Not such networks established in all the project sites, nationally and across borders. • The structure was established to manage the project which ran from the national level to the district level. The structure could not deliver expected results however. <p>It notes that the most successful aspect of the project is the awareness created on sustainable use of biodiversity via training and study tours, both within local communities and local government authorities.</p>

<p>4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT</p>	
<p>4.1.1 Outcomes (use a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU)</p>	
<p>A Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conserving Mountain Biodiversity in Southern Lesotho project was initially conceived in 1994. It was premised on: (a) the presence of globally significant plant diversity, unique habitats and high endemism in the Drakensberg-Maloti montane mountain region, 70% of which lies in the Kingdom of Lesotho; (b) the very low proportion (0.4%) of the country under formal conservation protection; and (c) the perceived threat to these floral and habitat values by overgrazing, over-frequent burning and, in the case of wetlands, by erosion within an open access system of land tenure operational in the country 	<p>Rating: S</p>

- Also, according to the Prodoc: Lesotho is eligible for UNDP and World Bank support, participates in the GEF, and has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. Lesotho has an active NEAP and Agenda 21 process. This project was designed to assist Lesotho in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The key provisions of this project followed from the GEF funded Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan process, which is aimed at addressing the concerns of the CBD. In particular it promotes regional cooperation (Article 5), supports many provisions of the developing biodiversity Action Plan (Article 6), establishes sustainable development around protected areas (Article 8), develops policy and fiscal incentives for conservation (Article 11), includes training (Article 12), and technical and scientific cooperation (Article 18).
- However, as noted by the TE, the focus on biodiversity in the southern mountains was not based on empirical evidence of threats to such biodiversity. In addition, the potential for achieving conservation of biodiversity in a communal land tenure system was not properly assessed. The latter may explain the poor success of the project in subsequently achieving its results.

B Effectiveness**Rating: U**

- It appears that the project spread itself too thin and could not achieve its results. With the exception of those project sites where communities were involved in eco-tourism initiatives and have established lodges such as at Qobong and Tsatsane, the TE team did not find any physical projects on the ground.
- At areas where protected areas, community nature reserves and range management areas were to have been established nothing was evident as having been done to physically develop these through project interventions.
- The notable achievement of the project appears to be the increased levels of awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation among community groups. This was due to the fact that the project did indeed spend a considerable amount of time and money on awareness raising and training.
- According to the final PIR and TE, one major constraint has been the “inappropriate selection of executing modality and agency” (PIR 05). The use of the PIU system for implementing projects created insufficient ownership of the project due to over reliance on the PIU, moreover after project closure, the PIU was disbanded and all its staff capacity was lost.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)**Rating: U**

- The TE reports “**very poor**” **financial management and control systems**, with poor coordination between the UNDP and project office. This resulted in both the UNDP and the implementing agency committing to an exit strategy for the project on the mistaken understanding that there was up to US\$ 500,000 of funding still available on the basis of an assessment of the project funds conducted by UNDP CO in September 2004. Thereafter, UNDP reported to the government that the project was only left with USD 22,000 and no new commitments could be made.
- The TE provides evidence that “**considerable amounts of money were spent on salaries for international staff**”, and also on “miscellaneous” line items. Yet, the TE conducted a review of all audits and notes no evidence of financial malpractice.
- In 2003, the conclusions of an internal evaluation by the project were that only about 30% of the project intended scope of work had been achieved with 40% of the budget used and further that the project still had major issues with community mobilization on the ground in almost all the project sites and that none of the intended protected areas were actually established and functional on the ground.

4.1.2 Impacts**U/A**

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= no or negligible risk to 1= High risk)

<p>A Financial resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Prodoc had anticipated that the project would assist in the development of ecotourism (along the lines of South Africa's experience) and perhaps set up a trust fund. It also anticipated that the "long term support for this, and other biodiversity and environment programmes in Lesotho, will be provided for through the allocation of a proportion of the water export royalties from LHWP, currently estimated at US\$55 million per annum". <p>None of these activities appear to have been implemented, and the risk to sustainability is significant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The conditions under which the project was developed have changed significantly during the lifetime of the project. Lesotho is now classified as a country in crisis by the UN, on account of the HIV AIDS pandemic that has afflicted the country, serious problems of food security that have affected the country in recent low rainfall years and problems of governance, most notably systemic and institutional capacity weaknesses. Much donor attention, and Government activities have been focused on addressing these serious problems. As noted in the PIR and TE, this will likely have a significant bearing on project activities at a national scale, by diverting attention and funding from conservation activities. 	<p>Rating: U</p>
<p>B Socio political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TE mentions that there are no clearly identifiable champions at the CBP level or among the civil society entities. It also notes that while varied stakeholders were represented in committees at the district-level, decision-making, particularly at the national level was not transparent and this lead to frustrations. According to the TE, community members who were employed as laborers claim that they are still owed some money by the contractor who left before finishing the tasks he had been contracted to perform. This became a source of community disenchantment that is still evident today and threatens to undermine follow on conservation initiatives in the area due to lack of cooperation by community groups. 	<p>Rating: MU</p>
<p>C Institutional framework and governance</p> <p>The TE and PIRs note the poor capacity of local level management staff, particularly with respect to biodiversity issues, as a reason for the poor achievements of the project. The Project has suffered from high staff turnover, which has undermined management and administration. It is also noted that the project design failed to appropriately address these issues.</p> <p>The original objectives, as mentioned in the Prodoc aimed to establish a "supportive environment for resource management", via improved sectoral policies, development of sustainable financing and incentive mechanisms, clarifying institutional mandates etc. This objective was reformulated, and weakened once implementation started.</p>	<p>Rating: MU</p>
<p>D Environmental</p> <p>In Mapotsane the community had closed off an area that was proposed for the establishment of a nature reserve for almost three years but have now opened it to grazing after realizing that CMBSL was no longer available to assist them. In Letseng-la-Letsie stock-posts have been re-introduced into the area and grazing continues unabated.</p>	<p>Rating: MU</p>

4.3 Catalytic role

a. Production of a public good

b. Demonstration
c. Replication - The results from this pilot initiative were expected to yield results for replication to the rest of the country and to other parts of the region where community groups deal with similar environmental problem. Perhaps a useful approach for CMBSL would have been to develop a focused intervention in a specific area of the country where results would be generated before expanding to new areas. Quthing district could have provided the area for this focus.
d. Scaling up

4.4 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): MU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project was developed without initial baselines, or assessments of the social and economic environment in Lesotho against which progress towards achievement of project objectives would be measured. Although a Logical Framework with activities, outputs and objectively verifiable indicators was developed at the time of project design, no comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan was developed for the project until 2002 after the first CTA assumed duty. Up until this time project implementation went ahead without a clear monitoring plan. In his Inception Report of 2001, the CTA observes that "there were no workplans or budget available to date, no systematic progress reports except those from the DPO Quthing, and no indicators shown for monitoring:" 	
B. M&E plan Implementation	Rating (six point scale): MS
The project appears to have had poor financial and management oversight. When red flags were generated, there was no follow up to redress concerns. The PIRs appear to be comprehensive.	
C.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&E in the budget included in the project document?	
Yes.	
C.2 Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&E during project implementation?	
Funding for M&E is raised as a concern by the TE.	
C.3 Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice?	
No. The M&E system was not updated consistently but instead changed significantly over the life of the project. For example, when the biophysical surveys process was stalled when the former CTA left the project in September 2002, a new Biodiversity Threat Index was then used. These changes reduced the ability to compare over time.	

4.5 Lessons

Project lessons as described in the TE

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?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity conservation projects need to be preceded by comprehensive situation analyses covering biodiversity, social and economic conditions at proposed project sites. These assessments should also include capacity assessments of institutions to be involved in advancing project goals so as to identify institutional capacity development needs to be focused upon as projects are implemented. The baselines developed through this process will be useful in measuring project progress; The sites at which a project will work need to be clearly articulated during the formulation stage. Likewise the type of activities that will take place there, targets and expected achievements ought to be specified in the log-frame. If not, as was the case here, sites and activities may become inappropriate. The PIR 2005 notes that in retrospect, a medium sized project intervention focusing initially on capacity building might have been fostered, with more targeted interventions at prior selected conservation sites. A phased approach, tying disbursements to the attainment of clear milestones could have been considered.

- The project staff were not engaged as government employees but were on contract with UNDP which were latter converted to GoL contracts. They were all dismissed when the project came to an end in December 2004. Although they gained some experience from working under the project they were not absorbed by the implementing agency when NES established district offices. They went off to look for alternative employment wherever they could find it. This represented a loss of the critical mass that could have been used as a foundation when NES established district offices.

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 document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings from other sources such as GEF EO field visits, etc.

None.

4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? The TE does not appear to use the information system that the PIRs used.	MS
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? Yes The report is constrained by the poor information provided by the M&E system when reporting on higher level results.	S
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?	S
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	S
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	S
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems?	S

4.6.3 Assessment of processes affected attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

Co-financing and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. 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, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?

There was no difference.

Delays and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons responsible for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?

According to the TE, due to the delays in project start up that were experienced, the project was re-phased in early 2002 with an extension of project lifespan to March 2005. At the same time, the project shifted focus and expanded from two to four objectives through the additional focus on bioregional conservation and project management. While consideration was given to the possible implications of this refocusing, no additional financial resources were secured to support the expanded project mandate – this caused the project finances to be spread out too thinly, and negatively affected the achievement of outcomes.

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:

No: NA

Explain: None conducted.

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

TE, Prodoc, PIRs