

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

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3135	
GEF Agency project ID			
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNEP	
Project name		Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Level	
Country/Countries		Gambia	
Region		AFR	
Focal area		Multi Focal Area	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		CB 2-Cross-cutting capacity building	
Executing agencies involved		National Environment Agency, The Gambia	
NGOs/CBOs involvement			
Private sector involvement			
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		February 13 th , 2008	
Effectiveness date / project start		January 2009	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 2012	
Actual date of project completion		December 2014	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		0.493	0.493
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government		0.168
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
NGOs/CSOs			
Total GEF funding		0.493	0.493
Total Co-financing		0.168	0.168
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		0.661	0.661
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		July 2016	
Author of TE		Hugo Navajas	
TER completion date			
TER prepared by		Molly Watts	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)			

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's goal was "to enhance capacities of Gambia in contributing to the conservation of and dealing with global environmental management" (Executive summary p.3) The project aimed to strengthen Gambia's capacity to implement multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) through the establishment of an institutional framework for global environmental management. Low institutional capacities had been a barrier to effective implementation of MEAs in the Gambia. (TE p.14)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The project document lists two specific objectives:

1: Strengthening the national institutional framework for integrated management of global environmental priorities

The project would strengthen the institutional framework through the establishment of a multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) Coordinating Committee "whose overall mandate will include inter-sectoral collaboration, prioritization and planning, monitoring and accountability" and through the establishment of an MEA Unit.

2: Integrating global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation through the application of ecosystem approach (Prodoc p.3-4)

The project sought to introduce the use of an ecosystem approach into divisional level planning by working with Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and their ANRE sub-committees who were delegated the task of environmental management in the Western and North Bank.

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

No changes in design are reported.

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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The TE rates relevance as Highly Satisfactory. This TER, which uses a different scale, rates relevance as Satisfactory. This project was based on findings of the Gambia’s National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) and designed to support the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) for Technology Support and Capacity building (TE p.33) The Gambia was one of six African countries selected to pilot the Bali Strategic Plan, thus this project was highly relevant.

The project is relevant to GEF as it responds to the third strategic area of support for capacity building: targeted capacity building across focal areas (cross cutting), and takes into consideration principles for capacity building as guided by the GEF Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building approved by the GEF Council in Nov 2003. It is also consistent with GEF programmatic objectives in three of the GEF focal areas, biodiversity climate change and land degradation. (Executive summary p.9)

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates the project’s effectiveness as moderately unsatisfactory, and this TER agrees with that rating. Although the project delivered most of its planned outputs and generated tangible results in pilot areas under the project’s second planned outcome, integrating global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation through the application of ecosystem approach, overall the TE reports that the project has had little influence at divisional government levels, and that a key product under the projects first outcome, an Information Management System, never materialized. The TE also notes that the project had little impact on Multilateral Environmental Agreement Management.

The project’s first planned outcome was strengthening the national institutional framework for integrated management of global environmental priorities The first two planned outputs, the establishment of an MEA (Multilateral Environmental Agreement) Coordinating Committee, and the establishment of an MEA Unit were achieved by the project. An MEA Unit was established within the Gambia’s National Environment Agency (NEA), and continued to be operational at the time the TE was written. The Unit includes an Information Manager and support staff, and during the course of the project assisted communications and data flows between NEA Coordination Committee members and convention focal points, and contributed indirectly to the 2014 UNCCD and State of the Environment reports. The TE notes however that the Unit’s primary mandate was to manage an integrated Information Management System (IMS) which did not materialize for reasons outside the project’s control according to the TE.

An inter-institutional MEA Coordination Committee was established, linked to the Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group. The Committee included three main Rio Convention focal points, government planning institutions, local government authorities, civil society organizations, NGOs and private sector representatives. (TE p.37) The TE notes however that the committee “lacked functionality, the frequency of meetings declined over time and was discontinued after the project’s termination.” (TE p.37) There was also no operational budget to sustain activities for this committee. (TE p.37)

The third output, improved collaboration between focal points, was not measured or tracked by the project, but can be seen as related to the second output and the establishment of an inter-institutional committee. The TE notes that “the inconsistent meetings of the MEA Coordination Committee and absence of an operational IMS restricted opportunities for improving collaboration between MEA focal points- and between central and local government.” (TE p.38)

The project’s second planned outcome was integrating global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation through the application of ecosystem approach. The TE reports that there was more progress towards this second outcome, “particularly with regards to the pilot Community Action Plans (CAPs) drafted by the villages of Darsilameh and Tuman Tenda” (TE p.38) The planned outputs under this outcome were: understanding of functional relationships within ecosystems, evaluation of ecosystem goods and services, adaptive management within ecosystems, empowered committees-global environment mainstreamed into decentralized planning process, and functioning inter-sectoral collaboration. The TE reports that local capacities for environmental planning and management were strengthened in the pilot villages, but that they have not been replicated in other locations or influenced local government. (TE p.39) Additionally, the project provided ecosystems training to the Agriculture, Natural Resource and Environment (ANRE) Sub-Committees linked to the Technical Advisory Committees of divisional government, however only two of the seven trained ANRE sub-committee members were still in their positions at project end, as the others had been transferred. These members reported “that they had not received enough training” and that contact with the project team had been inconsistent.” (TE p.41)

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE rates project efficiency as moderately satisfactory, noting that while implementation was slow, and the project required an extension, most outputs were delivered by project end, within the approved budget. This TER agrees with that rating. The TE also notes that two subcontracts were not fulfilled, resulting in key products not being delivered, namely the Information Management System, and implementation of ecosystems-based planning methodologies. Thus there was some inefficiency in the subcontracting of activities.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Unlikely
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The TE rates project sustainability as unsatisfactory. This TER rates sustainability as moderately unlikely, as project benefits under the second outcome appear likely to continue in targeted pilot areas, but

considering how many project outputs produced by the project do not appear to have been internalized by national partners. For example, the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Coordination Committee set up as part of the project stopped meeting at project end. The TE reports that there has been follow-up support in the two pilot villages, thus some sustainability of results in these areas, yet these case studies have not been replicated.

The TE rates financial sustainability as moderately unlikely. The Multilateral Environmental Agreement Coordinating Committee set up by the project never received an operating budget, and divisional governments are under-budgeted to support environmental initiatives. The pilot villages have been able to leverage additional funding from UNDP and NGOs.

The TE rates socio-political sustainability as moderately unlikely. At the local level, the Community Action Plans in the two pilot villages are contributing to sustainable development processes. However, the TE reports that replication is unlikely without additional donor funding.

The TE rates institutional framework as moderately unlikely, as the MEA CC is not operational, and while the MEA Unit continues to exist, its main mandate was to operate an information system that was never delivered. Additionally, there is limited institutional memory and capacity retention at divisional government levels, because members of the Agriculture, Natural Resource and Environment (ANRE) Sub-Committees linked to the Technical Advisory Committees of divisional government who received ecosystems training were mostly transferred by the end of the project.

The TE rates environmental sustainability as moderately likely. The TE reports that there are indications of environmental sustainability in the two pilot villages where ecosystems planning was demonstrated.

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 TE reports that 168,000\$ USD in promised in-kind co-financing from the government materialized, thus actual levels of co-financing were exactly as expected. No information is provided on how this co-financing was used.

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 TE reports that project implementation was extended from 4 to 6 years. The TE notes that the project was "activated in 2009, yet became fully operation in 2010 with the recruitment of a national project coordinator." (TE p.62) Project closure was extended from December 2012 to December 2014. The TE reports that some of the delays in the early stages of the project were "for the right reasons: NEA took the time to inform government and division-level stakeholders of the project and discuss implementation plans at an Inception Workshop; and the process of screening pilot villages took time."

(TE p. 62) However the TE notes that because these preparatory activities weren't done in advance of project start, they took up implementation time, necessitating an extension to complete activities.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The TE rates country ownership as highly satisfactory. The project built on a national capacity self-assessment, and was implemented by the Gambia's national Environmental Agency, which encouraged ownership by sharing the project proposal with the Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group, and organizing an inception workshop after project approval. The government provided in-kind co-financing as promised. Finally, activities under the project's second planned outcome of integrating global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation through the application of ecosystem approach were user driven and owned.

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: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE rates M&E Design at entry as satisfactory, but does not provided a discussion of M&E design at entry. This TER revises the rating for M&E Design at entry to moderately satisfactory, noting that indicators for the most part are actually outputs and are lacking clear targets, but recognizing that for a project of this size the M&E Design and budget is for the most part appropriate. The M&E plan presented in the Prodoc includes provisions for oversight on the part of UNEP through at least one field mission to assess progress on the ground, quarterly financial report submissions, a mid-term review and independent terminal evaluation. The project budget for M&E was 35,000\$, (31,000\$ from GEF funds and 4,000\$ from co-financing.) TE p.32 Indicators are presented at all levels, but as noted previously are phrased more as outputs, for example an indicator for the output 1.1: the establishment of an effective MEA Coordinating Committee is "decentralization of certain responsibilities to divisional levels." (Prodoc p.39)

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates M&E Plan Implementation as unsatisfactory, noting that monitoring by UNEP "was largely ad hoc yet responsive to country needs." This TER agrees with that rating. Annual Project Implementation Reports were submitted, and addressed progress towards outputs and outcomes, although they do not report against the indicators in the project's logical framework. The planned mid-

term evaluation was not implemented, and instead the TE notes that internal evaluation meetings were held with the task manager. The TE notes that for a project of this size an external mid-term evaluation was not necessary, however the internal evaluation meetings were not documented.

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 does not rate the performance of UNEP as Implementing Agency. This TER rates quality of implementation as satisfactory based on the strength of the project design, and evidence that backstopping provided during the project was appropriate. The TE notes that according to the project's national focal point backstopping provided by the UNEP task manager was satisfactory, noting that they intervened when requested to resolve problems such as the information management system contracted for The Gambia but not delivered. Additionally, the project design, based on the Gambia's national self-assessment, was strong and encouraged ownership.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The executing agency for this project was Gambia's National Environmental Agency (NEA). The TE rates project implementation and management as satisfactory, noting that the project was well managed by the NEA and the project coordinator, with most outputs fully delivered by the end of the project, and stakeholders consulted effectively throughout the project. The NEA encouraged ownership by organizing an inception workshop after the projects approval. Financial planning and management is also rated as satisfactory, as financial audits were conducted with no controversial findings, and unspent budgets were reprogrammed as needed.

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 project was successful in applying an ecosystem approach to natural resource planning and management in two pilot villages. Community Action Plans were piloted in Darsilameh village and Tumani Tenda, which the TE notes as the projects greatest accomplishments. (TE p.54) Soil conservation and reforestation activities were being implemented in both villages, and the plans have leveraged additional support from other donors in both locations. (TE p.54)

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.

As noted above, the Community Action Plans piloted in Darsilameh village and Tumani Tenda have leveraged additional support from other donors in both locations. (TE p.54)

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

Training was provided to the Agriculture, Natural Resource & Environmental (ANRE) sub-committees within the North Bank and South Coast divisional governments, however the majority of the members trained were transferred, thus institutional knowledge has not been retained. (TE p.53) Participants felt that "the project had lacked presence and that the training provided was useful but insufficient to have effect on local government capacities or practices." (TE p.53) Activities related to the creation of community action plan have increased capacities of villagers in the two pilot areas, who have reported that it was their first experience in community planning. Community organizations noted perceived improvements in local planning and resource management capacities. (TE p.54)

In the villages in which community action plans were implemented, community organizations were appreciative of the pilot process that had taken place, and perceived improvements in local planning and resource management capacities. (TE

b) Governance

The project strengthened institutional arrangements with the creation of a Multilateral Environmental Agreement Coordination Committee and a Multilateral Environmental Agreement Support Unit, however by project end only the MEA Support Unit remained in place, as the Coordination Committee lost momentum, and at the time the TE was written had not met since the project end.

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 are reported.

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

No broader adoption is reported.

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.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson 1: The expectation of harmonizing Rio Convention monitoring, reporting and management practices needs to be adjusted and re-focused. Each Convention sets (and periodically modifies) its own indicators and formats, with limited compatibility across conventions. National governments and environmental focal points have very little margin to adjust them.

Lesson 2: Future efforts to integrate Rio Convention mechanisms should focus on the Conventions themselves and engage their Secretariats in an over-arching review process.

Lesson 3: National focal points are more interested in the quality and availability of data that can be adjusted to different indicators or reporting formats, than in the integration of Convention mechanisms that they cannot influence.

Lesson 4: The timing and sequencing of project outputs is essential to maximize their cumulative effect and achieve expected outcomes. Although the three projects ultimately delivered most of their planned outputs, the intended outcomes were only partially reached.

Lesson 5: Data flows and reporting mechanisms are comparatively more developed for the UNFCCC than the other Rio Conferences, and offer working models that can guide future coordination efforts.

Lesson 6: Information management systems are more essential to support coordination and synergy between convention focal points, than establishing new committees or working groups that lose momentum after the project has finished.

Lesson 7: Coordination modalities that relied on inter-institutional committees and meetings have tended to lose momentum over time, with limited effect on convention implementation or reporting.

Lesson 8: Capacity building can be more effective and sustainable over time if training modules are uploaded to information portals and offered online.

Lesson 9: Develop integrated information systems in advance of project implementation to ensure their availability at an early stage.

Lesson 10: Training and planning activities in rural communities need to be accompanied by the implementation of selected pilot activities to create momentum, meet local expectations and sustain commitment, and demonstrate the value of capacity building.

Lesson 11: UNEP's responsiveness and guidance are essential to help projects move forward, particularly during the inception stage.

Lesson 12: Ex-post evaluations offer greater insight into overall project performance, sustainability and government commitment, with the trade-offs of declining institutional memory and less availability of national stakeholders.

Lesson 13: The indicators used to measure the achievement of expected outcomes were often based on external assumptions outside the project's control. This is a general design problem that makes projects more vulnerable to assessments of underperformance.

Lesson 14: Future capacity building and planning initiatives should include a small grant sub-component or secure early finding to implement selected from pilot plans.

Lesson 15: UNEP project appraisals should ensure that project outputs are connected according to their linkages and lead to their expected outcomes. To assist this, Theory of Change analysis needs should be required at the design stage and incorporated to the project documents. 84

Lesson 16: Ensure that institutions or firms proposed for project subcontracts have the means to deliver the goods or services that are needed, during project appraisals.

Lesson 17: Projects that are executed internally by national executing agencies need to consider financial remuneration for assigned support staff, in compensation for the added workload and to encourage better commitment and performance.

Lesson 18: External mid-term evaluations should not necessarily be required for GEF MSPs (in line with GEF requirements), and can be replaced by internal reviews facilitated by the Task Manager with the participation of the UNEP Evaluation Focal Point.

Lesson 19: Require an assessment of the preparedness of implementing UNEP technical divisions during project appraisals, as a criterion for project approval.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

Recommendation 1: Require national executing agencies to hold inception workshops when there are extended gaps – for example, more than one year - between project design and approval.

Recommendation 2: Upload training modules to the MEA information management systems or NEA websites and offer them online.

Recommendation 3: Final evaluations should be scheduled after implementation, yet before institutional memory fades.

Recommendation 4: UNEP project appraisals must ensure that performance indicators are realistic and within the projects ability to influence.

Recommendation 5: Follow-up GEF-UNEP assistance is needed to finalize and consolidate incomplete processes in The Gambia and Kenya.⁴¹ However, further assistance should be contingent on a demonstrated government commitment to implement the country-level recommendations that are listed below.

Recommendation 6: The most immediate post-project priority is to have an operational information management system and portal within NEA that connects focal points and other convention stakeholders, as envisioned in the project's design.

Recommendation 7: Another immediate priority is the need to disseminate and replicate the ecosystems planning approach that was successfully demonstrated in two pilot villages, on a wider scale.

Recommendation 8: National funding mechanisms should be explored to support community-based conservation and sustainable resource management.

Recommendation 9: Retain the MEA Coordination Committee as an ad hoc group and activate it according to the demands of the convention monitoring and reporting cycles.

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 report presents an evidence based assessment of delivery of outcomes and achievement of objectives	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is internally consistent and evidence is compelling	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Project sustainability is well-reasoned and evidence based	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learned are comprehensive and supported by evidence	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The project reports actual co-financing and costs by activity	S
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The discussion of M&E is very brief	MU
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).