

**GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form**

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID:	3036		Review date:	12/12/07
IA/EA Project ID:	3713	<b>GEF financing:</b>	<u>at endorsement</u> (Million US\$)	<u>at completion</u> (Million US\$)
Project Name:	Supporting Capacity Building for the Third National Reporting to CRIC-5/COP-8	IA/EA own:	0.51	0.41
Country:		Government:	0.24	0.15
Operational Program:		Other*:	0.21	0.2
Country:	Asia/Pacific	<b>Total Cofinancing</b>	0.45	0.35
Operational Program:	15	<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	0.96	0.76
IA:	UNDP	<b>Dates</b>		
Partners involved:	UNOPS	Work Program date		NA
		CEO Endorsement		03/08/06
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		NA
		Closing Date	Proposed:	Actual:
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: NA	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: NA	Difference between original and actual closing: NA
Author of TE: Marie-Karin Godbout Le Groupe-Conseil Baastel Ltée		TE completion date: 12/22/06	TE submission date to GEF OME: 09/13/07	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 9 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	<b>N/A</b>	No rating	-	UA
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	-	No rating	-	S
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	-	HS

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

Yes, the TE is very comprehensive and provides all required information in a very clear manner. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the TE concludes that the timing of the final evaluation is less than ideal. Since the CRIC-5 was postponed, carrying out the TE before this meeting did not allow for a complete and fair assessment of all aspects of the project, particularly in terms of the results achieved.

**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**

- What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes

<p><b>during implementation?</b></p> <p>According to the Project Document, the Global Environmental Objective of the project is to contribute to development of capacities for strategic planning on sustainable land management.</p> <p>No changes during implementation.</p>
<p>• <b>What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?</b></p> <p>The Development Objective of the project is to assist 34 countries to enhance their capacities to prepare their third national reports (NRs) to the UNCCD CRIC-5 and COP 8 in a participatory and self-evaluative manner. More specifically, the project was designed to better enable non-African LDC-SIDS Parties to the UNCCD to improve the quality and timeliness of their national reporting, build capacities for reporting process self-evaluation, and engage in regional knowledge-sharing on Sustainable Land Management.</p> <p>No changes during implementation.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Outcomes and Impacts</b></p> <p>• <b>What major project outcomes and impacts are described in the TE?</b></p> <p><u>In terms of stakeholder participation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 12 countries have reported holding validation meetings/workshops, 3 have reported holding validation processes, but not in the form of a formal validation workshop and 3 have made firm plans to do so in early December 2006. This implies that less than 50% of the project target in that regard (35 national workshops were held by September 2006) has been achieved as per the original schedule.</li> <li>▪ In terms of achieving the project target set at project design in regard to stakeholders' participation at the regional level, the two Regional Synthesis Workshops had been held by September 2006 as scheduled. However, less than 50% (31 of 70) of the targeted number of participant were able to attend the workshops.</li> </ul> <p><u>In terms of countries' capacities to conduct self-evaluation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At the time of this final evaluation, nine (26%) of the self-evaluations have been completed but given the postponement of CRIC-5 to March 2007; a much better performance can be expected.</li> <li>▪ Some level of exchange of experiences occurred at regional levels during the Regional Synthesis Workshops. However, given 1) the early status of implementation of the various national reporting processes, 2) the lower-than-expected level of participation in this workshop, and 3) the fact that the methodology for self-evaluation had not been agreed upon by the time of the Regional Synthesis Workshop, results at this level have been lower than expected.</li> </ul> <p><u>In terms of capacities at the national level to elaborate 3NRs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 8 country Parties (23%) have submitted final Country Profiles, 11 country Parties (31%) have submitted draft Country Profiles and the reminder (46%) have yet to submit their Country Profile.</li> <li>▪ As of November 30, 2006, a total of 9 countries (26 %) had submitted official final reports, 16 countries (46%) had submitted draft reports, and 2 countries (6%) had submitted a summary reports. 8 countries have yet to submit any report. Overall, about 25% of the project target in that regard (35 3<sup>rd</sup> NR available by July 2005) has been achieved as per the original schedule.</li> </ul>

#### 4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT

##### 4.1.1 Outcomes (use a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU)

<b>A Relevance</b>	<b>Rating: MS</b>
<p>Overall, the project objective is deemed relevant to the objectives of GEF, UNDP, and the UNCCD Secretariat as well as to the needs of the LDC-SIDS Parties. However, the TE notes that project had a top-down design to ensure that non-African country Parties are on par with those African country Parties that have, in the past, had access to funds to prepare their national reports (NRs). In addition, despite the fact that the relevant government representatives have formally endorsed the requests for funds (sub-project at county level), the level of ownership of this project, as assessed through the level of country driven-ness, stakeholder participation and co-financing varies greatly across participating country Parties.</p>	
<b>B Effectiveness</b>	<b>Rating: U</b>
<p>According to the TE, it appears that the various targets set for output, outcome and impact levels in the context of this project were over-ambitious given the risks identified at the project design stage and the externally set time constraint.</p> <p>The TE concludes that at the time when it was conducted, given that the project is still under implementation in several countries, it is relatively premature to assess the project's overall effectiveness. Nevertheless, according to the initial schedule, the project did not complete either the planned activities or meet the</p>	

expected outcomes. Overall, if the CRIC-5 meeting had taken place in October 2006 as originally scheduled, the project would have failed to meet its objective. In particular, this can be demonstrated by the fact that as of September 30, 2006, a progress report prepared by the project coordinator illustrated that as of that date, only seven countries (20%) had submitted official final reports, with 18 countries (51%) having submitted only either summary or draft reports.

But, the TE states that given the postponement of CRIC-5, and in light of the continued efforts of the UNDP project coordination unit and COs, of the UNCCD Secretariat and the country Parties themselves to prepare their NRs in time for CRIC-5, a lot more can still be achieved and overall project results might be reassessed as marginally satisfactory or satisfactory

#### **C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)**

**Rating: MS**

According to the TE, with respect to overall costs, the project did not explicitly use either a benchmark approach or a comparison approach to ensure that costs would not exceed those of similar projects in similar contexts. However, according to the UNCCD representatives interviewed for the TE, the amount allocated for the preparation of NRs was comparable to the amount allocated to undertake this task during the previous reporting cycle. In addition, it is clear that a certain level of synergy has been achieved, in particular with respect to consultation and information sharing.

The TE concludes that cost-effectiveness would most likely be slightly lower than expected. This is due, in part, to the fact that attendance at the Regional Synthesis Workshop was much lower than initially planned. Originally, the project was to finance two government participants per country, for a total of 70 participants. However, the Asia and LAC Unit of the UNCCD Secretariat requested UNDP to fund one participant per country and to reallocate the remaining balance to cover other expenses related to the workshop. In the end, the project supported the participation of eight LDC-SIDS delegates and four NGO representatives in the LAC synthesis workshop; for the Asia synthesis workshop, it supported the participation of 16 LDC-SIDS delegates and three NGO representatives. As a result, the project supported the participation of 31 participants overall, rather than 70.

#### **4.1.2 Impacts**

According to the TE, the main impacts were related to capacity development in participating countries.

Impact in capacity development at an individual level: even though consultants were hired to assist in preparation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> NR, the sub-projects could have contributed to:

- Building the capacity of local consultants themselves;
- Strengthening the capacity of the NFPs and relevant ministry representatives closely involved in the process;
- Some consultants had the explicit mandate to build the capacity of some of the government representatives and other stakeholders for participation in production of the NR.

Impact in capacity development at an institutional level: the 3<sup>rd</sup> national reporting process permitted the creation of synergies among parties involved in SLM issues at the national level. In other cases, it has at the very least permitted the identification of national weaknesses in terms of processes and relationships between the various institutions and agencies involved with SLM.

Impact in capacity development at a systemic level: The 3<sup>rd</sup> national reporting process is not likely to have any significant direct effect on the availability of human or financial resources for the preparation of NRs. However, in some cases, NFPs interviewed mentioned that the information gathered through the NRs actually permitted the country Parties to take stock of the situation in terms of land degradation and that this information will inform the design of the NAP and accordingly, of future SLM-related projects.

**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)

#### **A Financial resources**

**Rating: UA**

The TE assesses that it is mentioned in the Project Document that the financial capacity should come about from implementing the larger UNDP Portfolio MSP, through the financial sustainability mechanisms that will be put in place, such as CCD Funds, dedicated government budgets, etc.

#### **B Socio political**

**Rating: MU**

Despite the fact that the relevant government representatives have formally endorsed the requests for funds (sub-project at county level), the level of ownership of this project as assessed through the level of country drivenness, and stakeholder participation varies greatly across participating country Parties. The TE concludes that the project did not provide enough of a tailored approach to capacity building in terms of both its design and implementation, especially in a way that would adequately take into account the varying capacity levels of the various partner countries. This, in turn, has seemingly had a negative impact on the process meant to build further ownership of the initiative by the local actors (in terms of co-financing, adequate consultation, etc).

#### **C Institutional framework and governance**

**Rating: UA**

It is also in the context of the larger UNDP Portfolio MSP that the institutional arrangements and organizational capacity, and policy and regulatory frameworks would be addressed. Hence, it is only in the context of the other UNDP Portfolio MSP that in the future, the UNCCD NFPs would have the technical capacity to undertake the preparation of future NRs on their own in a timely and efficient manner, without the need for additional outside assistance.	
<b>D Environmental</b>	<b>Rating: NA</b>
Not applicable	

#### 4.3 Catalytic role

<b>a. Production of a public good</b>
8 country Parties have submitted final Country Profiles, 11 country Parties have submitted draft Country Profiles.
<b>b. Demonstration</b>
Not applicable
<b>c. Replication</b>
Not applicable
<b>d. Scaling up</b>
Not applicable

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

<b>A. M&amp;E design at Entry</b>	<b>Rating (six point scale): MS</b>
According to the Project Document, program level coordination would ensure cost effective delivery at the national level through close coordination with the LDC-SIDS Portfolio Project, and to coordinate the activities at the regional level. A short term coordinator would be engaged and based in Pretoria (within the offices of the LDC-SIDS Portfolio Project Global Support Unit) who would work closely with the Global Coordinator of the Portfolio Project. The short term coordinator would also monitor the delivery, implementation and results of this MSP, and liaise closely with the UNCCD Secretariat for policy guidance. A comprehensive report on lessons learned from the involvement of GEF resources would be produced for wider distribution. In addition, the project design incorporated an element of self-evaluation by the countries participating in the project. This would be conducted both at the national level, but also at the regional level, and be led by the CCD Focal Points of the countries. Unfortunately, no country specific baseline information on capacity to prepare NR was identified at the time of the project's inception which makes it difficult to assess any changes in capacity in the context of a final evaluation.	
<b>B. M&amp;E plan Implementation</b>	<b>Rating (six point scale): S</b>
An inception report was prepared in June 2006 and a progress report prepared at the end of September 2006 by the project coordinator. These reports provided very useful information in terms of assessing the status of the project and also identified areas where further efforts were needed and where decisions needed to be taken. A table for monitoring the implementation status of each activity in every country Party was also prepared. This allowed for the monitoring of the overall progress made at any point during the course of the project.	
<b>C.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&amp;E in the budget included in the project document?</b>	
Activities budgeted for the project included \$37,000 to develop a methodology and approach to self-evaluation at national level, and \$36,000 to implement it; \$21,100 to produce a comprehensive report on GEF project M&E and lessons learnt, and \$56,440 for project management and coordination. The TE mentions that with respect to finances it appears that the amount initially budgeted for project coordination was unreasonably low. In particular, the expected cost of the project's co-ordinator salary, travel costs and costs related to the independent final evaluation far exceeded what was planned	
<b>C.2 Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&amp;E during project implementation?</b>	
The TE does not mention any problems regarding sufficient and timely funding for M&E.	
<b>C.3 Can the project M&amp;E system be considered a good practice?</b>	
No. Overall M&E has been adequately planned given the scope of the project. However, one of the major shortcomings was the lack of country specific description of baseline capacity that makes it difficult to assess any changes in capacity. Another shortcoming arises due to the fact that the UNCCD Secretariat had the responsibility for the evaluation of the overall quality of the NRs but that no clear criteria or methods for evaluating the quality of national reports have been established and no specific reporting requirements to the UNDP were identified.	

#### 4.5 Lessons and Recommendations

Project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

<p><b>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?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The location of a project coordination unit in a Convention secretariat allows for more effective and efficient project management and better coordination between the IA and the Secretariat.</li> <li>- Responsibilities for M&amp;E must be clearly assigned and clear criteria and methods for evaluating all results should be established at project inception; when responsibilities are assigned to third parties, specific reporting requirements need to be agreed upon.</li> <li>- In order to ensure a more timely delivery of higher quality NRs, the reporting cycles of the Convention and the associated capacity-building initiative needs to be fully co-ordinated in terms of timing. Otherwise, there may be contradiction between the time frame for reporting to the convention and the actual and optimal time frame required to implement the associated capacity- building initiative.</li> <li>- From the financial resources disbursement date, a minimum of six months is required to prepare NRs.</li> <li>- Self-evaluations are particularly useful in the context of a capacity-building project providing a small amount of financial support to several countries. Although it has its shortcomings, self-evaluation provides a cost-effective means of gathering information on project implementation issues, results achieved and lessons learned.</li> <li>- Ensuring that a thorough self-assessment of needs has been conducted and that proper consideration is given to the pre-existing capacity at all levels is crucial to the effectiveness of capacity-building activities.</li> <li>- When faced with deadlines, and other operational pressures, there is danger of losing sight of the capacity development process, and focusing too much on the outcome. By doing so, the long-term gains from the capacity-development outcomes may be reduced, to the advantage of short term reporting outcomes.</li> <li>- Ensuring national ownership and leadership, as well as multi-stakeholder consultations and decision-making at all stages of an initiative creates a favourable environment for the achievement of results.</li> <li>- All this in turn requires adequate implementation timelines and tailored approaches, which require flexibility.</li> </ul>
<p><b>List (or if detailed summarize) the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prior to the coordination unit close-down in December 2006, it is recommended that responsibilities for follow-up interventions be clearly assigned to COs, UNDP Regional Technical Advisors and the UNCCD Secretariat;</li> <li>- It is recommended that due attention be given to the compilation and analysis of all self-evaluations completed by the country Parties by CRIC-5 and that the main findings be disseminated at CRIC-5 and shared with the AHWG. This could help to ensure a more adequate assessment of the results achieved through the 3NR MSP. Ideally, this responsibility should be given to the project coordinator; alternatively, this could be undertaken as part of the UNDP Portfolio Project;</li> <li>- Capacity development efforts for national reporting would gain greatly, in impact and sustainability, from being considered, in the future, within the broader framework of capacity development for the implementation of the Convention, rather than as stand-alone interventions. Such an approach requires a longer-term commitment to capacity-development efforts, synergies between conventions, and above all, mainstreaming. These three elements are crucial to ensuring countries' long-term capacity gains and ownership for the implementation of their national and the global agendas.</li> <li>- It is recommended that sometime in the near future, investigation begin to establish who will pay for the 4<sup>th</sup> NR to the UNCCD, if there is one. In particular, UNCCD should be informed as to whether the GEF could be financing it and under what conditions</li> </ul>

**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.

<p><b>4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings from other sources such as GEF EO field visits, etc.</b></p>
None

<b>4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
<p><b>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</b> Yes. The TE contains a complete assessment of the project outcomes and impacts. It includes a comprehensive and candid analysis of project implementation. It is however very important to acknowledge that this TE was carried out before the CRIC-5 meeting and therefore was not able to analyze the final achievement of project results.</p>	S
<p><b>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?</b></p>	HS

Yes, this TE is consistent and provides detailed information and evidence to support its findings. It is noteworthy to mention that this TE includes a discussion on the evaluation methodology.	
<b>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</b> Yes. The TE concludes that addressing the sustainability of project outcomes can be considered overall as a challenging aspect of this particular project and that significant issues remain to be addressed in order to help ensure sustainable results in terms of capacity to prepare NRs for the UNCCD.	HS
<b>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</b> Yes. The TE provides a comprehensive and well supported list of lessons and recommendations.	HS
<b>E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?</b> The TE includes information on planned vs. actual cost by activities and donors, a complete assessment of the project co-financing, financing plan and disbursement, and the expenses per country.	HS
<b>F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&amp;E systems?</b> The TE presents a complete and comprehensive assessment of the M&E systems, both at the inception and implementation.	HS

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

<b>Co-financing and Project Outcomes &amp; Sustainability.</b> 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?
Yes. But the TE clarifies that the financial closure of the project will only occur in the first quarter of 2007. A more thorough assessment of expenditures will be required at that time.
<b>Delays and Project Outcomes &amp; Sustainability.</b> 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?
The lack of consensus on the role that the GEF should be playing in relation to the UNCCD and the enabling/capacity building activities divide have, apparently, delayed the formulation and the approval of the project. This delay affected the project implementation since, at the time the project was endorsed, it was already clear that the timely delivery of project output would be a major challenge.

**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:

Explain: The TE highlights that its timing is less than ideal and does not allow for a complete and fair assessment of all aspects of the project, particularly in terms of the results achieved. Ideally the TE should have been conducted after the CRIC-5.

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

Project Document