

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2014

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		356	
GEF Agency project ID		342	
GEF Replenishment Phase		Pilot Phase	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Restoration of Highly Degraded and Threatened Native Forest in Mauritius	
Country/Countries		Mauritius	
Region		AFR	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP3 Forest Ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		National Parks and Conservation Service, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Secondary executing agency (MWF is the project manager)	
Private sector involvement		Through consultations	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		June 15, 1995 (Date shown is UNDP date of approval)	
Effectiveness date / project start		June 19, 1995	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		June 14, 1998	
Actual date of project completion		June 14, 1998	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		0.20	0.20
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government		
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		0.20	0.20
Total Co-financing			
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		0.20	0.20
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		June 1, 1999	
TE submission date			
Author of TE		Simon Fowler	
TER completion date		September 2014	
TER prepared by		Daniel Nogueira-Budny	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Joshua Schneck	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	N/A	N/R	N/R	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	N/R	N/R	U/A
M&E Design	N/A	N/R	N/R	MU
M&E Implementation	N/A	N/R	N/R	U
Quality of Implementation	N/A	N/R	N/R	MU
Quality of Execution	N/A	N/R	N/R	MU
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	-	-	-	MU

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objectives, as described in the PD, is to restore a large plot of native forest in Black River Gorges National Park of Mauritius that has been degraded by invasive exotic plants and animal species. Mauritius possesses one of the most diverse floras in the world; indeed, this isolated island has evolved a unique flora and fauna with a high proportion of endemic species found nowhere else in the world. However, it also has one of the most threatened plant species, particularly due to degradation by exotic flora and fauna. PD states that not acting to halt the spread of these exotic species would likely lead to the extinction of a number of indigenous flora and fauna, a significant loss to the global community due to the global significance of the island nation's biodiversity.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

As stated in the Project Document, the project's Development Objectives are as follows:

- To develop, through consultation with top restoration ecologists, an effective means of controlling invasive plants that are threatening the native forests; conduct experiments to determine the best treatment
- To document the biological diversity of the degraded native ecosystem and monitor the response of the biodiversity to the control measures adopted
- To restore a plot (at least 5 Ha) of highly degraded native forest in the Black River Gorges National Park to its original state

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

There were **no** changes to the GEOs or Dos throughout implementation. However, according to the UNDP Mission Report – Mauritius (Hough 1998), as cited in the project's ICR, the emphasis of the project adjusted slightly to focus more on the baseline survey and experimental testing of weeding methods rather than the restoration itself, due to delays and design/implementation issues with third objective.

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 project was relevant to both the GEF and National priorities at the time of approval. Consistent with OP3 – Forest ecosystems – the project aims to document the status of a degraded forest, determine effective treatments to rid it out invasive weeds, and help restore a plot of forest land to its original state. Moreover, the project works to conserve both the highly endangered plants as well as the threatened habitat types in which they exist, and to restore critical habitats for some of the most highly endangered species of birds that exist in the world today. For Mauritius, the project serves to relieve the most significant pressures on Mauritius’s remnant upland native forest, to restore this endangered habitat through ex-situ propagation of threatened and endangered plants, to recreate appropriate micro-climactic conditions in the forest, and to reintroduce native plants and birds into the forest.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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Project effectiveness is rated as moderately satisfactory, as, while two objectives were thoroughly achieved, the third was only partially achieved. Nonetheless, the project was seen as being of excellent quality overall. Incomplete achievement of the three objectives is partially explainable through weakness in project design: i.e., changing the project from five to three years, and budget limitations. Achievement and challenges under the three stated project objectives are as follows:

1. *To develop control measures against invasive exotic plants* – This objective was achieved. However, the project design only looked at invasive plants, not animals. Experimental trials are underway, after long delays.
2. *To assess the native biodiversity and build capacity in biodiversity assessment and monitoring* – This objective was fully achieved, albeit in a longer time period than expected. Training and capacity building was considered excellent. Surveying was successful as well.
3. *To restore a pilot degraded ecosystem to its original state as far as possible with the involvement of youth groups* – This objective was only partially achieved; however, to be

fair, it would have required a far longer time frame than three years. It is near impossible for such a long-term objective to be achieved in the short time frame offered by the project, an issue that should have been addressed during the design stage of the project. There were unspecified major issues with the youth groups, owing largely due to their inexperience and the need for highly skilled labor to assist with the complicated weeding. Additionally, two deer were accidentally fenced in and not removed for most of the project duration; the enclosed deer were eventually shot, but not before eating much of the re-introduced plants. Numerous bureaucratic and technical delays and difficulties hampered the activities' effectiveness. Furthermore, a full biodiversity monitoring system was never devised.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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In general, the project was highly cost-effective, generating substantial outputs while utilizing a relatively small amount of GEF funding. However, the limited amount of project funding contributed to design and implementation problems. The project's component activities all began and ran behind schedule. Certain activities were deemed inappropriate or poorly designed, allocated funds were transferred from one activity to another, etc. The National government had to mobilize extra resources to help fund the weeding teams; furthermore, additional inputs were provided from other sources (university staff and students, local NGO staff and volunteers, etc). Additionally, the use of local, specialist consultants proved to be particularly cost-ineffective: continuous monthly retainers were paid to some of them, yet there was little monitoring of their outputs relative to the outputs specified in the signed contracts.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Unable to Assess
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No rating is provided for overall sustainability of project outcomes, since the sustainability of its outcomes is contingent on funding that has yet to be committed, but TE does not make any assessment of whether funding is forthcoming. Sustainability is assessed along the following four dimensions:

- a) *Environmental sustainability (U/A)* – ICR provides insufficient information to provide a rating on environmental risks to sustainability.
- b) *Financial sustainability (U/A)* – ICR provides insufficient information to provide a rating on financial risks to sustainability.
- c) *Institutional sustainability (L)* – ICR states that project was successful in developing improved weeding methods that are more cost-effective and efficacious; knowledge remains within Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources' National Parks and Conservation Service.
- d) *Socio-Political sustainability (L)* – There appears to be a general consensus of the benefit of the project and the need to preserve country's endangered biodiversity. Indeed, ICR states that the government's commitment appears to be increasing over

time, as evidenced by the establishment of the National Park, recent increases in staff, and the use of the Conservation Fund.

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?

Expected co-financing, which all materialized, came mostly in kind: staff hours from national government, local NGO, and university. The government was forced to draw upon Conservation Fund to help fund weeding activity, which was more complicated and costly than expected. Given the relatively small amount of the UNDP loan, in kind co-financing from the government, local NGO, and university (amount, listed in local currency, found in PD pp 19-22) was crucial to achieving the project's outcomes and 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?

There were numerous delays in project implementation and completion at every stage. Workshop (Activity 1.1.1) was delayed until biodiversity surveys were (mostly) complete. The experiments, which should have taken place shortly after the Sept 1997 workshop, only began in April 1999, due to an unclear understanding of who would carry out the weeding, as well as the realization that youth groups were inappropriate to carry out this activity. A bureaucratic issue delayed the granting of permission to remove/kill two deer that were accidentally fenced into the plot (and eating the re-introduced plants). The delays may not have affected the project's end outcomes and sustainability; however, they prevented the project from achieving everything it set out to do within the allotted time (weed experiments were ongoing at time of ICR, etc).

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:

PD and ICR do not directly mention country ownership. Nevertheless, country ownership appeared to be strong, given the fact that the executing agency was the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources' National Parks and Conservation Service, as well as the fact that the government tapped its Conservation Fund in order to cover unplanned costs.

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately

Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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Design of this project’s M&E system is rated moderately unsatisfactory because of the absence of indicators and/or targets in the project design. There is no way to assess whether project was on track in achieving five listed outputs, or whether said outputs were achieved upon completion of project. While an Evaluation Mission was planned and funded for (US\$10,000), for one week at the end of the second year, there were no monitoring systems put into place. Annex 1 (Workplan) of the PD sets out all of the activities to be completed over the project’s three year period; however, the Monitoring activity (3.2.1) referred to the monitoring of biodiversity within the plot, not to monitoring of the project to see whether it is on track to achieving its intended objectives. The PD does mention in passing, in Annex 2 (Terms of Reference for Technical Advisory Committee), that the Technical Advisory Committee, which was to hold meetings every three months, would, among other things, 1) ensure that the implementation of the project conforms to the project document, and 2) monitor the progress of the project on a regular basis. However, no explanation of this system was provided.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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While the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) did meet approximately every three months, it does not appear that it engaged in monitoring or evaluation work. Overall, implementation of M&E systems were unsatisfactory. The work of the TAC was hampered by poor communication between the local NGO (MWF) and the Committee chairman, the Director of Mauritius’ National Parks and Conservation Service; furthermore, most Committee members did not have an adequate understanding or knowledge of the objectives and proposed outputs of the project, according to the ICR cf. p 14). One reason for the poor communication was due to the lack of a project manager at the local NGO (as originally specified in the first UNDP/GEF proposal), due to lack of funding. Additionally, there was no mid-term evaluation, despite the allotment of funding for said activity. The UDP’s Tripartite Review (Hough, 1998) identified several key problems and uncertainties and produced a revised set of outputs with a new timetable for the remaining 10 months of the project; however, it is unclear whether those revisions were ever taken into account.

It should be noted that the Biodiversity Training Workshop component (Activity 2.1.1) stood out for its high level of quality evaluation. Completed evaluation forms from students and attendees were analyzed by the UNDP Office in Port Louis and resulting recommendations were followed up in the subsequent year. Years 2 and 3 workshops were successful, as witnessed by an increased number of participants as well as demand for further expansion.

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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TE states that the project was characterized by poor design and a general lack of supervision. Implementing agency should have scaled back activities and objectives, given limited resources and, particular, time frame. Although certain activities did end up being well implemented, despite preventable delays, overall the project was poorly designed and implemented.. The project's M&E design was moderately unsatisfactory, and implementation of such systems proved even worse, leading to poor project implementation. The mid-year evaluation never took place, Committee meetings were not seen as effective, external consultants were not supervised and their outputs were never monitored, and a lack of a project manager from the local NGO meant that the project was not well supervised. Local NGO did not have the appropriate experience or supervisory skills and UNDP did not do enough to address these deficiencies.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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Execution of certain activities, namely those related to the first two objectives (activities related to the development of control measures and biodiversity assessment) were well done; however, the third objective (restoration) was poorly executed and even remained unfinished at the end of the project. In particular, failure to address in a timely manner the penned-in deer undermined the re-introduction of native flora activity. Inappropriate youth participation, mentioned earlier, led to poor weeding execution, until inexperienced weeders were replaced by more highly skilled ones. A key issue in the project's poor execution seemed to be the local NGO's poor management skills and its failure to communicate adequately with the executing government agency.

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.

ICR reported a number of positive short-term and long-term environmental changes resulting from the project. The project's specialist workshop and experimental trials on new weeding methods appears to have had a significant environmental change by helping establish a cost-effective and appropriate method for weeding large areas. Furthermore, biodiversity surveys post-weeding have demonstrated the benefit to many taxa of weeding and exclusion of alien fauna: specialists noted the discovery of one new animal, found an animal not seen since 1926, and documented improved regeneration of native plant species, as well as better survival of plantings from nursery after exclusion of large foreign herbivores. Separately, control measures against predatory animal species have proven effective in helping increase survival of native birds (cf. ITR p 21).

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.

ICR did not report any changes in socioeconomic well-being to have occurred due to the project. What socioeconomic changes that would take place as a result of this particular intervention would only be seen in the long-run: PD mentions that, since island nation's unique flora and fauna attract ecotourism, preserving Mauritius's biodiversity could help lead to more ecotourism, following the development of tourism infrastructure, that is.

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 – ICR reported that project’s training activities have had the impact of increasing the capacity of country’s biodiversity conservation (cf. ICR p 21). Approximately 140 students, local NGO staff, and National Parks and Conservation Service staff attended the three Biodiversity Training Workshops.
- b) Governance – ICR does not provide any information on governance changes as a result of the project.

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 ICR did not mention any unintended impacts.

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.

New weeding and conservation methods have been mainstreamed into National Parks and Conservation Service, as well as local NGO (cf. ICR p 21).

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.

ICR does not mention any key lessons, good practices, or approaches.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

ICR does not offer any recommendations.

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?	ICR's assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of project, as well as achievement of objectives, is adequate, albeit disjointed and often hard to follow.	MS
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	Report is mostly consistent, although a few ratings in certain sections seem to contradict those in others. Qualitative evidence provided is convincing, if not always complete. Ratings are substantiated with qualitative evidence.	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Report assesses project sustainability, although coverage of this aspect of project performance was not as thorough as it should have been.	MS
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	No lessons learned mentioned.	HU
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	No, report does not include actual project costs and actual co-financing used.	HU
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	ICR evaluates project's M&E systems, although coverage of this aspect of project performance was not as thorough as it should have been.	MS
Overall TE Rating		MU

Overall TE rating: $0.3 * (4+4) + 0.1 * (4+1+1+4) = 3.4$

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