

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2013

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3284	
GEF Agency project ID		105830	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF - 4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Consolidation of Liberia's Protected Area Network	
Country/Countries		Liberia	
Region		Africa	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP 3 – Forest ecosystems SP BD 1- Sustainable financing of PA systems at the national level	
Executing agencies involved		Forestry Development Agency (FDA) [Lead], Ministry of Finance [Financial Mgmt], BirdLife international [Secondary Executing Agency]	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Forestry Development Agency [Lead Executing Agency] BirdLife international [Secondary Executing Agency]	
Private sector involvement		None noted.	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		March 24, 2008	
Effectiveness date / project start		May 5, 2008	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		April 15, 2011	
Actual date of project completion		November 30, 2012	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.06	0.06
	Co-financing	0.08	0.08
GEF Project Grant		0.75	0.75
Co-financing	IA/EA own		
	Government		
	Other*		
Total GEF funding		0.89	0.89
Total Co-financing		6.71	2.13
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		7.6	3.02
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		March 28, 2013	
TE submission date			
Author of TE		N/A	
TER completion date		February 6, 2014	
TER prepared by		Dania Trespalacios	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Joshua Schneck	

*Includes contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development, cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and beneficiaries.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	MS	MS	Not rated	MU
Sustainability of Outcomes	MU	L	Not rated	L
M&E Design	Not rated	--	Not rated	S
M&E Implementation	MU	--	Not rated	U
Quality of Implementation	MS	MS	Not rated	MU
Quality of Execution	MS	MU	Not rated	U
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	--	--	Not rated	S

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective is to conserve biodiversity through the expansion, consolidation and rationalization of the national Protected Area Network in Liberia. The project was designed to bring 3 national forests – Lake Piso, Gola and Wonegizi- under effective strict conservation management, and bring additional surrounding forest under sustainable use conservation management.

The Upper Guinea Forest Biodiversity Hotspot is a global biodiversity hotspot and a critical area for conservation. Only 14% of the original extent of this forest remains, and 43% of it is located in Liberia. Only 4% of Liberia’s forests are under protected areas. These rainforests are highly threatened by new concessions for hunting and mining. Due to 14 years of conflict, biodiversity data is poor and fragmented. (TE pg. 3, Project Document pg.4)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The development objectives of the project included: improved conservation and environmental management capacity the Forest Development Agency and the EPA, development of conservation livelihoods and reduced dependency on protected area resources, and the formal establishment of project management units.

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

The environmental and development objectives of this project, including the main project components, did not change during implementation.

4. GEF EO 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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Project outcomes were consistent with GEF's Biodiversity focal area. The project aligns with the Biodiversity GEF -4 objective of catalyzing sustainability of PA systems, and strategic program of strengthening terrestrial PA networks. The project built on successful GEF investments in Sapu National Park, and on region-wide investments through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

The Liberian government launched the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy in February 2006. This project will contribute to that effort by improving governance (through strengthening of management institutions) and contributing to economic revitalization (through the alternative livelihood components of the project). The project also contributes to the implementation of the new Forest Policy by balancing the conservation and community interests. (Project Document pg. 4-5)

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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This project had 5 components, each with several sub-component indicators (listed below). Many of the project components were either not achieved or only partially achieved. The project results are not commensurate with the expected outcomes of the project, mostly due to ineffective planning, implementation and execution, and somewhat due to political challenges.

The TE assigns an overall project rating of moderately satisfactory, as it claims the project ultimately succeeded in conserving biodiversity by reducing the threats of bush meat hunting, improving community relations with authorities, increasing the management capacity in the three project areas, and laying the foundations for future strengthening and development of capacity. The TE highlights project achievements beyond those specified in the project components, including advancing gender issues (women were actively recruited for enforcement and administrative positions in the parks) and improving relations between community members and FDA (the latter was previously seen as an absent, rent seeking institution with little interest in community development).

Despite the positive achievements of this project, a significant proportion of the project components were not achieved, or were partially or insufficiently achieved. The reasons for this failure seem to be a lack of effective planning on the part of the World Bank and to ineffective execution by the FDA. The Project Document for CEO Approval describes the potential risks presented by the low institutional capacity of the chosen executive agency, which indicates that the World Bank was aware of potential challenges, and perhaps did not plan effectively to mitigate them. The FDA's project execution was flawed and problematic, and yet was not adequately addressed until mid-project.

This project was designed to be a model for accelerating conservation in Liberia and throughout West Africa, yet it offers as many examples to avoid as to emulate. Due to poor project implementation, the Global Environmental Objective of this project, which was to conserve biodiversity through the expansion, consolidation and rationalization of the national Protected Area Network in Liberia, was not achieved. On account of foreseeable project implementation blunders that ultimately prevented the achievement of project targets, this project is rated moderately unsatisfactory.

For further details, the expected and actual project outcomes are individually listed under each project component:

1- Strengthening of FDA and EPA

- a. 20 qualified staff performing FDA in both field and capital
Achieved.
- b. 2 vehicles, 4 computers provided to EPA
Not Achieved
- c. 10 qualified staff performing EPA
Not Achieved

Project Results: Due to FDA's failure to secure co-financing for some of these activities, and the slow speed of work, the project failed to increase the capacity of EPA to contribute to the project as planned.

2- Consolidation of Protected Area Management Instruments

- a. Comprehensive law on wildlife management produced
Achieved The law is awaiting ratification. This process will receive support from the GEF funded EXPAN (Expansion of the Protected Area Network) project, which will continue these activities in the future.
- b. MOUs with Sierra Leone and Guinea partner institutions for management of trans boundary PA.
Partially achieved. Thanks to EC/BirdLife International, the president of Liberia signed an MOU with Sierra Leone on a proposed park
- c. Transfer mechanism from Ministry of Finance to FDA of commercial logging receipts earmarked for PA operation cost.
Not achieved
- d. Liberia Conservation Trust Fund Proposal
Achieved Thanks to the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the proposal is under discussion and will count on future projects for further development.
- e. PA system management strategy
Not Achieved

Project Results: Multiple set-backs and delays prevented the achievement of several of the activities of this component.

3- Creation of new protected areas

- a. 3 new national protected areas demarcated and under improved management, measured by WWF score cards for PA and METT, with physical structures and equipment, and management plans approved by relevant institutions and stakeholders.

Partially Achieved

Project Results: One new park was gazetted (Lake Piso Multiple Use Reserve), and work was begun at two others (Gola and Wonegizi). METT was begun only at Lake Piso towards the end of the project, thus score cards are not available. Despite the lack of legal arrangements, management improved at all three parks, including a new and trained ranger corps, enhanced community relations, increased prosecution of illegal bush meat, and development of socio-economic and biodiversity baselines. A management plan was developed for Lake Piso, and all three parks gained equipment.

4- Livelihood activities around protected areas

- a. 20% of communities around the park involved in biodiversity friendly sustainable activities

Not Achieved. Although 12 community members were trained in biodiversity friendly sustainable activities, and there was community participation in all 3 parks, a lack of baseline studies and monitoring impede attributing any change to this project.

5- Project management

- a. Project coordinator recruited, equipment provided, operation costs funded
Not achieved. Project management was problematic throughout the project, both on the part of the implementing agency (which could have foreseen and avoided many management challenges) and on the part of the executing agency

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE provides a qualitative and convincing assessment of the cost-effectiveness of this project. The TE explains that considering the total cost of the project (\$750,000 GEF funds) and the area of the 3 parks managed (176,462 ha), the project provided a degree of protection and management at a cost of \$0.85/ha/yr. The TE compares this value to the \$1.57/ha/yr cost of project management at SAPO, a comparable GEF funded project in the region, and concludes that the project was cost-effective.

However, project implementation was delayed due to administrative and political problems, and the degree of protection and management given to each of the 3 parks varies widely and does not meet the expectations of the project.

The executing agency was not successful in securing sufficient co-financing required for the implementation of many project outcomes. As a result, the total project financing was

USD\$2.9 million, only 39% of the expected USD\$7.6 million expected for this project. The completion date was extended by a year and 7 months, and still many components were not achieved. Thus the rating given for efficiency is moderately satisfactory.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Likely
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The changes and activities that were successfully achieved by this project are likely to persist in the future because the GEF funded Expansion of the Protected Area Network (EXPAN) project will continue the activities that were begun under this project. (TE pg. 8) This project was designed to be the first in a series of phased investments from the GEF in Liberia's protected area system. The project has established enabling conditions for future work, including management changes that generated community support and good will. Conservation International and BirdLife International have already begun to build on the achievements of this project.

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?

Co-financing was essential to the successful completion of this project. Of the five components of this project, only 2, 3 and 5 were implemented directly with grant funds. Components 1 and 4 (strengthening of FDA and EPA, and livelihood activities around protected areas) required co-financing for implementation. Component 4 received funds from the Government of Italy and from the European Commission (through a project executed by BirdLife International). Component 1 received funds from an IDA credit to strengthen FDA. No co-financing was secured for strengthening EPA. (TE pg. 2)

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?

There were many delays in implementation, and a project extension was needed. The cause seems to be ineffective project planning on the part of the World Bank, and ineffective project execution on the part of the FDA. The final project deliverables were affected, as many were not accomplished.

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 does not provide much information on country ownership. Instead, it explains how the project relevant to the World Bank's regional strategy for Africa and country assistance strategy for Liberia. The Project Document for CEO Approval provides a few more details

on how this project aligns with national priorities. It is unclear from the TE whether there was sufficient, if any, country ownership of this project, and whether or how this affected project outcomes and sustainability.

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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According to the Project Document for CEO Approval, the budgeted M&E plan would be based on indicators of the results framework, and would be measured and reported on 2 times a year. FDA would prepare a methodological data sheet on each indicator and would establish baselines during the first quarter of the project. The World Bank would carry out one supervising mission per year to oversee the implementation of the program. The M&E was given a budget of \$150,000.

In light of the conformity with GEF M&E guidelines described above, project M&E is rated as Satisfactory.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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The TE states that “throughout the project period, reporting was piecemeal and remained a problem.” (TE pg. 6) The last PIR (World Bank Grant Reporting and Monitoring Report 2010) notes that “the MTR is more than a year overdue and project management is not providing a monthly work plan/budget update as agreed. The grant does not have an M&E staff. This situation slows down grant supervision and does not guaranty a full transparency.” (PIR 2013 pg 6) The PIR from 2009 notes “ the indicators monitored so far do not coincide exactly with the ones on the project brief”. (PIR 2009) No other information is found on M&E reporting on the PIRs, or in the TE.

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: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates The World Bank team’s performance as moderately satisfactory, citing implementation support in the latter half of the project, appropriate and timely identification of risks, engagement of technical experts as needed, and effective alerts to management as issues arose.

However, the World Bank seems to have developed an overly ambitious project that did not adequately plan for the lack of capacity in the executing agency, and did not budget appropriately for project management. (TE pg.8) The TE describes how project management arrangements were revised three times during the project: the project coordinator was initially an external remote consultant, then an external in-house consultant was hired as a replacement, and finally an FDA employee has hired as a replacement. These constant changes in leadership contributed to the delays of the project.

The Project Document for CEO Approval lists the low capacity of FDA to manage protected areas as a potential risk to this project. (Project Document pg. 10) The failure of the World Bank to adequately plan for this risk, which eventually materialized and caused significant project delays and unsuccessful project results, is not adequately explained by the TE.

The Project Document specifies that Conservation International and Flora and Fauna International would be implementation partners. Yet these partnerships are not described in the TE. Instead, the TE describes the activities of BirdLife International, giving the reader the impression that this partnership was planned from the start of the project.

For various and foreseeable failures in project implementation, the quality of project implementation is rated as moderately unsatisfactory – lower than the TE rating of moderately satisfactory.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates the performance of the executing agency, the Forest Development Agency, as moderately unsatisfactory. There is cause to demote the rating to unsatisfactory.

Project implementation was delayed various times. The TE describes that the project design was too ambitious, and depended on a weak executing partner. FDA had previously never managed a conservation project on its own, thus the SAPO project components were eventually executed by FFI, and the project components funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund were executed through civil society. Changes in senior management at FDA added to the delays. (TE pg. 4) Even when the project executing team was relocated inside the FDA’s Conservation Department, procurement support was ad hoc. (TE pg 9)

The TE also reports that financial management responsibilities were transferred from FDA's financial department to the Ministry of Finance's Project Finance Management Unit, due to FDA's poor performance in this area. (TE pg. 4)

The TE claims that despite implementation delays, design challenges, and a lower than expected provision of co-financing, the FDA did succeed in meeting the project development objective of conserving biodiversity:

“ Though it could only fully gazette one of the three parks as planned, the Project did succeed in conserving biodiversity through a mix of official gazette at Lake Piso and enhanced national forest management in Gola and Wonegizi that resulted in the reduction of threats- particularly from bushmeat hunting- to biodiversity.” (TE pg. 8)

Although the project furthered the cause of biodiversity conservation, the project objective of expansion, consolidation, and rationalization of 3 protected area systems was not achieved.

8. Lessons and recommendations

8.1 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 describes a few main lessons for future project planning and executing in the forest sector in Liberia and other similar low income countries:

- 1- Sequencing investments. Because alternate livelihood activities depended on co-financing, the activities began and ended before park management activities were begun in a particular site. Thus, projects should be sequenced to optimize sustainable landscape-level investments.
- 2- Scaling activities to capacity. This project had an overly ambitious design. Project design should assess the capacity of executing partners, the institutional challenges and the ability of parties to adhere to World Bank policies. “Fragile state environments should not be underestimated.” (TE pg. 10)
- 3- Scaling activities to business as usual. This project invested in infrastructure and human capital that would be sustainable in the long term after project completion. Long term costs for government were reduced, and ongoing operational costs considered government approved rates, thus enabling the continuation of project outputs after completion.
- 4- Building incentives into the project. Frequent management changes and use of external remote consultants caused a lack of ownership from FDA senior management for the first years of the project. A built-in transition to full FDA management was not planned from the beginning. Future projects should take into account both the need for external support to accelerate project activities, and the need to build ownership of the project among staff and senior management of the executing agency.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE does not explicitly lists any recommendations.

9. 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 EO 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 explicitly and effectively reports on the expected and actual outcomes of the project and the achievement of the objectives.	HS
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE is internally consistent. However, the ratings seem to be too lenient, and the report does not include any information on M&E or financial accounting. The TE does not address all project aspects that were originally included in the Project Document (e.g. the involvement of Conservation International during the course of the project).	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The project sufficiently addresses the risks and sustainability potential of the project outcomes.	HS
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are supported by the evidence, and well explained.	HS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE does not report on the project costs per activity. There is sufficient discussion of co-financing quantities and importance.	U
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE does not discuss M&E activities.	HU
Overall TE Rating		S

$$0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f)$$

$$0.3(10) + 0.1(15) = 4.5$$

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

This TER was completed using:

- *Project Implementation Report of 2013 (World Bank Grant Reporting and Monitoring Report)*
- *Project Document for CEO Approval (2004)*