

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID: 250		Review date:		09/13/2006
		at endorsement (Million US\$)		at completion (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	628	GEF financing:	5.106 (TE) (5.164 PMIS GEF)	3.506 (TE)
Project Name:	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia	IA/EA own:	1.012 (TE)	0.953 (TE)
Country:	Mongolia	Government:	2.05 (TE)	1.4 (TE)
		Other*:	3.767 (TE)	
		Total Cofinancing	6.829 (TE) 6.861 (PMIS GEF)	2.353 (TE)
Operational Program:	1	Total Project Cost:	11.986 (TE) 12.025 (PMIS GEF)	5.859 (TE)
IA	UNDP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	Mongolian Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE)	Work Program date		01/01/1998
		CEO Endorsement		12/20/1997
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		06/05/1998
		Closing Date	Proposed: 06/15/2005	Actual: 12/2005
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Antonio del Monaco	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 7 years	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 7 years 6 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 6 months
Author of TE:	Dr. Dominique Roby & Dr. Khuldorj Balganjav	TE completion date: 02/2006	TE submission date to GEF OME: 06/08/2006	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 4 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

GEF EO Ratings for project impacts (if applicable), outcomes, project monitoring and evaluation, and quality of the terminal evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), not applicable (N/A) and unable to assess (U/A). GEF EO Ratings for the project sustainability: Highly likely (HL), likely (L), moderately likely (ML), moderately unlikely (MU), unlikely (U), highly unlikely (HU), not applicable (N/A), and unable to assess (U/A). Please refer to document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project outcomes	S	S	-	S
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	S	-	L
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	-	-	-	S
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A		S

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

Yes. Even though the report is a little repetitive, it covers all required fields in an inclusive and clear manner and presents candid analysis of the project's constraints.

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

No.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

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

According to the TE, the global objective was to promote and ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the protected areas and buffer zones of the Eastern Mongolian grassland ecosystem, and incorporate biodiversity considerations into development planning for the Eastern Steppe.

A revision of the Project Document shows that there haven't been any changes.

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

According to the TE, the main development objectives were:

1. To ensure that the management of the seven existing protected areas (PA) in the Eastern Steppe is strengthened for effective protection of critical biodiversity within them.
2. To support biodiversity conservation and sustainable alternative livelihoods in the buffer zones of protected areas.
3. To incorporate and internalize components of biodiversity conservation into provincial and local development plans, so as to ensure the sustainability of activities and provide institutional frameworks for the replication of these initiatives. To support general measures for the long-term sustainability of all these efforts.

The 2003 Tri-partite project review (TPR) agreed that only one management plan (instead of 7) would be implemented as a model. The TE explains that the original objective was deemed unrealistic due to a lack of baseline information and initial underestimation of budgetary requirements. And following another TPR recommendation, the project adapted to focus most of its work on achieving objectives 2 & 3.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

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

According to the project's objectives, the most significant achievements are:

1. Objective 1
 - Two new PAs were set and the Ganga Lake Natural Monument was upgraded to the status of a Natural Reserve and expanded by 31,596 ha.
 - Management plans for all PAs in the region were finalized. An evaluation of the implementation of the Numrug PA by an independent team concluded that 74% of

- planned activities had been completed.
- The project developed and established a GIS tool for long-term monitoring including a comprehensive environmental database and interactive software to access, process, and update databases. It assisted 3 eastern provincial governments to establish their own databases and provided training on the use of the GIS software.
 - Improvement of the capacity to expose illegal hunting. The project's study on the impact of hunting on wildlife populations was vital for the government's adoption of the amendment to the Law on Hunting and the installation of a tagging system to identify legally hunted products.
 - Ecological control of Brandt's vole populations. In the 3 eastern provinces Brandt's voles are no longer a problem and harmful rodenticides have been banned.
 - Preventative approach for fire management. A model fire management plan was developed and regional and local capacities to prevent fires have been improved through training and workshops. There was a dramatic decrease in the number of fires reported within the SPAs boundaries (from an average of 12 per year between the years 1995-99 to 0 during mid-2004 to mid-2005)
2. Objective 2:
- Five representative Buffer Zone (BZ) Councils were established and were assisted to develop and implement management plans for BZs. BZ Councils included representatives of local herders, local governments and PA administration.
 - Establishment of a Community Conservation Fund (CCF). Even though the fund was only established in 2002, by the end of the project it had allowed the implementation of 76 small projects. On average, CCF beneficiaries represent 7.5% of county population and the monthly income of households involved in project activities increased on average by almost 30% in 2004.
 - The link created between community-based conservation and improved livelihood helped to develop a strong sense of ownership in community groups. Examples of this include the creation of 26 local herders groups, local people voluntary participation in the conservation and monitoring of marmots through contracts formalizing individual responsibilities, in the protection of cranes, of gazelles, and in spring protection through fencing and plantations.
3. Objective 3:
- Guidelines for land planning and use at county and province levels have been amended to integrate biodiversity considerations as mandatory and were adopted by the Land Agency. A pilot county land use plan was prepared and adopted by the Land Agency.
 - The Eastern Regional Action Programme for 2003 to 2020, The Nature and Environment Policy of the Government Action Programme for 2000 to 2004, and the Economic and Environment policy of the 2004 to 2008 Governor's Action Program for Dornod province, all have included biodiversity sections and internalized several of the project findings.
 - The project had a strong influence on high-level decisions regarding biodiversity conservation. By working in close cooperation with other stakeholders, the project helped develop amendments to national environmental laws (Law on Environmental Protection, Law on Hunting) and successfully lobbied the parliament to refuse any proposal on declassifying existing Protected Areas.

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes

A Relevance	Rating: S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In retrospect, were the project's outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain 	
<p>Yes. This project is fully consistent with the GEF Operational Strategy and more specifically with</p>	

OP1 on Arid and Semi-Arid Zone Ecosystems. It has contributed significantly to improve the conservation of the unique Eastern Mongolian grassland ecosystem, which is one of the world's last temperate grasslands with an abundance of rare and threatened species, including many endangered mammals and birds.

Project outcomes have dealt directly with many of the main threats to biodiversity as described in the project document (land degradation, increased frequency of wildfires, illegal hunting, indiscriminate use and aerial application of pesticides, etc). However, the TE states that not all research studies undertaken by this project were relevant to the desired outcomes and that there was a need to improve research planning.

B Effectiveness **Rating: S**

- **Are the project outcomes as described in the TE commensurable with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (i.e. original or modified project objectives)?**

According to the TE, overall, the project has been successful at achieving its expected outcomes and has had a clear impact on the area where it was implemented (see above list of achievements of project outcomes). However, the TE describes that the draft management plans for PAs were still not accepted by the MNE.

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

- 4. Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost – effective? How does the cost-time Vs. outcomes compare to other similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?**

According to the TE, in general, the participatory approach applied by the project resulted in a high level of efficiency in the outcomes achieved (mainly by establishing multiple partnerships with national and international institutional or individual stakeholders).

Nevertheless, the project suffered from a major setback: the new government elected in 2000 did not agree with the project approach and as a result the national execution by the Ministry of Nature and Environment was suspended in 2001. And while UNDP and the project team maintained a stable commitment to the project's objectives and kept implementing project activities, this problem had an impact on the rate of implementation, slowing down or postponing some of the project's activities in 2001-2002. By 2004 the ministry was again involved in the planning process for the approval of annual and quarterly work plans.

The TE also indicates that 6 months were added to the project duration but gives no explanation for this extension.

Impacts

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

Although ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Eastern Mongolia can only be assessed effectively in the long-term, this review finds that the project had some tangible outcomes that will positively influence the attainment of this long-term objective.

The TE mentions that, due to the late implementation of the Community Conservation Fund (established in 2002), it is difficult to assess the effect of its activities to develop livelihood options in terms of reduction of threats to biodiversity.

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

A Financial resources **Rating: ML**

The project established a Buffer Zone Support Revolving Fund which was also funded by local governments and residents. By the end of the project, this revolving Fund had increased by 7% due to accrued interests.

The project was also supposed to serve as a frame to generate seed money for the Mongolia Environmental Trust Fund (METF), but all the projects' efforts to this regard were ineffective,

owing to the lack of availability or commitment from the METF members.	
B Socio political	Rating: ML
The TE states that most stakeholders were highly aware and appreciative of the project's benefits, outputs and outcomes. In addition, due to the effective participatory strategy adopted by the project, there is a strong sense of ownership from the part of local stakeholders. A good example is that several National Community Volunteers have established, on their own initiative, environmental NGOs with the purpose of pursuing the work they initiated in the project. According to the TE, the suspension of the MNE as the national implementation agency resulted mainly from a disagreement with the capacity-building and research components of the project; and even though the MNE started to take part again in the decision making process by the end of the project, its level of ownership and commitment is not clear.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: L
The project remained consistent with national environmental priorities and development plans throughout the duration of its implementation. Also, the project was successful at influencing amendments to national and local laws and development plans. Finally, sustainability of the project was increased by creating an NGO that will be in charge of supporting the project achievements.	
D Environmental	Rating: L
No risks to environmental sustainability mentioned.	

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

A Financial resources	Rating: L
B Socio political	Rating: ML
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: L
D Environmental	Rating: N/A
Overall Rating on Sustainability as calculated by the old methodology: L	

4.3 Catalytic role

1. Production of a public good
2. Demonstration Knowledge acquired in the course of the project was promoted in documents based on project results during training workshops, and national and regional forums. The project has also contributed to develop capacities of a wide range of actors through developing new tools and conducting training and workshops, in order to expand the outcomes to national scale.
3. Replication Several activities developed by the project were successfully replicated, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New mechanical techniques introduced as effective method to control Brandt's vole populations that have been introduced in 34 counties thanks to a small community-based project funded by the GEF SGP through the UNDP/Netherlands. • Model fire management plan for counties, which was replicated in 3 additional counties with their own financial resources. • Design and methodology to monitor illegal hunting activities, which was used in the Western part of Mongolia to study illegal trade of musk deer pod. • The success of the Buffer Zone Revolving Fund led the Dashbalbar BZ council to establish its own environmental conservation fund.
4. Scaling up The hunting study findings have been used to develop policies and legislation and the new tagging system has been successfully implemented nationwide. The methodology to monitor pasture condition developed by the project is now incorporated into the National Manual for Rangeland Health Monitoring and recognized for use on nationwide scale.

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

<p>A. In retrospection, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient? (Sufficient and practical indicators were identified, timely baseline, targets were created, effective use of data collection, analysis systems including studies and reports, and practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, when for the M&E activities)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rating: S</p>
<p>The project lacked a logical framework at its inception, but a set of 14 ecological and socio-economic indicators to measure project's progress was developed and adopted in 1999 (different from the 15 indicators that had been suggested in the project document); their measurement relied on independent sources of information, surveys and studies. M&E plan included a schedule for yearly tripartite meetings to review project objectives in line with experience learned, biannual participatory evaluations, a mid-term review, and a final evaluation.</p>
<p>B. Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards projects objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rating: S</p>
<p>The TE concludes that, in general, all scheduled M&E activities took place, and decision and recommendations resulting from them were implemented by the project. Examples of followed recommendations were shifting the focus of the project's efforts from objective 1 to objectives 2 & 3, and extending the National United Nations Volunteers employment for the whole duration of the project. M&E was not implemented from the start and reporting was temporarily stopped during 2002.</p>
<p>C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was it properly funded during implementation?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rating: MS</p>
<p>The financial analysis in the TE shows that the actual expenditure on the categories of travel/monitoring trips was significantly larger than planned (due to the fact that the project was implemented from 2 distant offices, and the participatory planning and evaluation activities involved a lot of travel).</p>
<p>Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? Yes. Although the project M&E system was developed after the project started, it followed a strong participatory strategy, and the indicators used had clear defined goals and outcomes to be reported on a yearly basis. There was also adequate institutional and financial support (and relevant partnerships established) to obtain the necessary data needed during the project implementation.</p>

4.5 Lessons

Project lessons as described in the TE

<p>What lessons mentioned in the TE that can be considered a good practice or approaches to avoid and could have application for other GEF projects?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteerism as an outreach strategy to involve and empower local communities and link them to the local governments: This project was very successful at getting local people actively involved in the implementation of its activities, and the key mediators between the project and the local population were the National Community Volunteers (NCV). These volunteers were recruited from the locations where the project was carrying out its activities through the United Nations Volunteer programme. - The importance of tailoring the outreach strategy according to the characteristics of intended end recipients. In this case the creation of a mobile public campaign was ideal to reach scattered herder's settlements established in remote areas. - The establishment of a project steering committee is essential to provide policy guidance and to help solve implementation problems and reduce risks of polarization when problems such as lack of common understanding of project objectives arise amongst

major project partners.

4.6 Quality of the evaluation report Provide a number rating 1-6 to each criteria based on: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, and Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. Please refer to the “Criteria for the assessment of the quality of terminal evaluation reports” in the document “Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems” for further definitions of the ratings.

4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings
In some cases the GEF Evaluation Office may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office. If additional relevant independent information has been collected that affect the ratings of this project, included in this section. This can include information that may affect the assessment and ratings of sustainability, outcomes, project M&E systems, etc.
No additional information was available to the reviewer.

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? Yes. The TE gives a thorough analysis of the various outcomes and of attainment of project objectives.	HS (6)
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? Yes. In general the TE presents necessary evidence to support its claims and ratings. But the suspension of the MNE as the national implementing agency contradicts the “HS” rating given to stakeholder ownership.	S (5)
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? Yes. The TE identifies the likelihood of the project sustainability regarding financial resources, stakeholder ownership and institutional framework. It also includes an analysis of the final exit strategy agreed on by all the stakeholders (the creation of an NGO to continue the projects activities)	S (5)
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Lessons identified in the TE were not always comprehensive (and some were really just conclusions).	MS (4)
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The total cost by activity is not known due to a change in the reporting format in 2004, and therefore planned and actual costs for the whole project could not be compared. The TE presents figures for expenditure categories regarding planned and actual GEF and UNDP contributions, but no consolidated amount of the project actual co-finance from other sources is included. NOTE: Data varies between last PIR (2005) and TE.	MS (4)
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? The TE gives a good description of the project M&E plan and addresses the achievements and shortcomings of the plan in a clear way.	S (5)

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: X	No:
Explain: It would be interesting to analyze the real impact on biodiversity conservation of the activities that were funded by the Community Conservation Fund, and to verify if the PA		

management plans are being implemented.

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

Project brief, PIR 2005