

3726 Terminal Evaluation Review, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, FEB 2017

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3726	
GEF Agency project ID		277	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		FAO	
Project name		Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for Country Action	
Country/Countries		Global	
Region		CEX	
Focal area		International Waters	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		IW SO1: To foster international, multi-state cooperation on priority water concerns IW SP3: Balancing overuse and conflicting uses of water resources in surface and groundwater basins that are transboundary in nature	
Executing agencies involved		FAO as lead executing agency together with UNESCO-IHP, IAH and the World Bank as co-executing agencies	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Through consultation	
Private sector involvement		Through consultation	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		9 November 2010	
Effectiveness date / project start		25 January 2011	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		November 2013	
Actual date of project completion		June 2015	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	-	-
	Co-financing	-	-
GEF Project Grant		1.75	1.75
Co-financing	IA own	0.85	0.85
	Government	-	-
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	1.85	1.98
	Private sector	-	-
	NGOs/CSOs	-	-
Total GEF funding		1.75	1.75
Total Co-financing		2.70	2.83
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		4.45	4.58
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		April 2016	
Author of TE		Food And Agriculture Organization Of The United Nations Office Of Evaluation	
TER completion date		February 2017	
TER prepared by		Mireia Duran	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Molly Watts	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

According to the Project Document (p.14), the project's global environmental objective is "to accelerate the accrual of global environmental benefits (goods and services) that are generated through improved groundwater resource governance at transboundary, national, and local levels. This, in the face of rising human demand, overall water scarcity and the anticipated impacts of climate change, will contribute to the GEF's objectives and feed into Millennium Development Goal 7: to ensure environmental sustainability."

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Project Document (p.14) defines the project development objective as "to extend the life set of livelihoods reliant upon groundwater and related aquifer services. This objective is consistent with FAO's mission to raise levels of nutrition, increase agricultural productivity and improve the lives of rural populations. It will also help these countries to meet Millennium Development Goal 1: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger." The Project document also stipulates that the emphasis on this objective will come from national Ministries of Water, Health and Agriculture and the related World Bank and UN agency projects. The relevance of this objective to the GEF will be in efforts to increase the environmental sustainability of activities in the productive sectors that this project will support.

The project is structured in the following five components (PD, p.14-15):

1. Compilation of the state of groundwater governance – through thematic papers and country case studies, to be summarized in a synthesis document
2. Make a global/regional diagnostic – through five regional consultations culminating into a diagnostic document
3. Development of a Shared Vision and Global Framework for Action on Groundwater Governance
4. Communication and Dissemination of the Framework for Action
5. Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

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

No changes in the GEOs and DOs were made.

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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This TER gives a rating of Satisfactory to the Relevance of the project. The TE does not give an explicit rating to this component but it highlights the relevance of this project throughout the report. The Groundwater Governance (GWG) project is a global project aimed at the improvement of groundwater resource governance at transboundary, national and local levels. Continued access to groundwater and sustainable management of the aquifers is aligned to national priorities in relation to potable water supply, industrial commercial use and agriculture. 40% of all equipped irrigated areas are supplied by groundwater but in many arid and semi-arid countries, this reliance on groundwater is much higher (GEF Secretariat Review for Full/Medium-Sized Projects).

This project is also relevant for GEF strategies since GEF STAP identified groundwater as a priority area and urged GEF to promote the integration of groundwater governance issues into the global dialogue on water (TE, p.8). GWG project is designed to draw lessons from the GEF's International Waters program and to support the development of operational links between groundwater and other GEF focal areas - biodiversity, climate change, land degradation and POPs. This will also support improved global environmental benefits across focal areas in future GEF projects and programs in its portfolio (Project Document, p.13).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE rates both the achievement of objectives and the attainment of outputs and activities as Moderately Satisfactory and this TER gives also a rating of Moderately Satisfactory to the effectiveness of the project. Overall, the TE argues that progress was made toward increasing knowledge about the importance of groundwater governance, as well as in laying out a step-by-step framework to begin governance work at the national and local levels. However, the project was not that successful in raising the awareness and understanding of decision makers about the need for better groundwater governance (TE, p.31). Project outcomes were successfully accomplished, but the final documents

produced appeared to be different from what was originally planned since they failed to address social and political aspects of governance –documents focused instead on the technical aspects of the GWG project. Consequently, the TE argues that documents were not appropriate for awareness raising and advocacy with national decision makers. Finally, the communications/outreach component was under-implemented, which created another gap in awareness raising, particularly among key target groups beyond the technical audience (TE, p.31).

In terms of outputs, the main achievements and products produced by this project were (TE, p.51):

- Five regional consultations with 70-120 participants each Outputs: five peer reviewed reports; follow-up e-forums
- Twelve thematic papers: 12 peer reviewed full reports and 12 digests, and A Synthesis Report combining the findings of the 12 papers
- Global Diagnostic on Groundwater Governance
- Global Shared Vision 2030 on Groundwater Governance
- Framework for Action to achieve the vision 2030.

A detailed analysis on the progress and success made in each of the project components defined in the logical framework is detailed below:

Component 1: *Compilation of the state of groundwater governance in relation to groundwater supply and demand (quantity and quality).* Overall, most targets of this component were achieved. A global definition for governance was not agreed despite multiple meetings, which led to the use of a variety of definitions throughout the project period (Output 1.1). The TE found that all the definitions used focused on the technical and institutional arrangements, but failed to address the socio-economic context of groundwater, as well as the power dynamics among relevant stakeholders (TE, p.13). In addition, a number of case studies were originally envisaged; however, given the material available elsewhere the project produced only three (Output 1.2). The MTR notes that, in general, the project produced enough documents and knowledge, and more country cases would not have added much value. Furthermore, twelve thematic papers covering a range of governance, institutional, management and technical topics relating to the exploitation, protection and management of groundwater were successfully completed and uploaded in the website (Output 1.3). Yet, the TE pointed out that there were some gaps in the subject matter, including environmental aspects and the socio-economic context in which extraction takes place (TE, p.14). Finally, the Synthesis Document was successfully completed and undergoing final editing by the end of the project (Output 1.4). The TE highlights the good quality of this document as it was well balanced, detailed, easy to understand and extensively used for other project outputs.

Component 2: *Development of a global/regional groundwater governance diagnostic integrating regional and country experiences with prospects for the future.* This component was the one that had better results according to the TE. First, the reports for all five Regional Consultations were made and uploaded online (Output 2.1). They provided extensive and detailed information, had good quality and properly identified the key problems in groundwater governance. Second, the Global Groundwater

Diagnostic was successfully prepared and expected to be released after the end of the project (Output 2.2). The TE reports that the diagnostic was credible, scientific and appropriate for water specialists, but unlikely to be compelling for a more general audience. Finally, the intention to undertake specific mainstreaming into the GEF project portfolio (Output 2.3) was achieved and exceeded its initial scope, with significant success in expanding the groundwater portfolios of all project partners (TE, p.18).

Component 3: *Definition of a shared vision and Global Framework for Action on Groundwater*

Governance. The TE rates the results of this component as Moderately Satisfactory. A final meeting held in February 2015 confirmed consensus on key messages (Output 3.1). Participants discussed the documents produced, provided additional comments and final reports were revised to include the elements of the discussion. Furthermore, the document “Global Framework for Action on Groundwater Governance” was published and validated by the Steering Committee (Output 3.2). The TE states that the documents contained some very good information, represented an important step forward in defining the principles of groundwater governance (GWG), and included the steps needed to strengthen GWG at the national and local levels. However, as mentioned, they are not oriented to the intended target audience, nor has their preparation raised political awareness (TE, p.29).

Component 4: *Communication strategy and dissemination of the Framework for Action on Groundwater*

Governance. According to the TE, this component was the least successful. The communications/ dissemination part only fulfilled the minimum requirements –i.e. establishing a website and supporting the launch– and there was limited dissemination of the project products (Output 4.1). The TE argues that the more critical elements to establish a communication strategy to expand the dialogue on GWG beyond the water community were not effectively addressed (TE, p.30). With regards to the Outreach Conferences for results dissemination (Output 4.2), the TE notes that these were carried out and records made available, but it was unclear if key messages on GWG were widely disseminated (TE, p.30).

Component 5: *Project management, monitoring and evaluation.* This component will be analyzed in the succeeding sections of this report.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates the efficiency of this project as Satisfactory and this TER agrees with that rating. The main reason for the rating is that the project successfully produced most of its outcomes and documents within budget. It is worth noting that in-kind contributions were substantially higher than expected. In addition, as mentioned in the GEF Secretariat Review for Full/Medium-Sized Projects, the project used existing programme arrangements with each agency to maximize synergies and cost-saving on the basic administrative tasks in organizing joint meetings, consultation and disseminating products. The project is also efficient as it catalyzed cross sectoral benefits by strengthening the linkages across the GEF focal areas.

Nonetheless, there were some deficiencies in terms of maximizing the cost-effectiveness of the project. By the end of the project, there was a surplus of USD 348,152 due to under-expenditures in Component 3, 4 and 5. The TE explains that the surplus represents the cost of document publication, the under-implementation of the activities needed to expand the GWG dialogue to the non-agricultural users and

decision makers, and the outstanding evaluation (p.25). The TE notes that the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Core Drafting Team (CDT) members were unaware that substantial funds remained within the outreach component. This limited the PSC's ability to play a larger role in this under-implemented component, which undermined its achievements (p.25).

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Likely
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The TE gives a rating of Satisfactory to the sustainability of this project, however this TER rates this sustainability as Moderately Likely. The TE argues that, while there were gaps in implementation, the project made substantial contribution to putting groundwater on the development agenda. The positive aspect on the sustainability of this project is the speed and commitment with which the principals of the FFA (Framework for Action) were integrated into the work of the five agencies participating in this project: GEF, FAO, UNESCO-IHP, IAH and the World Bank. On the other hand, there are some uncertainties regarding the commitment of national government. It appears that the project failed to produce the expected impact on national government programs and initiatives because it was not designed to focus on developing knowledge products and awareness-raising among national decision makers was not successful.

Project sustainability is further assessed along the following dimensions:

- *Environmental* – since this is a global project aimed to increased groundwater governance there has not been any environmental risk identified.
- *Financial resources* – future financial commitments are highly likely to be available for the continuity of this project's results. As mentioned, the agencies involved incorporated GWG into their programs and initial work already started at project end. For instance, the World Bank incorporated a groundwater projects portfolio of more than USD 1 billion for two years, of which about one-third will focus on governance and related institutions (TE, p.33).
- *Socio-Political* – In its designed the project identified as a potential risk the possibility that the FFA (Framework for Action) would not be taken up by national governments (ProDoc, p.22). As mentioned, the project has not been able to create global political awareness on the urgent need for improving GWG due to the under-implementation of the communication component and the tendency during implementation to focus on the technical aspects. Hence, it is unlikely that countries will commit to the objectives of this project since the political risks identified in the ProDoc have not been properly addressed.
- *Institutional framework and governance* – There is the risk that technical units who might implement multi-disciplinary projects related to groundwater governance act primarily from their technical role, even when the project calls for a broader perspective (TE, p.39). As mentioned, this risk was present under this project and the same may happen in the future due to the institutional structure/approaches of implementing agencies and national decision makers.

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The co-financing comprised in-kind contribution of the four agencies that executed this project (FAO, IAH, UNESCO and the World Bank). The level of co-financing was adequate, as the proposed co-financing ratio was 1:14, which exceeds the IW SO1 requirement (see GEF Secretariat Review For Full/Medium-Sized Projects). This ratio was higher at the end of the project since the implementing agencies reported that they exceeded their original in-kind commitment to project activities (TE, p.26). Originally, co-financing costs were limited to report production, which as mentioned involves the main outputs of this project, and meeting organization. However, the agencies increased their commitments mainly to pay the services of the partner agency personnel who served on the PSC throughout the five years of the project (TE, p.10).

In addition, since the parties who provided financing were also the main stakeholders involved in the project, co-financing was crucial to achieve the project's objectives. As noted in the TE, "the partners' commitment is surely one of the reasons for the success of the project in creating a highly effective, multi-agency team that has been able to produce valuable outputs" (p.26). They provided in-kind resources in all 5 components of the project, particularly in component 1 and 2. The co-financing of component 3 involved only IAH, while component 4 and 5 involved only FAO. Co-financing was also important for sustainability as the agencies who provided the funding increased their commitment to the frameworks developed in this project, and thus began to incorporate GWG to their programs/initiatives, and in some cases, even committed further financial resources (as in the case of the World Bank).

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 major delays in the preparation of the project products (mainly the Global Diagnostic Vision and the Framework for Action) that increased implementation costs and required a two-years extension. The reason for the delays were deficiencies in the design of the project and its original time frame that created unrealistic workloads for those involved (TE, p.39). This led to delays in project implementation, particularly when specific timelines were not carefully set and adhered to. The TE also notes that the decision to implement the program jointly, relying on organization staff to serve on the PSC, also created delays. The management group had numerous other responsibilities, which at times took precedence over their work with this project (p.11). A final reason for the delays was the multi-partner approach that increased the time needed for review. As stated in the TE delays were also due to "intense internal discussion about the appropriate format and presentation of the work for its intended audience" (p.24).

However, Core Drafting Team and Steering Committee members interviewed for the TE reported that delays were not a problem since the resulting outputs were of high quality, and agreed and endorsed by the member organizations. They also noted that all members contributed considerably more time than scheduled in the project design (TE, p.25).

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:

As mentioned, the communication and outreach strategy did not sufficiently engage stakeholders outside the implementing agencies or catalyzed national action and investments in GWG (although it catalyzed investments within the agencies involved). However, among the technical stakeholders at the country level, the Regional Consultations created an excellent basis for further, specific work, which will be important for follow-on activities in groundwater governance (TE, p.31).

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE does not give a specific rating to M&E design although it rates the overall M&E system as Satisfactory. However, this TER gives a rating of Moderately Satisfactory to this section. Baseline indicators for all activities and outputs, time frame for M&E activities and standards for outputs were specified in the Strategic Results Framework and the Project Document (p.33 and p.36-38). However, according to the TE, the strategic framework indicators were essentially a checklist of physical products to be produced, such as reports and minutes. The indicators focused only on the process rather than the content and audience of the key outputs, which as mentioned, resulted in an under-achievement of the Component 4 (Communication and Dissemination of the Framework for Action).

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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As mentioned, the TE rates the overall M&E of this project as satisfactory, but this TER gives a rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory. Both the MTE and the TE concluded that the reporting were appropriate, on time and substantial. Progress reports and PIRs were produced regularly, submitted on time and were qualified as Highly Satisfactory by FAO. However, the project units failed to notice that seriously delays were occurring and that Component 4 was being under-implemented. Hence, even though project reports were complete and had good quality, the M&E system failed to capture the problems occurring during implementation (particularly in Component 4), and thus management and strategies were not

able to adapt in order to correct those deficiencies. In addition, financial monitoring presented important weaknesses since PSC members were unaware about available resources in Component 4, which prevented further outreach and advocacy activities (TE, p.25).

Finally, the TE notes that the project orientation diverged from a focus on preparing materials and engaging with decision makers into a position to influence groundwater governance. However, the intention to make such a change was not formally documented or agreed among partners and funding agencies (p.30).

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 Satisfactory
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The lead implementing agency was FAO but overall project implementation was the responsibility of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) whose members include representatives from FAO, GEF Secretariat, UNESCO, the World Bank and IAH. In addition the Permanent Consultation Mechanism (PCM) and the Advisory Panel was established to enhance the work of the PSC by including the views of the larger water user audience and decision makers. The TE rates project implementation as Satisfactory but this TER gives a rating of Moderately Satisfactory. The argument for the TE rating is that most project activities were successfully implemented despite delays in the documents preparation, and that FAO provided a good support in the project's administration and oversight. The TE also reports that the Project Steering Committee was productive, participated substantially in the meetings and provided a sound follow-up of project's activities. However, as mentioned before, Component 4 was under-implemented and PSC members were not able to change the strategy to fulfill the outreach activities, even though resources were available for it.

Also, some stakeholder groups were not effectively reached, notably the private sector, high-level government decision makers and civil society. Initial efforts were made to engage through the Advisory Panel, and the Private Sector Roundtable in 2013, but neither of these was followed up adequately (TE, p.31).

The project document provided a comprehensive and clear hierarchy of the outcome and output needed to achieve the project's objectives, and outlines the activities and approach required. However, the design presented some weaknesses. The TE argues the project could have been even more effective if the true scope of the work had been more thoroughly discussed, with a view to making decisions as to

the best use of the consultants' time and the PSC to achieve the project results (TE, p.26). Overall, the project design underestimated the time required for the preparation of documents.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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FAO was the lead executing agency and the co-executing agencies included IAH, UNESCO-IHP and the World Bank. The TE does not provide a rating for this section but this TER has given a rating of Satisfactory. The reason for this rating is the successful alliance made by these organizations that worked well together and achieved most of the project's results. The TE enhances the benefits of this collaborative partnership, especially in terms of ownership of the final products, despite that the number of partners also increased the time needed for review and contributed to some delays. Also, the members of these agencies were highly involved during execution and a clear division and distribution of tasks was made. Overall, this collaboration is regarded as successful.

In addition, the decision to execute the program jointly, relying on organization staff to serve on the PSC and provide leadership resulted in a management group that was highly qualified. However, the staff had numerous other responsibilities, which at times took precedence over their work with the project and caused delays (TE, p.11). Despite that, the TE notes that this alliance was one of the strong points of the project since the benefits are likely to be sustained and mainstreamed by the executing agencies (p.32).

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.

It is too early to observe any environmental change as a result of this project. The GWG project consisted on complying information, making a diagnostic, developing and action plan and communicating the message. Hence, at the end of the project nothing was change in terms of environmental stress. However, the TE notes that there is potential for substantial impact in terms of the created knowledge products being rigorously used, and in terms of follow-on activities to apply the principles and processes contained in the FFA (Framework for Action) (TE, p.31). However, it is also noted that further efforts are necessary to enhance impact beyond the technical or scientific community.

Impact is observed in the participating agencies of this project as they incorporated some of the outputs, notably the FFA principals, into their programs. For instance, the World Bank increased their investments and projects of their groundwater portfolio, including GWG. Investments after project completion increased due to the direct intervention of PSC members within their agencies. However, impact on national decision makers and the private sector did not happen due to the limitations of the outreach activities and also because the two mechanisms designed to broaden the dialogue on GWG (the Permanent Consultative Mechanism and the Advisory Panel) did not function as intended and failed to include input from a wider group of water users or decision makers (TE, p.26).

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.

No socioeconomic changes are reported. The TE reports, however, that insufficient work was done on the economic aspect of GWG; a consensus was not reached on the scope for future GWG actions that might lead to socioeconomic impacts (p.33).

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

Changes in capacities are observed only within the executing organizations. The project considerably increased the scientific and economic knowledge and understanding about issues related to GWG, particularly among the technical groundwater community. The Framework For Action lays out a very broad scope for future action. However, the prepared documents are not sufficiently oriented to national decision makers and the documents’ dissemination is unlikely to significantly raise national awareness or understanding of the key issues, or to build political will for further national investment (TE, p.2).

b) Governance

As mentioned, the TE did not find strong evidence that public participation or greater action on GWG at the national level occurred by the end of project, except for a small number of letters of endorsement of the project’s work. Hence, there was not impact in terms of changing national governments’ regulation,

initiatives or perspectives. Local support for greater investments in GWG did not occur. However, the increase in groundwater project portfolios by the World Bank may lead to this in the future (p.28).

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

No unintended impacts are reported in the TE.

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.

As mentioned the aim of this project is that its products and approaches are disseminated and adopted by others. In that aspect the impact has been partially successful. On one hand, the project has been very successful in mainstreaming its results into the work of the agency partners. A brief summary of the main initiatives that have been adopted by the end of this project are provided below (TE, p.33):

- a) GWG were effectively mainstreamed into the GEF portfolio, with the inclusion of programs on managing water governance, and a conjunctive program for surface – underground water (TE, p.31).
- b) FAO started a pilot project on groundwater governance in two aquifers in Morocco and Tunisia under its Regular Budget resources.
- c) UNESCO-IHP planned to continue to integrate the FFA principles into its programme on groundwater governance in transboundary aquifers and was seeking to expand its work in groundwater governance with a number of new partners.
- d) The IAH began to disseminate information and advocate for the use of the Vision and FFA in strengthening groundwater governance and established a new Commission related to groundwater governance.
- e) The World Bank incorporated the principles and approaches of the FFA into new project development. These included an expansion of its groundwater projects with and important focused on governance and related institutions.
- f) Finally, the increased attention to GWG resulting from this project benefited the decision of the Government of Uruguay to provide training in GWG at the UNESCO Regional Centre for Groundwater Management for Latin America and the Caribbean.

On the other hand, the project failed to involve the private sector and national governments and thus, the results and approaches of this project were not incorporated into the target audience by the end of the project.

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 identifies the following key lessons as a result of this project (p. 39):

- **The consequences and benefits of assigning project implementation to partner organizations' staff.** Although the project benefited by relying on partner organizations' technical units and permanent staff (e.g. by drawing on their expertise and experience), it often created unrealistic workloads for those involved. This led to delays in project implementation, particularly if specific timelines were not carefully set and adhered to. Time management becomes particularly important in these cases, and technical units should carefully assess whether they have personnel with the requisite technical and managerial skills to carry out all of the additional responsibilities implicit in this project implementation approach.
- **Project supervision in multi-partner implementation.** In projects where a steering committee is responsible for leading the project, the responsibility for supervising their work should be explicitly identified, and a robust system of internal reviews established. This will help to ensure that project partners regularly reflect on their work relative to the agreed upon plan. Formal agreements should be made with the financing agent if project revisions are necessary.
- **Multi-disciplinary approaches and technical units.** When technical units implement multi-disciplinary projects, there is a risk that the personnel involved will act primarily from their technical role, even when the project calls for a broader perspective. In such cases, steps need to be taken either at the partner or steering committee level to augment available expertise and ensure that all aspects of the project are implemented properly.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The project produced sound technical documentation on GWG. However, the TE states that in order for this information to form the basis of more effective governance, additional steps are needed to strengthen outreach to decision makers, raise awareness and increase understanding of the process and components of GWG. The main recommendation of the TE are provided below (p.37-38):

- **Recommendation 1:** To FAO: The ET recommends that in order to reorient the materials to reach the intended target audience, the project should be extended for six months beyond 31 December 2015, using existing funds to prepare materials for outreach to national decision makers. If resources within FAO or UNESCO are committed elsewhere, the project steering committee should consider contracting a communications specialist for this task for three to four months.
- **Recommendation 2:** To FAO. Organize mainstreaming meetings within partner agencies and among partner focal points and operational units to (i) identify opportunities for the inclusion of GWG components in ongoing and pipeline projects, as well as other promotional activities, in order to promote GWG widely; and (ii) identify specific programmes that could form the basis

for continued interagency collaboration and learning on the application of the FFA in a variety of socio-ecological contexts.

- **Recommendation 3:** To FAO. If the project is extended as recommended, a second phase is recommended in order to implement aquifer-based pilot projects, with a specific focus on the management and governance issues linked to higher-level national initiatives.

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 TE provides a sound, detailed and structured assessment of all outcomes and outputs following the design of the Results Framework. It also provides a brief but sufficient analysis of project impacts.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE is overall consistent and evidence is provided, although there are some discrepancies between the ratings and the arguments provided throughout the report. For instance, the positive M&E and sustainability rating is not consistent with the deficiencies in both areas reported in other parts of the TE.	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The analysis of project sustainability is brief and risks are not assessed. Its rating (satisfactory) contradicts other arguments made in the report, such as p.4: "the project activities are unlikely to be sustainable."	MU
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learned are supported by the main arguments and evidence provided throughout the TE. However, they focused only on the multi-partner implementation issues. It does not discuss lessons on the execution of some activities, project design, M&E systems, and so on. In addition recommendations are addressed only to FAO. There are not recommendations provided for the other partner agencies.	MU
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE reports the actual project costs, total and per activity, including the amount of remaining funds. It also provides the level of materialized co-financing, both per component and per agency. However, the total spend to June 2015 and the remaining funds as of June 2015 does not add up to the 2015 budget (see Table 3, p.25)	MS
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The evaluation of the M&E systems is very limited. There are no discussion or analysis on the performance of indicators, how the system functioned over the life of the project or details on the design deficiencies identified to follow-up progress. Indeed, the TE notes that PSC members were unaware of some aspects of the project progress but it does not explain how or why the M&E system failed on that matter. Besides, the positive rating is not well substantiated given the failures of the M&E systems to properly inform about the problems in the implementation of component 4, which led to under-achievements in the raising-awareness and outreach activities.	U
Overall TE Rating		MS

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