

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2015

## 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3372	
GEF Agency project ID		3044	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		SIP: Capacity Building and Knowledge Management for Sustainable Land Management in Lesotho	
Country/Countries		Lesotho	
Region		Africa	
Focal area		Land Degradation	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		SP-2	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		PELUM; Serumula	
Private sector involvement		Not given	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		May 11, 2009	
Effectiveness date / project start		September 2009	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		January 2014	
Actual date of project completion		December 2014	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	.05	.05
	Co-financing	.03	Not given
GEF Project Grant		1.72	1.72
Co-financing	IA own	.3	.35
	Government	2.37	.5
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	2.03	.15 <sup>1</sup>
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		1.77	1.77
Total Co-financing		4.73	1
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		6.5	2.77
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		April 14, 2015	
Author of TE		Jessica Troni and Matsumunyane Molupe	
TER completion date		March 8, 2016	
TER prepared by		Laura Nissley	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Molly Watts	

<sup>1</sup> The TE refers to this as “leveraged” cash financing (pg. 77), however it seems appropriate to classify it as co-financing.

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Project Document does not directly state the Global Environmental Objectives of the project, however the goal of the project was: “Sustainable land management provides a strong base for sustainable development and ecosystem restoration in Lesotho to support better livelihoods and provide a range of global environmental benefits” (Project Document pg. 20). 60% of Lesotho’s land is comprised of rangeland that is under intense pressure due to heavy soil erosion and overgrazing. The premise of the project is that rangeland management sustainability is dependent on giving more control to the users of land, who make up poverty-affected communities in the mountain areas (TE pgs. 7-8).

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Project Document does not directly states the Development Objectives, however the project-level objective was as follows: “Supported by a knowledge management network, Lesotho begins to alleviate poverty, achieve more sustainable livelihoods and deliver global environmental benefits on the basis of enhanced local and national techniques, approaches, capacity and strategy for up scaling successful SLM” (Project Document pg. 20).

The expected outcomes of the project were as follows:

- Outcome 1: Proven, strengthened, participatory, replicable models and techniques that successfully overcome current institutional and governance barriers to SLM, strengthen country partnerships and integrate SLM into country programmes are ready for national implementation
- Outcome 2: Adequate local and national capacity for adapting and scaling up proven SLM models and techniques are in place
- Outcome 3: Lesotho adopts a programmatic approach to SLM - The enhanced awareness, dialogue, understanding and analysis of SLM best practice at resource user, community, local government, NGO and national government levels across the country, is reflected in strengthened, synergistic, multi-sectoral policies, strategies and programmes that achieve an integrated approach to natural resource management, and

- Outcome 4: Project managed effectively and results delivered within time and budget

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

There were no changes to the objectives during implementation, however the project design was revised in 2010 in order to reduce the scope of the project (TE pg. 31). It does not appear that project’s strategy was necessarily revised, but rather the scale of the activities was adjusted, as well as how progress toward achieving outcomes was measured (i.e. revision of indicators and targets).

## 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 <b>Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of “relevant” for this component of project outcomes, which this TER adjusts to **Satisfactory**. The project preparation grant, elaborated in 2005, was funded under GEF-3 Operational Program 15 Strategic Priority 1, *Targeted capacity building for sustainable land management*. The project outcomes, elaborated in 2008, were consistent with the GEF-4 Land Degradation Focal Area, specifically Strategic Program 2, *Supporting sustainable forest management in production landscapes* (Request for CEO Endorsement 2009, pg. 1). The project was also formulated under GEF TerrAfrica’s Strategic Investment Program for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SIP), contributing to the following results:

- Intermediate Result 1: *SLM applications on the ground are scaled up in country-defined priority agro-ecological zones*
- Intermediate Result 2: *Effective and inclusive dialogue and advocacy on SLM strategic priorities, enabling conditions, and delivery mechanisms established and ongoing, and*
- Intermediate Result 4: *Targeted knowledge generated and disseminated; monitoring and evaluation systems established and strengthened at all levels*

The project’s outcomes were consistent with Lesotho’s policies and plans regarding land degradation, particularly the 1989 National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), which identified rangeland

degradation as one of the country's key environmental problems. The project outcomes were also consistent with Lesotho's international obligations as a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (Project Document, pg. 18).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Moderately Satisfactory** for project effectiveness, and this TER concurs. Although some progress was made in establishing the necessary institutional arrangements and policies for Sustainable Land Management (SLM), the project fell short of achieving its development objective. At the time of the TE, the link between the SLM "models" developed by the project and the reversal of land degradation was inconclusive (TE pg. 91). Additionally, there were signs that poverty was increasing in the pilot project areas at the time of the TE, rather than decreasing. The TE notes that there was not sufficient evidence to determine whether the project prevented further decreases in income (TE pg. 85).

A summary of the project's achievements, by programmatic outcome, is provided below:

- **Outcome 1: Proven, strengthened, participatory, replicable models and techniques that successfully overcome current institutional and governance barriers to SLM, strengthen country partnerships and integrate SLM into country programmes are ready for national implementation**

Expected results<sup>2</sup> under this outcome included: (1) institutional arrangement for resource governance that builds on traditional systems and accommodates local authorities developed, (2) resource users identified and their groups formed, and (3) income generating activities identified, researched, and piloted. At the time of the evaluation, a District Project Implementation Forum (PIF) had been established, bringing together chiefs, community groups, and local councilors. The TE notes that while the PIF had the potential to grow into a substantial governance mechanism, there was no evidence that collaboration had increased or that there had been a shift in the balance of power between parties (i.e. the chiefs still controlled grazing) (TE pg. 52; 104). By April 2014, seven grazing associations had been developed, bringing 32,905 hectares under SLM, just under the targeted 40,000 hectares (TE pg. 51). However, the TE notes that the quality of SLM was questionable, and there was evidence that some grazing associations did not understand how the SLM model worked and that SLM activities were below what was expected (TE pg. 9; 103). Similarly, the income generating activities produced mixed results. On the positive side, community members pooled their own resources to expand investment opportunities. However, the TE reported many animals (pigs and chickens) died due to a lack of training and technical guidance (TE pg. 58).

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<sup>2</sup> Expected results are taken from the Midterm Evaluation (pgs. 34-40) and reflect the 2010 revisions to the results framework.

- **Outcome 2: Adequate local and national capacity for adapting and scaling up proven SLM models and techniques are in place**

Expected results under this outcome included: (1) training on SLM techniques and resource governance are delivered to local communities, technical officers and policy makers, and (2) lessons learnt from the project are made available nationally. The TE notes that actual results under this outcome fell significantly short of what was expected. Although trainings were delivered to local communities, there was no data available to indicate how many people were trained or the quality of the trainings. Moreover, there is no evidence that the trainings impacted the quality or scaling up of SLM activities. A SLM toolkit was produced in 2014, however there was no dissemination strategy in place (TE pgs. 58-59).

- **Outcome 3: Lesotho adopts a programmatic approach to SLM - The enhanced awareness, dialogue, understanding and analysis of SLM best practice at resource user, community, local government, NGO and national government levels across the country, is reflected in strengthened, synergistic, multi-sectoral policies, strategies and programmes that achieve an integrated approach to natural resource management.**

Expected results under this outcome included: (1) SLM is mainstreamed into relevant national sectoral policies, (2) national coordination mechanism for SLM established, (3) Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) for SLM formulated, and (4) Knowledge Management Framework and strategy formulated to disseminate lessons. At the time of the TE, SLM was integrated into two relevant national policies: Range Management Policy (2014) and Soil and Water Conservation (awaiting approval). However, SLM was not integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan (2012-2016), as the Plan was developed prior to the implementation of activities under this outcome. A Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) for SLM was formulated in 2013, although it had yet to be institutionalized by the time of the TE. The CSIF proposed national coordination mechanisms for SLM, but they had not yet been implemented. Additionally, a few knowledge products were developed by the project, however there was no strategic communications strategy (TE pgs. 62-63).

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: <b>Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Unsatisfactory** for project efficiency, and this TER concurs. The project experienced delays between the original project design and start-up which significantly impacted co-financing. The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) had originally committed \$2.03 million in co-financing for community council capacity building and decentralization initiatives. However, due to the time lapse, the GTZ project was out of sync with the UNDP-GEF project timeline, and therefore GTZ co-financing did not materialize (MTE pg. 18). The project also experienced moderate delays at project start-up due to challenges hiring a project manager, however the Inception Workshop proceeded on time (2013 PIR pg. 37). The TE also notes that staff turnover in key positions (i.e. M&E officer and project

officer) disrupted project implementation. However, the most significant delays in implementation resulted from a weak project design which required substantial revisions in 2010. The TE notes that the time spent revising indicators and targets negatively affected project delivery and the achievement of project outcomes. The project received a one-year extension, however there was not enough time to complete key results, such as institutionalizing the Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) for SLM (pgs. 68-69).

The TE also notes that project management expenditures were significantly higher than expected (48%), largely due to distance between the pilot sites and the project management office, which was located in Maseru. Higher project management expenditures affected the achievement of programmatic outcomes, particularly regarding capacity building initiatives under Outcome 2, where expenditures were 65% lower than expected (TE pgs. 75-76).

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: <b>Moderately Likely</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Moderately Likely** for project sustainability, and this TER concurs. Overall, risks to project outcomes appear to be moderate, although it is unclear the role environmental risks play in long-term sustainability.

**Financial Resources**

This TER provides a rating of **Moderately Likely** for the sustainability of financial resources. SLM was not integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan (2012-2016), which would have ensured a dedicated budget for SLM, however the TE does note that there is potential to mainstream SLM into the next iteration (pg. 62). The TE also notes that if staff and resources were decentralized, costs for maintaining project outcomes could be low (pg. 82). Although income generating projects produced mixed results, in some communities beneficiaries pooled their own resources to expand investment opportunities which should contribute toward sustainability (TE pg. 9).

**Sociopolitical**

This TER provides a rating of **Moderately Likely** for sociopolitical sustainability. The TE notes that country ownership over project outcomes was strong, and communities were actively promoting and expanding the grazing associations. However, the TE notes that chiefs needed to have a more defined role in the process, as they control grazing (pg. 82).

**Institutional Frameworks and Governance**

This TER provides a rating of **Moderately Likely** for the sustainability of institutional frameworks and governance. The project contributed to the development of key national policies which integrate SLM (i.e. Range Management Policy and Soil and Water Conservation), in addition to a draft Country

Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF). The TE notes however, that if there are not immediate follow-up activities, there is a risk that the CSIF will not be institutionalized (TE pg. 92). The TE also notes that a coordination mechanism for SLM (proposed under the CSIF) had not emerged by project end, undermining institutional sustainability (TE pg. 81).

## **Environmental**

This TER is unable to assess the environmental risks associated with project sustainability. The Project Document assumed that the improved governance of communal rangelands would contribute to environmental sustainability. As the TE notes, it is unclear whether an improved governance model is being implemented in the seven grazing associations supported by the project, so it is difficult to determine environmental sustainability. The TE also notes that there are likely other factors influencing land degradation but does not elaborate (pg. 81).

## **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?

Actual co-financing was significantly lower than expected, with only \$1 million of the expected \$4.73 million materializing by the end of the project. The difference in co-financing can be attributed to the withdrawal of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) from the project, which had committed \$2.03 million for community council capacity building and decentralization initiatives. The Government of Lesotho also provided less co-financing than anticipated, although it did finance income-generating activities (TE pg. 76).

UNDP provided \$50,000 more than anticipated, largely to finance project activities in the final year of the project once the GEF budget had been extinguished (2014 PIR pg. 37). The project also leveraged additional cash financing from other partners (GEF Small Grants Program, local communities, NEPAD, and the UNCCD Global Mechanism) that was not anticipated in the Project Document. However, the additional cash financing (\$.15 million) was not enough to make up the difference between the expected and actual co-financing. The TE does not indicate if lower than expected co-financing impacted project outcomes or sustainability.

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 experienced moderate delays at project start-up due to challenges hiring a project manager, although this did not prevent the Inception Workshop from proceeding on time (2013 PIR pg. 37). Staff turnover in key positions (i.e. M&E officer and project officer) disrupted project implementation,

although the most significant delays were a result of revisions to the project design in 2010. The TE notes that the time spent revising indicators and targets negatively affected project delivery and the achievement of project outcomes. The project received a one-year extension, however there was not enough time to complete key results, such as institutionalizing the Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) for SLM (pgs. 68-69).

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:

Country ownership was moderate throughout the life of the project. The Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation (MFLR) acted as executing agency, and the Government of Lesotho provided co-financing, although it was lower than expected. The Government also played a key role in formulating two relevant national policies: Range Management Policy (2014) and Soil and Water Conservation (awaiting approval), in addition to the Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) for SLM (2013). Once institutionalized, these policies will contribute to creating an enabling environment for the sustainability of project outcomes.

## 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: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Unsatisfactory** for M&E design at entry, which this TER upgrades to **Moderately Unsatisfactory**. The TE notes that overall, the results framework did not reflect the project’s underlying theory of change (pg. 87). In other words, it was unclear how the proposed outputs would affect change at the outcome level, and how the outcomes, taken together, would contribute to the overall objective of the project. As a result, the TE notes that the indicators identified at the design stage were largely inappropriate (pg. 43). Additionally, there were too many objective and outcome-level indicators, and many were not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely). For example, “increase in biological productivity of the land,” and “households in pilot areas benefit from income-generating activities,” are neither specific nor measurable. There is no indication as to what constitutes “productivity” or “benefit,” and how this would be quantified. The TE also notes that the targets set by the project were largely unrealistic and unachievable. For example, the Project Document



set targets of a 25% increase in biological productivity and a 50% increase above the socio-economic baseline score (pg. 86).

The Project Document does however, include a general M&E plan and an appropriate budget for M&E activities. The M&E plan includes M&E activities, such as the monitoring of performance indicators, reporting, periodic and annual reviews, and an external midterm and final evaluation. The M&E plan also indicated the responsible parties, budget, and timeframe for each M&E activity (PD pg. 38).

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Moderately Unsatisfactory** for M&E implementation, and this TER concurs. Weaknesses in the project’s results framework were noted during the inception workshop, and in late 2010 an M&E consultant was hired to revise the indicators and targets. The TE notes that the revision process was time-consuming and significantly affected project delivery. On one hand, the number of indicators was more manageable and more appropriate given the scope and scale of the project. On the other hand, however many of the new indicators and targets also lacked specificity. For example, the target for Indicator 1.2 was “By the end of project year three, at least one community Natural Resource Management institution has been created with devolution of management functioning and [is] institutionally robust.” Again, it is unclear what constitutes “devolution of management” and “institutionally robust,” and how either of these aspects would be measured (TE pg. 104). The TE also notes that while a lot of attention was paid to revising indicators and targets, the project team failed to address the underlying flaws in the project’s logic model (pgs. 68-69). This contributed to an overall lack of clarity around what the project achieved. It should also be noted that the project cycled through three M&E officers and the Midterm Evaluation was not completed until 2013, which did not leave enough time to implement the recommendations (TE pg. 68; 70).

## 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.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Moderately Satisfactory** for quality of project implementation, which this TER downgrades to **Moderately Unsatisfactory**. As the TE notes, the project design was overly ambitious given the timeframe and budget (pg. 31). Efforts were taken in the first year of implementation to reduce the scope of the project, however this process was time consuming and affected project delivery. Additionally, the revisions were limited to indicator and target development, and did not adequately address the flaws in the project's overall strategy (TE pg. 68). The TE also noted that UNDP's supervision over project implementation was limited, particularly regarding financial oversight. Project management expenditures were significantly higher than expected throughout the life of the project and yet this was not flagged by UNDP (TE pg. 73). The 2014 PIR noted that the UNDP Country Office had to infuse significant funds into the project's budget in order to complete activities in the final year (pg. 37).<sup>3</sup>

The TE does note one instance where UNDP's technical assistance was instrumental in moving the project forward. UNDP deployed a conflict management specialist to diffuse tensions between community leaders following the killing of a chief. Without UNDP's intervention it is possible that activities in that area would have been at significant risk (TE pg. 73).

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE provides a rating of **Moderately Unsatisfactory** for quality of project execution, which this TER downgrades to **Unsatisfactory**. The executing agency for the project was the Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation (MFLR). The Project Management Unit (PMU) was situated within the Department of

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<sup>3</sup> The 2014 PIR indicates that UNDP provided an additional \$500,000 to complete activities (pg. 37). This figure is not congruent with what is reported in the TE. The TE does note that UNDP leveraged an additional \$50,000 in cash financing (pg. 77), so it is possible the figure reported in the 2014 PIR was simply a typo.

Range Resources Management (DRRM) in the MFLR. Overall, there were weaknesses in the management structure established for the project. The PMU lacked a focal point within the MFLR and therefore struggled to engage MFLR staff in the project's implementation (TE pg. 72). The PMU did partner with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) to execute activities related to income generation, however there were no formalized structures for collaboration. The TE notes that as a result, service delivery to communities was not coordinated, which affected the achievement of project results (pg. 70). The Project Steering Committee met on a regular, quarterly basis throughout the life of the project, however the meetings were not well attended outside of MFLR and UNDP staff (TE pg. 68). A number of other issues plagued project execution which justify an **Unsatisfactory** rating, such as high staff turnover, lack of financial discipline, and weak data collection and information management (TE pg. 72).

## 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 TE notes that by April 2014, 32,905 hectares had been brought under sustainable land management, although the TE was unable to determine the quality of the SLM activities undertaken (pg. 9; 51). The TE also notes that forage production increased between 10% and 12% between 2010 and 2014, with the highest changes in areas that lack functional grazing associations. The TE therefore concluded that there did not seem to be a relationship between these changes and the SLM interventions (pg. 83).

The TE also noted that vegetation cover had also increased, ranging from 65-84.7%, compared to 45.5-77% in 2010. The TE notes that this indicates high stability and a low level of land degradation. The Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation (MFLR) attributed this change to a number of factors: development of new grazing management systems, rangeland rehabilitation measures, and deferred grazing (TE pg. 84).

In terms of species composition on the other hand, the density of desirable perennial plants ("decreasers") decreased between 2010 and 2014, and the density of undesirables ("invaders") increased. The TE notes that this could be a result of excessive grazing which reduces or

removes “decreasers” (pgs. 84-85). Again, however, the TE was not able to establish if or how project activities contributed to these changes.

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 TE notes that the average income in the pilot areas decreased between 2010 and 2014. The TE notes that it was impossible to determine whether the project activities prevented the average income from declining further (TE pg. 85).

The TE does cite some evidence of improved working relationships between the local chiefs and community councilors in some pilot areas as a result of working together in the grazing associations (TE pg. 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

At the time of the TE, seven grazing associations had been developed (TE pg. 51). Additionally, local community members, technical officers and policy makers were trained on SLM techniques and resource governance. However, the TE was unable to determine the quality of these trainings and whether they resulted in a change in capacity (TE pg. 58).

b) Governance

At the time of the TE, two new national policies had been formulated: Range Management Policy (2014) and Soil and Water Conservation (awaiting approval), in addition to the Country Strategic Investment Framework (CSIF) for SLM (2013) (TE pgs. 62-63).

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.

The TE notes that some communities pooled their resources to continue income-generating activities after project support had ended, which was an unintended impact of the project (TE pg. 9).

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 TE does not indicate any GED initiatives that had been adopted at scale by the time of the TE.

## 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 provides the following lessons learned (pgs. 99-101):

- The basis for project design should be a theory of change so that a clear strategy for connecting and sequencing outputs to deliver the intended targets is developed. This requires understanding clearly the policy questions that the project needs to address at the correct level of intervention. This project set out to address the land degradation problem via the mechanism of community-owned range management processes, but the problems with the currently operating systems were never really identified preventing the emergence of a unified concept and the effective targeting of the project resources. The lack of a properly thought out concept was one of the main reasons for the underachievement of the project.
- Using existing information will help to design better projects and avoid re-design once implementation starts, which is costly in management time. If design is based on experience, identifying SMART [Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely] indicators should be easy to do. For example, harsh winters and difficult terrain are known quantities in Lesotho, and there is documented evidence that it takes a minimum of three years to set up a GA [Grazing Association], which experience on this project supports. Benchmarks for output delivery had already been set by other projects, for example what it costs to support 20,000 hectares of land under SLM [sustainable land management]. These were known quantities yet the project design was wildly optimistic in the way it had set its targets, setting up the project to fail.
- Change processes are likely to entail backward as well as forward movements, it takes time but the trajectory may eventually be one of progress. Patient investment is needed as well as a commitment for continuous support and supervision. Though it is likely to take specialist skills such as conflict management, much can be done to avoid conflict in the first place by designing an effective consultative process. For example, experiences in Lesotho show that trainings that bring together different parties (Chiefs, Communities including herders, Community Councilors) and are carried out in a participatory manner can play a vital role in promoting coordination, mutual understanding and improving community relations.
- The IGAs [income generating activities] seem to have been instrumental in promoting community cohesion and may therefore be considered as an integral part of a community-based range management strategy. Communities have shown a willingness and ability to pool funds together to expand or re-start (where previously efforts had failed) the IGAs, showing that lack of credit need not be a barrier to starting up small enterprises. The bigger immediate barrier is technical know-how and management skills, as well as the need for integrated service delivery

on veterinary services. For long-term growth potential, access to credit and markets will be a constraint that will need attention.

- The model was widened in 2013 to include conservation agriculture (CA) for some communities. Given the emerging importance of agriculture in the rangelands and its influence on environmental system dynamics, it seems to make sense to include it in future range management schemes.
- It is well understood that communities need to see benefits accruing to them from their investment of time in group range management schemes. But whether the group management schemes work on the basis of voluntary time is also a question of relative benefits, recognizing that there is an opportunity cost of time. Time spent on brush control is less time spent growing food for subsistence or time spent on income generating activities. There are other models under implementation, such as the cash for work scheme for herder boys (a figure of the equivalent of \$83 for 20 days was mentioned) and the range rider model (voluntary). These alternatives should be monitored to assess the extent of their effectiveness in brush control, as well as any other benefits which may arise.
- The project demonstrates that an effective capacity building approach for changing practice is the interchange between farmers. Study tours between villages were perceived by farmers interviewed as most effective for learning and sharing new technologies and innovations for changing their current practices and for the community organization work. These should be encouraged and supported by MFLR [Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation].
- The management team was too thinly spread and this negatively affected project results. For half of the project life, there was only one PM [project manager] to lead the management, deal with the routine logistical issues and coordinate the technical aspects of the project. A technical adviser working on a project that is trying to pilot innovations and promote a learning process is essential. Technical inputs are required for guiding the project strategy, to guide consultants producing technical reports, and connect the technical information to the implementation process. Specialist technical input would free up time for the project manager to manage. Implementation would also have worked better had a policy specialist been recruited to provide direction to the M & E (from a policy needs perspective), strategic communications, and the training program which are all means to achieving policy shifts. Getting an adequate management team in place to cover all bases may be seen as costly, but with the right people in place, it is an investment in project success.
- Implementation would have worked better had it been based on a meaningful partnership model, delegating authority to competent agencies within and outside the private sector where it makes sense to (i.e. where the expertise and experience lies). This would also have incentivized more meaningful participation of other ministries in the PSC meetings. The role of

government in this area of work is best served in a facilitative and supervisory role, setting standards, coordinating and promoting dialogue.

- Work to implement the GA system should be carried out from the field in order to make the funds go further and crucially, to provide a better service to communities. Delays in placing of Government extension staff in the project area to train and guide the association members was a challenge, and was acknowledged in project reports as being an oversight in the design of the project which ultimately affected implementation progress. This can be seen clearest in what must be concluded to be the woeful performance of the water harvesting tanks for irrigation, though the contributing factor was that the appropriate partner, MoAFS [Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security], was not engaged to lead on this activity, ultimately sealing the fate of this activity.
- The MTE [Midterm Evaluation] was carried too late to maximize its utility to the project. The MTE was initiated at mid-point (in May 2012) but was not completed until February 2013, which left the project with less than a year to implement the recommendations. With a further seven months to complete a technical audit, this left less than 4 months to implement the recommendations (according to original closure timing) and a fraction of the budget remaining. MTEs are more than a compliance requirement, they can be very helpful in steering the project to help it reach its objective, but they need to be initiated well in advance. The leakage of funds to pay for a high level of per diem rates (linked to the poor decision to implement from Maseru) should have triggered the MTE much sooner.
- The land degradation issue in Lesotho needs a sustained, longer-term effort that approaches the problem from an integrated systems perspective. This means that it requires the effective inputs from a multi-disciplinary team of implementing partners to work in their respective expertise and ideas, calling for effective coordination. The disciplines that SLM needs to cover include agriculture, livestock management, veterinary services, energy, water, marketing, economics, institutional development, training, and transport. This implies the need for larger programmatic projects. Small budgets can still be useful but should be focused on delivering results in niche areas with working connections to the bigger whole.

## 9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE provides the following recommendations (pgs. 94-98):

Promoting better coordination and collaboration between ministries

1. Constitute a Strategic Investment Program Board. It is clear that better ways must be found to engage other ministries for cross-government learning and strengthened policy making. The CSIF's [Country SLM Investment Framework] primary recommendation is to legally establish a Program Investment Board as the key inter-sectoral coordination mechanism at central government level. Competitive recruitment processes could be used to identify seconded staff



from a range of ministries, with the aim of developing a cross-ministerial team for joint-working, better coordination and leadership. An additional feature would be to work together with the Ministry of Economic Development & Planning, with the latter in a leadership, convening role and the SLM Board in a Secretariat function, to enable policy and investment linkages of SLM to wider economic planning, for example, in issues around market access.

2. Establish a programmatic approach to dual-focused project steering committee meetings. This would be another way to strengthen cross-government collaboration and learning on SLM-relevant initiatives. Ministries would come together to discuss the strategy, intended results, implementation challenges and possible solutions for a range of projects. Attendance would be incentivized through opportunities for learning and cross learning. Expert speakers could be invited. New proposals could be discussed. In essence, day 1 would be dedicated to a results-based substantive discussion. Separate, management/logistical discussions could be taken on a separate day by the project Implementing Partner. The results-based discussion could conceivably be convened by the SLM investment board and/or the Ministry of Economic Development and Planning.
3. Incentivizing ministry staff to work with the project through non-monetary incentives, given the limitations present in civil service salary pay-scales and difference in relation to private sector market rates. These non-market incentives could be especially important to offer as a reward to technical staff willing to move to the field for a period of time. These non-monetary incentives could, for example be:
  - a. Good standard of accommodation in the field.
  - b. Professional learning. If this could be applied to the project, the project officer gets a double reward with regards to an updated qualification plus applied work experience. Examples could be GIS training, monitoring and evaluation; project management, contract management and so on.
  - c. Exposure and learning opportunities through connections to international conferences. This could be facilitated through research links to higher learning institutions.

This strategy should be considered a sustainability strategy as institutional support makes or breaks a project. Therefore, it would be justifiable to put funds and time aside (3 to 6 months) for this kind of professionalization. The issue of attrition of well qualified staff from government is a real one but that should not matter if the talent stays in the country.

4. Consider how ministry staff time is used. A greater de-concentration of ministry staff would deliver better support services to communities and help to support continuation of these GAs. Given obvious limitations in numbers of staff available, more time to institutional support would mean less time to the production of technical reports, which can be contracted out to the private sector. Sub-contracting to the private sector on issues of construction is likely to work better based on the principle of payment on delivery (and where requirements for apprenticeships can be written into the contract). This essentially means a change of role to a

more facilitative, supervisory role, which is likely to need skills development, for example on conflict management and contract management skills.

5. Develop training standards for communities. This would comprise standardized training materials, Standard Operating Principles for organizing these such as where best to hold the training events, how to develop a blended service mix of formal training and farmer-to-farmer learning and evaluation methodologies.
6. Use the CSIF as a platform to mainstream SLM in the next iteration of the National Strategic Development Plan, which is due to end in 2016/7. The starting point would be putting in place a process for institutional coordination, for which there are two possibilities and one recommendation in the CSIF. In addition, the CSIF contains a schedule of activities, some of which could serve to build awareness and political will to support the new National Range Resources Management Policy.
7. Policy needs should frame the efforts on knowledge management and project data monitoring. This needs attention from the very start. What are the needs and what is the strategy? It is suggested that sub-contracting responsibility for managing this work to a policy specialist would be necessary in order to draw in the necessary expertise and in order for the policy component to receive the necessary attention from the start. This would enable a stronger link to be made between detailed design and field implementation, results and policy processes, thereby helping to maximize the project's relevance to GoL [Government of Lesotho]. This work stream would also provide a useful framework for the monitoring system (see recommendation below), which should include metrics for capacity development. It is common for Parliamentarians to be dropped from the project focus in relation to the main project priorities because of time constraints, they are an important group to factor into a policy engagement strategy because of their role in progressing the democratic principle and to create national visibility and debate for SLM. Getting an adequate management team in place from the start is an investment in project success.
8. Structure the monitoring exercise from the point of view of the policy questions that need answering in order keep the exercise contained, focused and cost effective. For example, is the governance model working in achieving a sustainable model for rangeland management and what would be the indicators to measure this (see point 6 above). What are the most cost-effective ways of halting soil erosion and rehabilitating gullies? Another policy question of relevance could be the use of trees for soil stabilization as well as providing other co-benefits such as fruit production, fuel wood and shelter, paying due regard to the tree species in question and possible impacts on water resources. The effect of climate change on rangeland condition as well as the effectiveness of range management systems in the fact of this changing risk should be included.

Monitoring would also need to shed light on the underlying theory of change and monitoring the assumptions underlying it. For example, will grazing fees lead to improved quality of rangelands? Do income generating activities improve rangeland quality and justify the investment from this angle or any other? Will paid incentives be needed for communities to spend time on brush control? The IGAs were seen by some as a compensation to engage in SLM activities – is the causal link justified by the evidence? Will paid incentives be desirable from the point of view other rangeland management functions such as condition monitoring? The role of gender differences and different impacts on women and men should be central line of enquiry given the wide gender disparity in Lesotho.

The UNCCD [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification] indicator monitoring study estimated the costs of sampling UNCCD indicators (land cover, grazing capacity, livestock numbers, plant and animal biodiversity, aridity index, carbon stocks above and below ground, land under SLM and population below the poverty line) as being M14, 250.000 per sampling occasion for an area of 50km assuming 3 to 4 members in a team working for 28 days average per year. This is therefore a costly exercise. Experimenting with different models such as the range riders' concept would be useful in finding cost-effective ways of carrying out the monitoring. The monitoring system developed could try as far as possible to involve communities. It should be approached from an experimental perspective to keep the enquiry objective and open to all ideas.

9. Develop evaluative case studies on the different models under operation and success factors, in order to inform policy decisions on the choice of implementation strategies regarding range management. Successful governance models have already been developed and are being implemented, such as in LHDA [Lesotho Highlands Development Authority] project. An evaluative case study approach to exploring why some rangeland management systems work well and others do not would be an important input into designing future initiatives as well as identifying key indicators to measure progress such as membership numbers. Given the wide gender disparities, the different roles of men and women and impacts on men and women should be explored.
10. Support the continuation of the district-level project implementation forums which have had good feedback in bringing all relevant parties together. These could be an important mechanism to provide communities with an additional avenue for voice and accountability and to provide a platform for Community Councilors to begin to build a profile. Councilors should be supported to use these fora to begin the process of developing local development plans as well as well as to enforce the newly approved Rangeland Management policy. These could be important mechanisms to begin carving out new roles for chiefs. Empowering communities may ultimately not be sufficient to break away from the traditional model without a parallel effort to build local government authority and mandate on local development planning processes.

11. Develop an engagement strategy with the Chiefs since they are a critical part of the range management system while the new system of democratic governance phases in, which could be a 10 year medium term prospect. Even with a well- functioning local government system, it will be important to carve out a niche role for the chiefs as they are likely to continue commanding the loyalty of the communities. It is likely that more support for the changing development planning system can be secured from the Chiefs if they see themselves as moving with the change, rather than being left behind.
12. Community empowerment is part of the solution. Farmer to farmer learning blended with more conventional training should be continued because it is through capacity development that faith in alternative management methods, and in particular quantitative measurements of environmental conditions can be accepted as the basis for range management planning. In addition, motivation to participate in monitoring exercises can be fostered. Vandalism rates may decline if communities see the range management efforts as something to benefit all. IGAs may have more value in the empowerment sense (in the short-term) than in relation to reducing pressure on the resources. Supporting CSOs and NGOs would be central to this, perhaps by engaging them in areas where they are already working.
13. Develop cost-output benchmarks that can be used for budget planning and control. For example, how much institutional support (this needs definition) is needed to get a GA working well (this needs definition)? What is the cost of monitoring of 10 hectares of rangeland? What is the cost of carrying out 1 hectare brush control comparing different alternatives? A better understanding of costs (and benefits) of different implementation strategies can inform project design and ultimately lead to better value for money implementation as well as better results.
14. Training work streams should be sub-contracted to professional training organizations, working closely to develop the materials and the training plan, possibly by establishing a partnership with the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration. By professionalizing the task, it would be possible to establish quality standards and to develop methodologies to measure capacity development.

## 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's assessment of outcomes and impacts was complete, comprehensive, and systematic. It would have been helpful if the report had elaborated further on the expected results of the project. The report's assessment of project relevance and efficiency was satisfactory.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The evidence presented is complete and convincing, and the ratings provided are well-substantiated.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The report adequately assesses project sustainability.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned and recommendations are supported by the evidence provided and are very comprehensive.	HS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The report includes actual project costs and actual co-financing used. It is a little confusing that the report differentiates between "cash leveraged" and "co-financing."	MS
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report adequately assesses both M&E design and implementation.	S
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>S</b>

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

Midterm Evaluation (2013); Request for CEO Endorsement (2009)