

# Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2016

## 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3862	
GEF Agency project ID		4206 (PIMS)	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Strengthening fisheries governance to protect freshwater and wetland biodiversity in Argentina <sup>[1]</sup> <sub>SEP</sub>	
Country/Countries		Argentina	
Region		Latin America	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		SO2: Mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors SP4: Strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity SP5: Fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services	
Executing agencies involved		Primary executing agency: Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat (SAyDS) Co-executing agency: Under-Secretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAGyP)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Through consultations	
Private sector involvement		Through consultations	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) / Approval date (MSP)		March 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2010	
Effectiveness date / project start		June 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		March 2014	
Actual date of project completion		December 2014	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.095	.095
	Co-financing	0.085	NA
GEF Project Grant		2.355	2.355
Co-financing	IA own	0.1	0.1
	Government	4.829	16.128
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0	0
	Private sector	0	0
	NGOs/CSOs	0.335	0.537
Total GEF funding		2.450	2.45
Total Co-financing		5.349	16.765
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		7.799	19.255 +PPG
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		November 2014	
Author of TE		Laura García Tagliani, Ricardo Delfino Schenke	
TER completion date		December 11, 2016	

TER prepared by	Caroline Laroche
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 <sup>1</sup>	S	--	S
Sustainability of Outcomes		ML	--	ML
M&E Design		MS	--	MS
M&E Implementation		MS	--	MS
Quality of Implementation		HS	--	S
Quality of Execution		NA	--	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		--	--	MS

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's environmental goal is "to achieve territorial management of the wetlands in the region, within a harmonized regulatory framework which will provide sustainability to environmental management and to fisheries, guaranteeing through an eco-systemic approach, the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainability of fisheries resources for the benefit and development of the inhabitants" (PD p.36).

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The development objective as stated in the project document (p.36) is "to develop a strengthened governance framework across the provinces to ensure the effective protection of the freshwater fisheries and biodiversity in the Paraná and Paraguay River wetlands in Argentina". The project aims to improve the following barriers to biodiversity protection:

- 1) Deficient and inconsistent regulatory and policy framework for fisheries among provinces;
- 2) Weak institutional capacities for the comprehensive management of freshwater fisheries and wetlands;
- 3) Insufficient knowledge and incentives for sustainable alternative practices in fisheries and wetlands;
- 4) Deficiencies in inter-sectoral planning and territorial zoning.

(PD pp.15-33)

The project proposes to address those barriers by focusing on the following four outcomes:

- 1) Harmonized and ecosystem-based policy and regulatory framework is in place for freshwater fisheries;
- 2) Institutional capacity for fisheries and wetland management is strengthened;

<sup>1</sup> Rating from PIR 2013. PIR 2014 file was corrupt and could not be opened.

- 3) Pilots for the optimization and sustainable use of fish resources are developed to enhance fisheries governance; and
- 4) Pilot spatial and inter-sectoral ecosystem-based planning process is implemented in the Paraná Delta, with potential for replication throughout the basin.

(PD pp.36-54)

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

There were no changes in objectives or planned activities during project implementation.

#### 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>
----------------------	-----------------------------

The TE rates the project as relevant. This TER agrees with this rating and rates relevance as satisfactory due to the project's good alignment with both the priorities of the Argentinian government, and those of the GEF under its biodiversity focal area.

Argentina is very rich in biodiversity (BD). Its territory is home to 18 eco-regions ranging from tropical forests to arid mountain ecosystems. According to the project document (p.6), "the country's most important continental BD is found alongside the Paraná river, the main component of an immense central river basin – known as the 'Cuenca del Plata' ". However the Cuenca del Plata is currently facing severe threats, in particular from inland fisheries, barriers to fish migration, inadequate wetland management, climate change and institutional complexity regarding fisheries management (PD p.7, p.13, p.18).

Argentina joined the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1994. The country also defined a National Biodiversity Strategy in 1991, with the following objectives being particularly relevant to this project: "(i) Contributing to the wellbeing of society by conserving biological diversity and the services this provides; (ii) Conserving species, habitats and ecosystems so as to maintain essential ecological processes; (iii) Guaranteeing that the use of biological resources is undertaken based on sustainable management practices; and (iv) Strengthening national institutions and human resources to achieve these objectives"

(PD p.66). In 2008, the governors of the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos and Santa Fe signed a Letter of Intent committing to developing a “Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Paraná Delta” (PIECAS- DP). This plan “provides a solid basis of political commitment to advance in the environmental territorial zoning of an important portion of the region’s wetlands” (PD p.66), and represents a strong basis for this project. The project is also well aligned “with the Argentine Government’s commitments to mainstream environmental matters in the strategic orientation of its policies, promoting the rational use of natural resources, as well as the adoption of more environmentally-friendly technologies and productive processes” (TE p.12).

The project is also very relevant to the GEF-4 strategic programs under the biodiversity focal area. Under strategic objective 2 (to mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors), the project focuses principally on strategic programme 4 (strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity), as “it supports the development of a harmonized regulatory framework for fisheries governance in the area based on an ecosystem approach to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries and contribute to biodiversity conservation” (PD p.35). It also supports strategic programme 5 (fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services) as it aims to “implement pilot added value, ecotourism and sports fishing projects and initiatives to develop economic incentives for more sustainable practices” (PD p.35).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
-------------------	-----------------------------

The project aimed to reduce the “anthropic pressures affecting biological processes, and endangering the current and potential income provided by these resources” (TE p.5) in the Paraguay-Parana river area. The TE rates effectiveness as satisfactory. This TER also rates it as satisfactory as the project successfully developed policies, strengthened the regulatory framework, built capacity and held a successful pilot of spatial and inter-sectoral ecosystem-based planning process, which is already being replicated. In the paragraphs below, we discuss the extent to which the project successfully achieved the outcomes it was working towards.

**Outcome 1: Harmonized and ecosystem-based policy and regulatory framework is in place for freshwater fisheries**

The TE rates achievements under this outcome as highly satisfactory (p.27). One of the most important outputs under this outcome has been the coordination of fisheries policies among the different jurisdictions. The project also “promoted the development and coordination of mechanisms for collecting, harmonizing and standardizing fisheries information” (TE p.26) and completed the *Regional Plan for Managing Fisheries in the Argentine Basin of the Plata River*, which “sets forth a series of specific objectives and activities that will lead to the sustainability of project outcomes (for instance, continue with the harmonization of freshwater fisheries, optimize and keep SIFIPA operational, continue encouraging value to be added to the production chain, and continue promoting good practices in sports fishing)” (TE p.26).

**Outcome 2: Institutional capacity for fisheries and wetland management is strengthened**

The TE rates achievements under this outcome as satisfactory (p.29). Under this outcome, several tools were developed to increase the capacity of entities in charge of enforcing fishing policy. The *Operational Manual on Fisheries Oversight and Control* was developed and is now used to train staff in the region. Various groups were established or reinforced (*Inter-jurisdictional Oversight Group, Freshwater Fisheries Directorate*). Several training workshops were held on the topic of preparing management plans for wetlands, fish and fisheries. Management capacity seems to have improved as a result of the project, with the METT score having improved in 76.9% of areas over the course of the project. (TE pp.27-28)

**Outcome 3: Pilots for the optimization and sustainable use of fish resources are developed to enhance fisheries governance**

The TE rates achievements under this outcome as moderately unsatisfactory (p.31). The project was expected to develop “a series of pilot experiences for market-based mechanisms to make fisheries and natural resource management economically attractive (...), as well as to foster responsible sports fishing” (TE p.29). The project team did make efforts to develop means of increasing the economic value of fishing. Local fishermen were offered “training in the different practices of adding value to fish products (curing of fish skin, regional fish-based gastronomy), tourism, building and repair of canoes, best practices for manipulating catch, and disposal of waste, among others. Experiences and knowledge were exchanged among the different artisan fishermen communities in the region” (TE p.30). However, despite those efforts, “these experiences are still far from (...) generating significant economic income to diminish pressure on fisheries resources” (TE p.30). For this reason, this outcome has not been satisfactorily achieved.

**Outcome 4: Pilot spatial and inter-sectoral ecosystem-based planning process is implemented in the Paraná Delta, with potential for replication throughout the basin.**

The TE rates achievements under this outcome as highly satisfactory (p.32). According to the TE, the project promoted “the adoption of the ecosystem-based approach, the preparation of a *Línea de Base Ambiental de la Región DP* (Environmental Baseline of the Parana Delta Region) and the use of *Evaluación Ambiental Estratégica* (Strategic Environmental Assessments - SEA), as a management instrument to integrate the environmental dimension in the different phases to define and outline plans, policies and programmes” (TE p.31). As a result of those efforts, the *Strategic Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Parana Delta Region* (PIECAS-DP) was created and a bill on *Minimum Standards for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development* of the Parana Delta was approved (TE p.32). Overall, the pilot planning process was successful, and some aspects of it are already being replicated in the Santa Fe province (TE p.32).

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Satisfactory
----------------	----------------------

The TE rates efficiency as highly satisfactory due to the project's impressive accomplishments during a relatively short time frame and with a limited budget. This TER rates efficiency as satisfactory as the project appears to have been implemented very efficiently, but the TE presents no concrete evidence supporting a 'highly satisfactory' rating.

100% of the foreseen budget had been spent by project end, despite the very low spending rates experience in the first two years of the project (37% in 2011, 24% in 2012). This was due to initial delays in hiring consultants and setting up financial systems for the project. (TE p.21)

The TE describes the project as having been "very efficient in its implementation, fulfilling in due time and format most of the scheduled activities, within the agreed time-frame, and having overcome a series of obstacles (...) including delays in implementation start-up, changes in authorities, devaluations, lack of a Technical Coordinator, among others" (TE p.32). The TE also describes the project's cost-effectiveness as having been "outstanding" (TE p.32), but does not provide any indication that a cost-benefit analysis had been conducted.

Overall, efficiency for the project appears to have been good, especially given the challenges the project experienced at the start.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: <b>Moderately Likely</b>
--------------------	----------------------------------

The TE rates sustainability as moderately likely. This TER also rates sustainability as moderately likely due to the good progress made towards developing an exit strategy and reinforcing capacities for PA fisheries management across the system, but noting the lack of a clear financial plan to pursue activities following project completion.

#### **Financial Risks – Sustainability Moderately Likely**

The TE rates financial sustainability as moderately likely. At this point, there is no clear financial plan to pursue activities following project completion. When the TE was written, some plans were in the making. For example, the Regional Plan for Fisheries Management was working on designing a long-term financial strategy for its activities. In addition, the Plan for Fisheries Management is foreseeing "for each administration to commit the necessary resources according to its jurisdiction, roles and foreseen activities" (TE pp.36-37).

However, the level of institutional and inter-provincial coordination required to continue project activities is potentially very costly as it requires a lot of traveling for participants from different provinces, the cost of which had so far been borne by the project. At project end, there was no clear source of funding for those activities, and project participants "voiced their concern about not having the necessary resources available after project completion" (TE p.36).

#### **Socio-political Risks – Sustainability Likely**

The TE rates socio-political sustainability as moderately likely. This TER rates it as likely as there appears to be strong commitment from politicians and the local population for project activities. The TE describes the project as having “facilitated interaction, the setting up of partnerships and cooperation relationships among institutions, and led to harmonious work among the provinces, and between the provinces and the national government. In this manner it achieved a great degree of empowerment at the territorial level, which together with the strong leadership of the provinces, would contribute to reducing risks.” (TE p.34)

In addition to strengthening cooperation, the project was very effective at generating commitment from politicians and relevant policy leaders. Indeed, “there is evidence that most of the topics addressed by the Project are placed on the legislative agenda. For instance, the Law on Minimum Standards for the Conservation, Protection and Rational and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Argentina, which was passed by the Senate and was presented by Entre Ríos and Santa Fe legislators. Furthermore, COFEMA endorsed the Bill on Minimum Standards for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Parana Delta Region (PIECAS), for it to be dealt with by the Argentine Congress.” (TE p.34)

The project also successfully secured the commitment of local populations. The awareness and knowledge-building activities successfully “strengthen(ed) the capacities of artisan fishermen in the region, including their capacity to come together and create networks, thus making their participation efforts in biodiversity conservation in the region more effective, significant and informed.” (TE p.35)

### **Institutional Risks – Sustainability Likely**

The TE rates institutional sustainability as moderately likely. This TER rates it as likely due to the extent of the capacities that were built during the course of the project. The TE confirms that “one of the project areas that achieved better outcomes is the reinforcement of capacities at national and provincial institutions holding responsibility for environmental, fisheries and protected area policies” (TE p.35). Systemic-level as well as individual-level capacities were also improved over the course of the project.

According to the TE, “the project was a great catalyst for developing and/or consolidating in four years what had not been achieved in the last 20 years in freshwater fisheries; among others, a Regional Plan for managing fisheries, an oversight and control system at the provincial and national levels, institutionalized within the Inter-Jurisdictional Oversight Group, fisheries statistics at the provincial and national levels, sports fishing development and governance, fish bait development and governance (which was an informal, unregulated practice), an effective exchange and discussion forum at the federal level. All these built capacities are critical for managing fisheries resources.” (TE p.35) Indeed, as a result of the project, Argentina is now in a much better place to manage fisheries; the institutional capacities built during the project are now largely embedded in the regulatory and legislative framework, and do not appear likely to be reversed.

At the individual level, the government is now hiring the consultants who worked on the project. As a result, those capacities developed during the project will remain in the system. However, the TE points out there are still some institutional gaps that need to be filled. Among other things, it will be “necessary

to have a law passed for establishing the minimum standards based on which each jurisdiction can legislate” (TE p.36).

### **Environmental Risks – Sustainability Likely**

The TE rates environmental sustainability as moderately likely. This TER rates it as likely due to the lack of specific environmental risks that could threaten the sustainability of the project.

There are no reported or known environmental risks to this project. Environmental sustainability is therefore rated as likely, especially since Argentina, as a result of the project, will be better equipped to deal with any risks to fisheries that arise in the future.

## **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?

Materialized co-financing was \$19 million, substantially more than the committed \$7 million expected. The increase in co-financing largely came from in-kind government support, but the TE and other project documents do not clearly explain why support was so much higher than expected, or how it contributed to project outcomes.

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 delays in procurement and hiring at the beginning of the project, which slowed down implementation during the first two years of the project. However, the project was able to make up for the lost time in the early stages, and did not require a project extension. Project end was 9 months later than usual, but project documents do not mention a no-cost extension.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The government has been very supportive of the project, both in driving relevant legislation and in providing co-financing. In addition, according to the TE, “the initiative for preparing the Project came out of the Working Group on Aquatic Resources (GTRA)” (TE p.12), a government body. The project was therefore likely driven by government interest, which positively contributed to the realization of planned 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.

<b>6.1 M&amp;E Design at entry</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately satisfactory</b>
------------------------------------	--

The TE rates M&E design at entry as moderately satisfactory. This TER also rates M&E design as moderately satisfactory due to the completeness of the M&E framework put in place by the project, but noting the weakness of some of the indicators selected.

M&E activities planned and described included the following: project inception workshop followed by inception report, regular monitoring, quarterly meetings with UNDP, Annual Project Report (APR), PIR (PIR), quarterly progress reports, project terminal report, technical reports, mid-term and final evaluations. For each of those activities, the PD included details on responsible parties, budget and time frame required. The total project budget devoted to M&E activities appeared appropriate for the size of the project. (PD pp.78-83)

The strategic results framework presented in the PD (pp.85-91) is complete, with all output and outcome indicators being accompanied by baseline values, targets, means of verification and assumptions. However, not all indicators met the SMART criteria, with some not being easily measurable, or only measurable”, for instance, “% of income from new products” and “% of livestock managed as per best practices promoted within PIECAS” (TE p.21). It was not clear how those indicators should be measured.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
-----------------------------------	--

The TE rates M&E implementation for the project as moderately satisfactory but does not justify this rating. This TER (pp.20-21) notes difficulties in implementing the M&E framework due to inadequate indicators, but very little detail is provided regarding actual M&E activities that took place as part of the project. This TER notes that PIR were regularly produced, and evaluations took place as planned. As a result, a rating of moderately satisfactory is assigned.

## **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>Satisfactory</b>
--	-----------------------------

The implementing agency for this project was the UNDP. In the TE, the UNDP's quality of implementation is rated as highly satisfactory, largely due to its good performance compared to other implementing agencies operating in Argentina. This TER rates the UNDP's implementation performance as satisfactory.

According to the TE, "all key actors highlighted UNDP's support to Project management, and its strengths as a GEF implementing agency" (TE p.24). Those strengths include the fact that the UNDP, unlike other agencies, has officials devoted to GEF projects, managing projects on the ground, and highly trained in environmental matters. The UNDP is also praised for the strength of its financial management, for example for shielding grant funds and thereby protecting them from national financial fluctuations.

In terms of general project management, "several of the interviewees pointed out UNDP is aligned with country priorities, and highlighted that UNDP provided assistance in close communication with the Project's National Coordination and Management, including its participation on the Project Advisory Committee" (TE p.24). The TE also claims that "implementation has been one of the project's strengths. Overall, implementation was effectively and efficiently carried out, with a great capacity to correct and adjust its course vis-à-vis the operational difficulties it faced, without moving away from the strategic lines established within the project document." (TE p.13)

While the UNDP appears to have provided good implementation support and oversight to the project, the TE does not describe how exactly it supported project implementation in great detail. As a result, there is not enough evidence to grant a score of 'highly satisfactory'.

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
---	-----------------------------

The executing agency for this project was the Environment and Sustainable Development Secretariat (SAYDS). In the TE, the SAYDSs quality of execution for this project is not specifically rated. However, the project's 'implementation approach and dynamics', a topic which largely seems to cover project execution, is rated as highly satisfactory. This TER rates project execution as satisfactory due to the overall adaptability and know-how demonstrated by the executing agency, but noting small staffing issues that caused delays and administrative difficulties.

The TE describes project execution as having been flexible, efficient and highly adaptable. Despite being affected by a number of external circumstances (4 changes in SAYDS secretaries, currency devaluations, exchange rate issues), the project adapted well and allegedly solved problems very effectively (TE p.13).

The TE states that, during the final evaluation, interviewees attributed the level of success of this project to the Project Execution Unit (PEU): “the project’s success was mostly due to the quality and commitment of PEU members: the Coordinator-General as well as the administrative support team and GTRA technicians assigned by SArDS to the enlarged PEU. All interviewees pointed out that the technical skills and personal virtues of the Coordinator-General were essential to the project’s success, namely, her intelligence, efficiency, honesty, leadership as well as her federal and social vision. Also the SArDS officials participating in the project, who were interviewed, underscored her great technical capacity and knowledge.” (TE p.14) The consultants hired by the project were also praised for their quality and for their ability to integrate with the SArDS team: “*All consultants worked tirelessly, passionately. No difference can be drawn between SArDS officials and those hired by PEU, they are all fully integrated and committed*” (TE p.14).

That being said, the PEU did encounter some difficulties. PEU staff apparently had little knowledge in accounting, hiring and procurement, which brought about administrative difficulties and delays in project implementation. Those problems remained until an expert was hired to tackle those issues in 2013. Other delays and difficulties were also incurred when the Technical Coordinator left in 2013.

Overall, project execution appears to have run smoothly, with a few administrative hiccups that were adequately addressed by the executing 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.

While the project’s time frame was too short to allow for the measurement of environmental change, the project still had clear positive repercussions: “For instance, in Entre Rios, the existence of PIECAS-DP allowed the repeal of a law granting a 99-year concession of government lands in the Delta for intensive agricultural use. In Buenos Aires Province, a ban was placed on a real estate business aimed at turning several islands into a gated community, which would have serious impacts on the wetlands ecosystem. And Santa Fe province withdrew a claim for the 2008 fires it had filed with the Argentine Supreme Court of Justice against Entre Rios province. Furthermore, the project is spilling over benefits to the River Uruguay and its main tributaries, thanks to the reinforcement of technicians’ capacities in the provinces participating in this GEF project.” (TE p.38)

Overall, the project's accomplishments appear to be making a difference in the short term, and the project impact will most likely continue to materialize going forward.

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 change was reported as part of the project.

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

The government is now hiring the consultants who worked on the project. As a result, the capacities developed will remain in the system (TE p.36). In addition, the awareness and knowledge-building activities conducted by the project successfully "strengthen(ed) the capacities of artisan fishermen in the region, including their capacity to come together and create networks, thus making their participation efforts in biodiversity conservation in the region more effective, significant and informed." (TE p.35)

b) Governance

The project meaningfully increased Argentina's institutional capacity to govern its fisheries. According to the TE, "the project was a great catalyst for developing and/or consolidating in four years what had not been achieved in the last 20 years in freshwater fisheries; among others, a Regional Plan for managing fisheries, an oversight and control system at the provincial and national levels, institutionalized within the Inter-Jurisdictional Oversight Group, fisheries statistics at the provincial and national levels, sports fishing development and governance, fish bait development and governance (which was an informal, unregulated practice), an effective exchange and discussion forum at the federal level" (TE p.35). Indeed, Argentina is now in a much better place to manage fisheries; the institutional capacities built during the project are now largely embedded in the regulatory and legislative framework, and do not appear likely to be reversed.

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.

Some positive unintended impacts were reported as a result of the project. “For instance, bringing together fishermen from different provinces for their training in the building and repair of canoes (established objective) led them to meet one another and exchange job, cultural, daily life experiences and others (secondary goal). Another example illustrating this point are the fishermen collecting live bait in Formosa province who, with the support of the project, set up an association and, with the support of the Ministry of Production and the Environment, now have access to places with good quality bait on private farms.” (TE p.16)

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.

A replication strategy was defined in the Project Document (pp.73-74). While no replication had taken place as of project end, the project appears to have played a catalytic role. For instance, the TE reports that “one of the provincial reference officials stated that now that the fisheries sector had been organized from an ecosystem-based and inter-jurisdictional approach, other topics were being addressed by the provinces, namely, tourism. Furthermore, it is the intention of SSPyPA to extend the work of the Operational Oversight and Control Manual to other SAYDS managed areas, such as fauna and forests.” (TE p.33)

Some practices developed as part of the project have also been more widely adopted. One example of this is that an adapted version of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) used as part of the project is now being adopted as a management practice in the whole provincial PA system of Misiones. (TE p.33)

## **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 report presents the following lessons learned:**

1. Respecting the independence of each jurisdiction, the inter-jurisdictional role in a Federal state is essential for achieving outcomes and for the sustainability of achievements once the project has ended.

2. In multi-jurisdictional projects, a good practice to be replicated is the investment in staff for a relatively small central team and the reinforcement of public sector teams, in coordination with key local stakeholders. A project leaving installed capacities in provincial and national institutions promotes greater levels of ownership by key actors, thus providing for greater possibilities of sustainability.
3. A strong leadership and sense of commitment of the project's CG can catalyze positive changes beyond the project's scope.
4. It is essential to promote the active participation of key stakeholders in all decision-making (from the design phase through to implementation), so as to increase the sense of ownership and minimize potential conflicts. Achieving a sense of ownership with regard to an idea, a notion and a unified strategy is fundamental vis-à-vis potential institutional changes, while also fostering sustainability beyond project duration.
5. At the technical level, it is essential to involve decision-making political levels to ensure commitment for subsequent implementation of the actions defined by the technicians.
6. The design of complex projects, without clear indicators to measure performance, hinders implementation, follow-up and evaluation tasks. In order to achieve sound logical frameworks, it is essential to include M&E experts in the projects (as from the formulation stage), and train team members in results-oriented management and the design of SMART indicators, as a key tool for project follow-up and evaluation. For cost-effectiveness purposes, an M&E consultant could be shared among several projects.
7. Along the same line, it is essential to have expertise in financial-administrative matters during project formulation so as to appropriately plan for periods covering four or more years.
8. Promoting fora for interaction among governmental, academic, non-governmental, productive and community actors allows a more efficient identification of key problems and their subsequent solution.
9. It is very useful to have field training and practical demonstrations as regards policies, laws and regulations. This promotes the exchange of knowledge and experiences, while contributing to set up partnerships and cooperation bonds between actors.
10. During project implementation, it is important to ensure a timely re-direction of actions when implementation proves not feasible for different reasons, to thus optimize resources.
11. Integrity of the ecosystems and their services must be maintained across broad landscapes to preserve environmental services which operate on a large scale, facilitate connectivity between natural and semi-natural ecosystems, and ensure the notion of ecosystem services is mainstreamed into policies, strategies, production practices and the decisions of land and resource users.

12. Policies are a crucial governance element since they provide visions, strategies and plans for managing matters of common interest.

(TE pp.48-49)

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

**The report makes the following recommendations (edited by the writer of this TER):**

1. Developing an initiative that promotes an overarching solution addressing the threats to the system does not seem possible using co-funding resources, or during GEF project execution terms (up to 4-6 years). Nonetheless, a strategy aimed at addressing key issues can be the beginning of a path leading to a long-term, comprehensive solution, through the implementation of a series of “back-to-back” projects covering broader periods, and with ensured funding for 15 years or more.
2. It is necessary, on the one hand, to have the commitment of partners/beneficiaries in the implementation of instruments and agreements defined within the framework of project execution. On the other hand, in order to achieve the expected impact on global biodiversity values, it would be necessary to have additional GEF support through a new project to allow the consolidation of the outcomes achieved and expand them to the rest of the territory.
3. It is necessary to reach out to the local level (municipalities, villages) by developing Territorial Governance and environmental policy instruments, as well as by outlining and promoting conservation plans applicable to productive systems.
4. Given the size of the vulnerable groups using and living on this freshwater corridor and the consequences CC could have on the economic activities of the region, the suggestion is for Territorial Governance strategies to bear in mind ecosystem management as an effective and efficient adaptation and mitigation measure.
5. With regard to the replication of PIECAS, and in view of the suggestions of the CSO sector, the recommendation is for a case study to be carried out on the PIECAS experience as a forum of consensus building, with lessons to be learnt and replicated.
6. The idea is for the national government to actively continue supporting the processes, expanding them to other environments and similar topics, but respecting the pertinent jurisdictions.
7. In order to follow up on the response to the recommendations set forth herein, it is suggested for UNDP and SAYDS to promote a high-level, “ex post” evaluation meeting in mid-2015, with the participation of PAC and the RTA.

(TE p.vii-viii)

## 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 describes project realizations (outcomes and impacts), but this description could be done in a more systematic manner, and performance against the logframe be presented in a more accessible way.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is consistent, but some of the required ratings (for instance, quality of the executing agency) is not rated nor specifically addressed. Evidence is presented, but much of the discussion presented in the TE is not presented together with clear evidence.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE presents a very thorough, detailed discussion of sustainability and of the project's exit strategy.	<b>HS</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned/recommendations section is detailed, supported by evidence provided in the report, and appears comprehensive.	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	There are inconsistencies between the budget figures presented on TE page iv and TE page 23. Total costs are presented, as well as summary of materialized co-financing. However, this summary is missing several figures for 2014. Total and per activity project costs are provided.	<b>MS</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE only presents a very superficial description of the project's M&E implementation.	<b>MS</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MS</b>

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

No additional sources of information were used in the preparation of this TER.