

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2016

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3105	
GEF Agency project ID		3578	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP- Lead Implementing Agency FAO – Co-lead Implementing Agency (Component 1-3 activities)	
Project name		Building Capacity to Eliminate POPs Pesticides Stockpiles	
Country/Countries		Vietnam	
Region		Asia and the Pacific	
Focal area		POPs	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		POPs-3 and POPs-2	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Local community groups in Thach Luu commune, Thach Ha district, Ha Tinh province - consultations	
Private sector involvement		N/A	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		December 15 th , 2008	
Effectiveness date / project start		March 2010	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 2013	
Actual date of project completion		December 2015	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.350	N/A
	Co-financing	0.075	N/A
GEF Project Grant		4.301	N/A
Co-financing	IA own	0.210	N/A
	Government	6.406	N/A
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		N/A
	Private sector		N/A
	NGOs/CSOs		N/A
Total GEF funding		4.651	N/A
Total Co-financing		6.616	N/A
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		11.266	N/A
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		December 2015	
Author of TE		Carlo Lupi and Toan Thang	
TER completion date		February 14, 2017	
TER prepared by		Punji Leagnavar	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Molly Watts	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	HS	-	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		L	-	L
M&E Design		S	-	S
M&E Implementation		S	-	S
Quality of Implementation		HS	-	S
Quality of Execution		HS	-	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		---	-	S

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The broader goal of the project was to “support to sustainable development in Vietnam through the elimination of POPs from the environment” (ProDoc, p.24)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

Objective of this project is “to remove capacity barriers to the sustainable elimination of POPs pesticides in Vietnam” (ProDoc, p.24). At project conception it had the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1. Improved capacity facilitates elimination of POPs pesticides stockpiles
- Outcome 2. All known stockpiles are destroyed and impacts on human health relieved
- Outcome 3: Improved chemicals management prevents importation and use of POPs pesticides

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

Although there were no changes in the GEOs and DOs, there were changes to Outcome 2. This occurred after the Project Inception meeting, so the project operated under this revised outcome for the entirety of project implementation. The language changed to: (TE, p.35).

Outcome 2: At least 5 sites with a minimum of 1,140 tons of POP pesticides stockpiles and pits are rehabilitated, stocks are destroyed and impacts on human health relieved at these sites within budget limitations

4. GEF IEO 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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Relevance to GEF4 Strategic Objectives - the project is highly relevant with reference to the objective of the GEF4 focal area strategy on POPs. It supported several expected GEF-4 impacts, including: (a) GEF-supported countries have strengthened capacity for POPs management and consequently strengthened capacity for the general sound management of chemicals; (b) dangerous obsolete pesticides that pose a threat to human health and to the environment are disposed of in an environmentally sound manner, and; (c) the risk of adverse health effects from POPs is decreased for those local communities living in close proximity to POPs wastes that have been disposed of or contained. The project had several activities related to capacity building/training, direct removal of POPs waste from burial sites, and developing environmental management plans to reduce risk exposure to POPs from the surrounding populations.

Relevance to Vietnam national objectives: The ProDoc notes that “Vietnam has suffered perhaps more than any other country from the effects of POPs. Most of the negative impacts are associated with the war-time use of chemical defoliant” (ProDoc, p.5). Despite the government’s concern over POPs exposure, it lacked the necessary technology, knowledge and financing to begin eliminating POPs waste in a systematic and controlled manner. Thus, the project was an asset for the government and also supported a host of national policies and regulation concerning environmental safety and sustainable development.

Relevance to beneficiaries: There are several locations in Vietnam where dramatic health impacts, including deaths and birth abnormalities have resulted from storage of POPs pesticides. From the health perspective alone, this project was extremely relevant for local beneficiaries and communities living in close proximity to POPs waste and/or contaminated sites. The project helped to create the initial foundations for the country to identify, clean-up, and eliminate these toxins to ultimately improve the health of local populations.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately satisfactory
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The TE rated effectiveness as *highly satisfactory*. This TER disagrees with the rating, and rates effectiveness as *moderately satisfactory* since the project could not achieve all of its outcomes and lower level outputs. The main outcome, which was the elimination of POPs stockpiles was also only partially achieved, eliminating only 79% of what it originally set out to eliminate. A discussion on each outcome is below.

Outcome 1. Improved capacity facilitates elimination of POPs pesticides stockpiles

The project achieved all of its outcome/output targets and was able to demonstrate that it developed an improved capacity and knowledge that would facilitate the elimination of POPs stockpiles. The results framework had 10 separate outputs that were all achieved and rated in the TE as either satisfactory or highly satisfactory. One of the main achievements under this outcome was that the project developed an extensive data inventory for all of the 1,153 POPs pesticide sites in Vietnam, provided training for government staff on how to continuously update it, and fully integrated it into the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment operations. Another achievement was creating many governance and institutional interventions, such as: a monitoring plan for the disposal of stockpiles (Output 1.8), tender documents and budding processes for new companies wanting to open POPs sites (Output 1.10), and training of government staff in enforcement of POP pesticides clean-up (Output 1.6).

Outcome 2. At least 5 sites with a minimum of 1,140 tons of POP pesticides stockpiles and pits are rehabilitated, stocks are destroyed and impacts on human health relieved at these sites within budget limitations

Outcome 2 was the main focus of the project since it resulted in direct environmental impacts/benefits. This outcome can be rated as *moderately satisfactory* because it was not 100% achieved, but it came close. The project excavated, packaged, transported and destroyed approximately 900 tons of POP pesticide waste (~79% of originally envisaged) across 10 sites in Vietnam (TE, p.35). It also contained POPs pesticides in soil with a surface of approximately 3,480 m² (TE, p.39).

Outcome 3: Improved chemicals management prevents importation and use of POPs pesticides

Outcome 3 is intended to increase capacity building and awareness in POPs legislation and management; it is considered a key component to ensure project sustainability. This outcome was partially achieved through the delivery of project outputs (the most notable achievement being the adoption of a national chemical safety standard), however the quality of the effectiveness of the outputs is lower than expected. For example, the project was supposed to develop a taskforce between customs agencies in Vietnam, China, Laos and Cambodia on pesticides (output 3.4). The TE noted that this output could not be finalized because the customs agents only agreed to talk about the issue in their annual meeting. Another setback

was the project was supposed to evaluate and upgrade 5 storage facilities for confiscated pesticides at border sites. However, the project was only able to evaluate 2 facilities and was not able to upgrade any of them.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately satisfactory
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This TER rates efficiency as *moderately satisfactory*. This rating is slightly lower than the TE which rated it as *satisfactory*. The project was extended by 2 years (at a no-cost extension) due to some factors which could have been prevented. One preventable factor was that at the beginning of the project, only one site in Vietnam was capable and licensed to dispose of POP pesticides (the Holcim Vietnam), which limited the project’s ability to achieve its planned outputs and the overall outcome of POPs elimination. This was a risk that the project could have foreseen, and the results frameworks could have been adjusted according to this factor. Other delays that affected efficiency included internal management problems between the two Implementing Agencies, and coordination issues related to staffing and procurement (discussed in Quality of Project Implementation section). However, despite the minor setbacks, the TE noted that the project operated with “a high cost effectiveness due to the well managed procurement of disposal services” (TE, p.8) which allowed it to complete many of the project activities at cost.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Likely
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The sustainability of the project is considered to be *likely* because the project has long term financial support from the government, has built strong capacities for government staff to respond to POPs sites, and has developed a series of policies and regulations that are integrated into national objectives. Below is a discussion of each of the sustainability dimensions:

Financial sustainability: The financial sustainability of the project looks *likely* because the government has committed to allocating approximately USD 48 million for the disposal of POPs and clean-up of contaminated sites. This new financial commitment is facilitated through the National Target Program. The TE noted that the government, at local and national levels, “has great and urgent expectations on the guidance and outcomes envisaged by the project to implement a plan for the optimal use of the above financial resources” (TE, p.41).

Institutional and governance sustainability: Vietnam has instituted key pieces of legislation that support the enforcement of the POPs activities, such as Decision 1946/QĐ-TTg - *National Action Plan on treatment and prevention of POP Pesticides*, and the Decision 1206/QĐ-TTg - *National Target Program on Overcoming Pollution and Environment Improvement*. Both of these policies have a state fund that has been allocated for POP pesticide interventions (TE, p.11). In addition, the project was able to upgrade an existing database on contaminated sites for the Department for Waste Management and Environment Improvement. The database will continue to be used for archiving information on

contaminated sites adopting common standards. (TE, p.11) To that extent, it ensures some of the project results.

Socio-political sustainability: The capacity building activities of the project was one of its strengths and the TE notes that the increased awareness and technical capacity will probably help sustain project outcomes. Specifically, local authorities who were trained to be more sensitive to contaminated sites will be more likely to report and enforce rules for newly found sites.

Environmental sustainability: There were no noted risks to environmental sustainability.

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?

The project originally planned to mobilize a total of USD 6,540,110 in co-financing. It is difficult to ascertain the final co-financing figures from the project, and the TE does not provide the latest final amount.

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?

The project was extended from December 2013 to December 2015. The delays were a result of internal administrative problems having to do with finances, co-management of the project and defining roles between FAO and UNDP, and hiring of staff. This did not in the end seem to affect the delivery or achievement of the project outcomes. In 2013, the Mid-Term Review suggested a project extension (at no cost) because some of the project activities needed more time to complete.

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:

According to the TE, the project had a high level of government ownership (TE, p.40). The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment demonstrated a big commitment to the objective of the project. That was reflected in the way the project was executed as well as the new policy commitments from the government regarding the continuation of POPs activities in the country. Some of those policy initiatives include the 1946 /QĐ-TTg *Plan to treat and prevent environmental pollution caused by pesticides stockpiles all over the nation*, the USD 48 million allocation for the disposal of obsolete pesticides, and the regulation on remediation of pesticides to land use.

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: Satisfactory
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The TE and this TER rates the Quality of M&E Design as *satisfactory*. The project documents show that the project had a very robust system of M&E which included a logical hierarchy of outcomes, outputs and activities with supportive targets and baselines. The project justification and intervention techniques were justified in the project approach. As well, the indicators were SMART and the project even listed several impact indicators that it monitored throughout the span of the project, something that not all POPs projects have. Those were: *Quantity of POP pesticides destroyed* and *Number of people previously exposed to POPs*. The M&E design included two different results frameworks (one for the UNDP components and one for FAO components) because it wanted to streamline M&E activities for each of the Implementing Agencies.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Satisfactory
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The M&E implementation had many strengths and this TER and TE both rate it as *satisfactory*. M&E activities were delivered successfully and on time, and there were no indications that there were any serious problems in the project documents.

Of its strengths, the project showed an ability to integrate an adaptive management approach and adapted to an M&E system that was more efficient for project needs and measuring results. For example, the project initially did not have a set target for training activities for staff on the clean-up of contaminated sites, so instead it developed a quality control system based on pre and post assessments of the trainees which illustrated how much they learned. As well, the project team realized that a 2 separate results framework per organization was not efficient, so it consolidated the 2 into one common results framework to solve inconsistencies related to the POPs disposal targets. The revised result framework was approved by UNDP regional office in September 2013 (TE, p.19). The project also used the MTR to reconsider how to change the project. The MTR provided several recommendations that the project management team accepted. Such as, requesting a project extension until 2012 for a no-cost extension, and to consolidate the bidding processes for entities doing clean-up and disposal (TE, p.12).

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: Satisfactory
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The TE rated quality of implementation as highly satisfactory, and this TER rates it as Satisfactory. UNDP and FAO were the Lead and Co-Lead Implementing Agencies for the project. The TE noted that there were some small operational problems that hindered their overall effectiveness. Most of these issues were related to the operational set-up of the project between the two agencies, more than the quality of project implementation and backstopping. These issues were (TE, p.29):

- Problems coordinating staff hiring, procurement of technical assistance and developing TORs with sometimes overlapping consultants working with UNDP and FAO
- Difficulty to manage two different budgets between UNDP and FAO, and reporting obligations under each of them (i.e. implementation modalities)
- Lack of clarity of the role of partners and executing agencies

These issues were noted as minor and did not affect the achievement and delivery of the project outcomes, although they culminated in delays in the project implementation. (TE, p.9).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rated quality of execution as highly satisfactory, and this TER rates it as Satisfactory. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Vietnam operated efficiently and effectively and were important to achieving the outcomes of the project. The project had many outputs that were related to building government capacity in the domain of raising awareness, knowledge and of crafting government policies. The Ministry helped to facilitate specifically these outputs. The project documents do not indicate any substantial shortcomings in MONRE's ability to execute the project sufficiently.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case

and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.

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.

The most significant environmental impact that the project made was that it eliminated approximately 907 tons of POP pesticides, and contained about 3480m² of contaminated soil. (TE, p.9)

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.

The project activities allowed for a long term reduction of exposure to POP pesticides. The TE estimated that the exposure to POP pesticides was reduced to almost zero risk for 1850 people living near previously contaminated areas. (TE, p.9)

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 – Capacity building was one of the project’s notable achievements. Several hundred people were trained in POP pesticide management and disposal across various groups (government staff, farmers, and pesticide agents). In addition approximately 300 government staff were trained in contaminated site management, groundwater sampling and risk assessment, learnings that will continued to be applied in the future (TE, p.39).

b) Governance – The project developed the first national regulation that dealt with the technical treatment and remediation of POPs in land use (*regulation QCVN 54:2013/BTNMT*). The TE called it a “milestone in establishing standard rules” (TE, p.10). As well, the project opened the door for other companies to bid and receive contracts/tenders for POPs removal. It did this through developing a tender system that government authorities could use so that more waste disposal facilities could begin operating.

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 impacts were noted.

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.

The project was successful and Vietnam wanted to replicate the project, and the GEF approved a new project following the lessons learned and outcomes of this project. The project was entitled “Vietnam POPs and Sound Harmful Chemicals Management Project”

Scaling the project is also occurring in a localized manner. The TE noted that the project’s awareness raising activities helped to identify additional POP pesticide stockpiles and disposal sites. During a site visit of a wartime storage of DDT, the evaluator who was trained discovered that the site contained an estimated amount of 40 tons of damaged DDT, and 50 tons of DDT contaminated soil (TE, p.40). Discoveries like this might increase and scale because of the capacity building activities of the project.

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 TE provided the following key lessons (TE, p.43-44)

- The project did not have a complete POP inventory before the start of the project, which led it to readjust its total removal target many times; the unreliability of POP pesticides contaminated sites inventories is “the highest risk for all the POP pesticides disposal projects”; a detailed site inventory should be completed before all future projects
- The project was lucky to have a highly motivated project team across the implementing agencies, executing agency, and the Steering Committee. This is one reason why the project was successful
- The parallel implementation of different project components by the two agencies (FAO and UNDP) initially led to some difficulties. These were solved early in the project, but some preventative solutions such as streamlining administrative responsibilities, should be addressed before project implementation

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

For future GEF projects concerning POPs reduction in Vietnam:

- Allocate as much resources as possible at the PPG stage in order to carry out reliable site/stockpile inventories (e.g. POP pesticides waste, buried POP pesticides, contaminated soil and groundwater to be treated); look for co-financing from the government to assist in the identification process
- For co-implementing modalities, projects should combine the administrative procedures, M&E activities, and respect the processes of different UN agencies
- When more than two agencies are involved in implementation, sound planning, clear responsibilities, and a single implementation modality should be sought to avoid future misunderstandings

Recommendations to sustain project outcomes:

- The government should look into enforcing random inspections (at distribution points, retailers and farmers) that could discourage the illegal practices of illegal pesticide importation
- Competences on contaminated site remediation are fragmented across government Ministries, therefore a ‘knowledge center’ should be established to prevent each entity from enacting their own standards
- Support more “training of the trainers” so that training on POPs remediation can be scaled, and that more parties such as private operators can be involved and more certification schemes can be established

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 IEO 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 did present a robust analysis and presentation of the project and evaluation of achievements.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report was very thorough and provided detailed explanations of the ratings, justification and evidence. At times however, the rating did not match the evidence that was presented. For example, the project did not meet its main objective of eliminating 100% of POPs identified, it fell a little short, still the project TE rated effectiveness as <i>highly satisfactory</i> .	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Sustainability is properly assessed.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons were supported by the evidence in the project documents and were comprehensive.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE included a breakdown of project expenditures per year and outcome, however it did not show the correct co-financing table even though it was in the original TE TOR.	MU
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE could have been more detailed concerning the design and implementation of M&E	S
Overall TE Rating		S

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

Mid-term Review