

GEF IEO Terminal Evaluation Review form (retrofitting of APR2004 cohort)

This form is for retrofitting of the TERs prepared for APR2004. While several topics covered in this form had already been covered in the earlier form, this revised form adds several other performance and impact related concerns.

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		33	
GEF Agency project ID			
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-2	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNEP	
Project name		An Indicator Model for Dryland Ecosystems in Latin America	
Country/Countries		Brazil, Chile, Mexico	
Region		Regional	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP1- Arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		Natural Heritage Institute (NHI)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Lead Executing Agency	
Private sector involvement		No involvement	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		12/22/1999	
Effectiveness date / project start		1/5/2000	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		3/31/2002	
Actual date of project completion		4/1/2003	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.025	0.025
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		0.725	0.725
Co-financing	IA/EA own		
	Government		
	Other*	0.324	
Total GEF funding		0.75	0.75
Total Co-financing		0.324	N/A
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		1.074	N/A
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		11/1/2003	
TE submission date			
Author of TE		Javier A. Simonetti	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) preparer		Siham Mohamedahmed	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) reviewer		Claudio Volonte and Aaron Zazueta	
Revised TER (2014) completion date		06/05/2014	
Revised TER (2014) prepared by		Nelly Bourlion	
TER GEF IEO peer review (2014)		Neeraj Negi	

*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	HS	S	NR	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	L	ML	NR	L
M&E Design	N/A	N/A	NR	S
M&E Implementation	S	N/A	NR	MU
Quality of Implementation	N/A	N/A	NR	U/A
Quality of Execution	N/A	MS	NR	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	-	-	NR	U

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

According to the Project Document (pg.4), the Global Environmental Objective of the project is to promote the maintenance and sustainable use of biodiversity in Latin America drylands by providing policy makers, non-governmental organizations and local stakeholders with a tool to identify and analyze the causes of land degradation and biodiversity loss in dryland areas. In the face of accelerated land degradation in drylands, the unique biodiversity of this biome and the livelihood of dryland populations are increasingly threatened. This increases the likelihood of migration, increasing poverty, and further species habitat loss. Like most semi-arid regions of the world, each of the pilot areas is inhabited by agropastoral communities, which rely upon local land and water resources for survival.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

According to the Project Document (pg.4), the development objectives of the project are to:

- (1) Integrate social, demographic, physical, ecological, economic factors which contribute to land degradation and biodiversity loss in dryland areas into an analytical tool model for decision making process related to sustainable development and biodiversity protection; and
- (2) Test the developed model in a pilot location in each participating country to determine its utility for identifying activities which have significant impacts on the sustainable use of the biodiversity in dryland areas.

The project aimed to provide the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other stakeholders with an indicator model for assessing desertification through the integration of physical environmental, biological and socio-economic variables. This model, translated into proprietary software known as MONITOR, should identify vulnerable areas and communities in the dryland ecosystems of Brazil, Chile and Mexico and offer a decision tool for developing management plans and monitoring the direction of changes after such plans are implemented.

The project involved an ample variety of approaches, embracing the development and later refinement of the MONITOR proprietary software to model the interaction of biophysical and socioeconomic

factors; national consultations with interested parties; training of personnel; public involvement through consultation; and pilot study implementation.

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

No change in objectives was reported in the TE and in the last PIR.

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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The TE found that the project is relevant to the challenges faced by biodiversity in arid lands and their consequences for human welfare. Latin-American drylands face accelerated biophysical and social degradation. The demise of their biological resources and the resulting impact on human welfare are phenomena in urgent need of attention (TE pg.3). The project “An Indicator Model for Dryland Ecosystems in Latin America” is a solid attempt to disentangle the interactions between the biophysical and socio-cultural roots of the environmental degradation of the drylands of Latin America, not only allowing the elaboration of better land-use practices, but also potentially fostering the development of technically and socially sound public policy.

Additionally, the project refers to UNEP’s programme of work 2000-2001, and its sub-programme (GF/1040-00-10, Environmental Assessment and Early Warning) and sub-program element (Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation) on Sustainable Management and Use of Natural Resources. The project also support the GEF Operational Strategy in which “GEF activities will be designed to support capacity building, human resource development and skills that are necessary to achieve global environmental objectives” and the GEF Operational Program Number 1: Arid and Semi-Arid Zone Ecosystems and its emphasis on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In accordance with this OP- 1, the project was expected to provide a decision support tool, in the form of an indicator model, capable of identifying vulnerable dryland ecosystems and communities, providing advice regarding better land use practices and adaptively monitoring changes brought about by the implementation of management plans.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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According to the TE, the project successfully achieved the first objective; however, the project advanced but did not fully achieve the aim of influencing public policy formulation. There are several promising signals that governmental organizations are seriously considering adopting or have already adopted MONITOR in Brazil, Chile and México. There are also promising evidences that this software will be used in pilot sites in other Latin American countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru (TE, pg.4).

On one hand, a fully functioning indicator model for dry land ecosystems is complete which was identified as the tangible outcome of the project in the project document. Using the model, areas critical for biodiversity loss (if current resources use practices continue unchanged) were identified for each participating country. Moreover, the TE stated that there is evidence that the model is being adopted by policy and decision makers in participating countries. Additional Latin American countries (in which an apparently relevant yet unnamed project was carried out) will use the model as a decision support tool for policy makers to identify the causes of land degradation and biodiversity loss. The model is being adapted for use in environmental education in rural schools in participating countries.

However, on the other hand, the end goal of using the model for policy formulation was not achieved. There was no unified definition adopted of what constitutes a "hot spot" for land degradation in the critical areas for biodiversity loss. Data collection at pilot sites was not complete and data quality was not assessed. Finally, the short time available for rigorous pilot testing impacted the degree to which the model can be used for policy formulation.

Therefore, the overall effectiveness is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE considers that the project fulfilled its first objective, however, it involved more time than scheduled, which prevented full field-testing of the model by local communities and adoption by policy makers. The 24 month period planned for developing the software, field testing the model, refining it, creating awareness of it, achieving its adoption by policy makers and influencing policy, seems too short a period (TE.pg.7).

The longer than expected duration reduced the options for achieving objectives related to its testing and adoption.

Moreover, government collaborators changed over the duration of the project. Extra time was required to get those new personnel acquainted with the project philosophy and approaches.

There is very little information on the actual budget used for the project. The TE states that a proprietary software with far-reaching implications has been obtained within a reasonable budget (TE, pg6).

Overall, the efficiency is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Likely
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According to the TE, there was support among the partnering organizations to continue their support for the activity in future.. Moreover, the Center for Agriculture and Environment (AGRIMED) has secured additional funds in order to refine the software and increase ease of use by end-users; however, the amount of funding secured is not clear.

Additionally, several workshops were organized to inform stakeholders about new approaches to address land degradation and its impact on biodiversity and to enhance local participation. These workshops were organized in the three countries to familiarize and train both project associates and Government officials in the application of the MONITOR software. AGRIMED has started the process of adapting MONITOR as an educational tool for teaching rural school children about the environment.

The project does not envision creating new institutions, only adding capacity to those already in existence. Personnel from the agency and private partners were trained in the use of the MONITOR. To ensure sustainability at least two persons from each of the partnering organizations were trained to use the Model. According to the TE there is evidence that policy and decision makers are adopting MONITOR, which would make the project sustainable.

Some reasons that could impact the project sustainability is the model input data that was not available at all pilot sites, which hindered application of similar algorithm at all sites, and the government collaborators that changed over the duration of the project which required extra time to inform new personnel about the project philosophy and approaches.

Overall the project sustainability is Likely.

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?

Initially, the budget was US \$1,048,800 funded by the GEF Trust Fund (US \$725,000) and cofinancing from Esquel Group Foundation, Brazil (US \$91,000), University of Chile (US \$145,000), Secretaria de

Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales, y Pesca (SEMARNAP), México (US \$60,000) and National Heritage Institute, (NHI) (US \$27,800).

There is no information available on the actual financing in the TE and in the PIRs.

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 planned for an initial duration of 24 months, from April 2000 to March 2002, but was granted an additional 10 months extension for completion in January 2003. The project actually closed in April 2003.

According to the TE, the overall goal of changing national policy was too ambitious given that the project duration was only two years, particularly since the project included developing, testing and upgrading new software. The project closed a year later than anticipated. The delays were created by the following problems:

- (1) Government collaborators changes required extra time and effort to acquaint new staff with the project: Changes in mid- and high-level officers in Brazil and Mexico and the withdrawal of CODEFF from the project delayed its implementation. Youth for Development and Production (Juventudes para el Desarrollo y la Producción -- JUNDEP) later joined the project as a Chilean non-governmental organization, together with AGRIMED.
- (2) Model input data was not available at all pilot sites, which hindered application of similar algorithm at all sites.
- (3) Technical and scientific reports were not prepared for dissemination, hence validation of the project suffered.

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 project assumption that government partners and collaborators would remain constant in order to offer adequate continuity to the implementation of the project was proved false for mid-and higher level officials in Brazil and Mexico. However, the TE states that although the adoption of MONITOR by end-users at the local and governmental levels was not fully achieved, the country ownership was good based on the promising signals for follow up work.

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 M&E design at entry is not assessed in the TE.

However, according to the PD, a logframe was developed, with outcomes, outputs, and activities. Each activity has indicators to measure the progress of the project, and has a specific budget allocated. The M&E activities also have an allocated budget in the PD (pg. 22)

The PD states (pg.31) that there is a “need to design a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure the degree to which the changes anticipated during project implementation are realized”. The M&E plan describes the parameters that define progress toward completion of anticipated activities, and a timetable for evaluating these parameters. Indicators of those progresses are contained in the logical framework. Two evaluations (Mid-Term and Final) were planned to be conducted to monitor the progress and the long term impacts of the project.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The M&E implementation is Moderately Unsatisfactory for the following reasons.

On one hand, a number of data products were developed by the project partners in each pilot zone which were gathered into databases, and a manual containing a list of indicator variables and procedures to assess the degree of desertification of a given site were developed by AGRIMED.

However, on the other hand, the TE states that the monitoring and evaluation system of the project is not in place yet (at the time of TE). Additionally, no technical and scientific reports were produced for dissemination and validation of the project’s knowledge products. And finally, in each country some degree of difficulty was encountered in gathering the full data either because in-availability or because it was not available at the scale required by Monitor.

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: Unable to Assess
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Very little information is given in the TE about the quality of project implementation; therefore, it is difficult to assess performance on this parameter.

The implementing agency of this project is UNEP. TE reports on the language constraints faced in project implementation. Three languages (Spanish, Portuguese and English) were used among project participants, but English was mandatory for reporting to UNEP. Unfortunately, English is not the first language of the countries where the project itself was developed, leading to a significant effort to translate (into and from English) several reports and documents, particularly at the non-governmental organization and local stakeholder level.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The project's original proponents were entities from four countries: the Center for Agriculture and Environment (Centro de Agricultura y Medio Ambiente -- AGRIMED) of the University of Chile and the National Committee for the Defense of Fauna and Flora (Comité Nacional pro-Defensa de la Flora y la Fauna -- CODEFF), both of Chile; the Esquel Group Foundation of Brazil; the Soils, Conservation and Restoration Department from the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries Secretariat (SEMARNAP) and RIOD-México from México; and NHI from the United States of America.

NHI coordinated project activities and administered the project budget, while the overall scientific and technical leadership was carried out by AGRIMED. According to the TE, a central administration by NHI was pivotal to foster the overall performance of the project, given the number of countries and entities involved. NHI periodically organized telephone conferences in order to promote exchange of opinions and experiences and to promote consensus regarding a variety of issues ranging from data gathering to editing of reports. Such activities, coupled with budget control, resulted in the smooth development of the project. However, it is the TE's opinion, that NHI should have organized more meetings in order to allow partners to become familiar with the use of the MONITOR software in a faster and more expedient way, as problems emerged with the use and implementation of the new software. Otherwise, NHI's role seems to have been crucial in securing and administering funds while keeping the pace of the project on time.

Therefore, the Quality of Execution is Satisfactory

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

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.

Not mentioned

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.

Not mentioned

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

A meeting took place in Brazil in June 2001 wherein methodologies were discussed, consensus was sought for the environmental and socio-economic variables required to feed the model and partners were familiarized with the software. By December 2001, AGRIMED delivered a manual containing a list of indicator variables and the procedures to assess them in order to evaluate the degree of desertification of a given site.

Several workshops were organized to inform and enhance local participation. Similarly, several workshops were organized in Brazil, Chile and Mexico to familiarize and train both project associates and Government officials in the application of the MONITOR software. Several pilot studies were implemented and data was collected for biophysical variables.

b) Governance

Not reported. This is mainly due to the delays in creating the software. The formal role of MONITOR in shaping public policy through its adoption is yet to be assessed (TE. Pg.6).

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.

Not mentioned.

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.

According to the TE, in spite of the fact that the project was developed mostly by academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, there is evidence that policy and decision-makers are adopting MONITOR. Besides organizations in Brazil, Chile and Mexico, staff of a project carried out in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Peru by the Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura and the Banco Interamericano del Desarrollo will use the software.

Further, AGRIMED has secured additional funds in order to refine the software and increase ease of use by end-users. Such refinements would ensure software adoption.

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 following lessons are given in the TE:

- (1) Desertification process could be captured in an analytical tool, which uses the "pressure-effect-impact" approach to organize variables into conceptual model to plan for sustainable development in drylands.

- (2) Although English is the official language of implementing agencies, it might be beneficial to use the country's native language in low ranking reports to save the time and effort spent by stakeholders in translation. Using the local language is also symbolic of diversity appreciation.
- (3) A project assumption was that Government partners and collaborators would remain constant in order to offer adequate continuity to the implementation of the project. The assumption proved wrong for mid- and higher-level officials in Brazil and Mexico, posing unexpected challenges and requiring extra time to inform and teach about the project philosophy and operation and delaying data gathering.
- (4) While changes in governmental personnel triggered delays, it also reinforced another project assumption that universities and non-governmental organizations are more suited to develop innovative approaches, as they are more flexible and possess a wider base of intellectual resources than Government institutions. Conversely, while university -based projects may be more stable, they also imply a lower capacity to influence national policy, as this is set forth and financed largely by Government officials and entities.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE cited several recommendations specific to the current project. The following is a summary of some recommendations of broad applicability:

- (1) Uncertainties rising from lack of data and complex interactions among physical and social data need to be addressed by adopting various approaches such as applying fuzzy logic in analytical models.
- (2) To distinguish different impact of land use practices on biodiversity, it is useful to classify the resources according to their uses in the databases.

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 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 report fails to assess adequately the achievement of the project objective. The report lacks both a discussion on how MONITOR is being used by agencies and analysis of its impact. Also the evidence on outcomes is sparse and lacks key supporting information. For instance the report could have explained better some of the reported outcomes and impacts such as the connection between the model and dryland management. The report notes that " there is strong evidence suggesting MONITOR can be sustained and have far-reaching impact", whereas it is not clear for the reader what that evidence is or how to measure the impact of the project.	U
To what extent is the report	There is no evidence presented to support the ratings and	U

internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	overall there is inconsistency between the discussion and the ratings on p.6 of the TE. The TE could have at least partially discuss how the model can catalyze data collection among national biodiversity agencies and make more rigorous assessment on how the model enhanced the capability to create regional monitoring system and improved the capacity to use modern technology. There is also no discussion on the potential use of the model, and no adequate explanation of IA ratings.	
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The report did not adequately assess all aspects of project sustainability nor did it discuss the project exit strategy. The TE for example does not mention how agencies identified in the project document have incorporate Monitor into their ongoing work. The report under the heading of project impact mentioned that there is evidence that policy and decision makers are adopting MONITOR, which would make the project sustainable. However, the report does not provide specific evidence this is actually taken place.	U
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The TE gives a list of some lessons, however with shortcomings. For example the TE states that "the pressure-state-impact approach proved a useful approach", while the approach itself and how it was used was not stated.	MU
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE does not include actual project costs, actual co-financing used or a final financial audit statement of project expenditures. There is no analysis and/or evidence on whether the project was cost effective or not	U
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The M&E system is briefly assessed. But once again there is no evidence on the quality of the system.	U
Overall TE Rating		U

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