

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2018

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3873	
GEF Agency project ID		P113860	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Developing and Demonstrating Replicable Protected Area Management Models at Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area	
Country/Countries		Lao PDR	
Region		Asia	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD-SO1-SP1, SP3 SFM-SP1, SP2	
Executing agencies involved		Wildlife Conservation Society	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Wildlife Conservation Society	
Private sector involvement		-	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		8/22/2012	
Effectiveness date / project start		4/18/2013	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		8/31/2016	
Actual date of project completion		3/31/2017	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.00	
	Co-financing	0.00	
GEF Project Grant		0.88	0.87 ¹
Co-financing	IA own	0.64	
	Government	0.13	
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.70	1.91
	Private sector	-	-
	NGOs/CSOs	0.26	
Total GEF funding		0.88	0.87
Total Co-financing		1.73	1.91
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		2.61	2.79
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		7/2017	
Author of TE		Wildlife Conservation Society & Proj. Mgmt. Unit (no author credited)	
TER completion date		1/24/2019	
TER prepared by		Cody Parker	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Neeraj Negi	

¹ This is the amount given in the TE; the Implementation Completion Memorandum gives .869.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	MS	MS ²		MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		L		UA
M&E Design		NR		MU
M&E Implementation		NR		UA
Quality of Implementation		S ³		MS
Quality of Execution		MS ⁴		MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report				MS

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's Global Environmental Objective is "to test, in selected areas of the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area, targeted activities for sustainable natural resource use and protection of selected species threatened by human interaction" (Approval Request, p. 17).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Development Objective is the same as the Global Environmental Objective. The project originally aimed to achieve this objective through three components:

1. Management and conservation working models within the National Protected Area including implementation of co-management of infrastructure in sensitive habitats;
2. Working models of ecotourism for community engagement and sustainable financing;
3. Dissemination and replication of working models of the National Protected Area within Lao PDR.

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

The project objective did not change. In 2014, the project underwent a restructuring and the closing date was extended from August 2016 to March 2017. The restructuring changed nearly all the indicators in the Results Framework, largely due to the original indicators being irrelevant, too complicated to measure, or inadequate proxies; the few that were unchanged had their targets revised downward for realism (Implementation Completion Memorandum, pp. 2-4). After the restructuring, the project consisted of 4 components:

1. Community Engagement Model;
2. Protected Area Administration Model;
3. Resource Management and Protection Model;

² The TE assigns no ratings; this and the Sustainability rating are taken from the Implementation Completion Memorandum.

³ Rating for "[World] Bank performance" in ICM.

⁴ Rating for "Recipient [i.e., executing agency] performance" in ICM.

4. Planning, Research, and Development Model.

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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The project was aligned with GEF's Biodiversity focal area Strategic Objective 2, "to catalyze sustainability of protected area systems", through its aims to designate 304,000 ha of broad-leaf forest as a Totally Protected Zone and 193,000 ha as a Controlled Use Zone. The project was also relevant to Strategic Program 1, "sustainable financing of protected area systems at the national level", through increasing support for ecotourism development within the system, and Strategic Program 3, "strengthening terrestrial protected area networks", through its aim to improve protected area management by 8 points on the METT scorecard (later revised to 6 points). (Approval Request, p. 28). Furthermore, the project was aligned with national goals to pursue green growth and strengthen protected areas, as exemplified by the Government's target of establishing two National Parks by 2020.

Overhunting of wild animals and habitat destruction continue to pose a threat to wildlife and humans alike despite the designation of the Protected Area, as lack of awareness among residents, lack of enforcement capacity, and financial incentives combine to drive destructive behavior. The project's activities aimed to overcome these barriers by providing training and equipment to law enforcement, conducting awareness campaigns, signing agreements with villages to support sustainable land-use management, and establishing ecotourism models to provide alternative conservation-friendly sources of income to residents. Relevance of project objectives and design is therefore rated as Satisfactory.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE does not assign a rating for effectiveness. This TER rates effectiveness as **Satisfactory**, given the achievement of most of the project's targets and overachievement of several.

As noted in section 3.3, the results framework was revised significantly following the Midterm Review. The TE and Implementation Completion Memorandum both evaluate effectiveness based on the revised indicators, and in the absence of data to evaluate achievement of the original indicators, this TER follows suit.

The revised Results Framework includes five Outcome Indicators. Indicator 1, “Extent of forest cover maintained”, was slightly overachieved with 309,000 ha total forest cover against a target of 305,000. Indicator 2, “New critical wildlife species habitat gazetted to the National Protected Area”, was not complete by end of project due to bureaucratic delays, although there was a chance that 91,000 ha of habitat (against a target of 80,000) would be appended to the Protected Area soon after project completion. Indicator 3, “Protected area management effectiveness”, achieved a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool score of 45 against the revised target of 44 (baseline 38), although not reaching the original target of 46. Indicator 4, “Villages with signed Village Natural Resource Agreement compatible with approved mitigation plan for Phathi Road” (target: 3) was partially achieved, with 4 agreements completed but awaiting final approval. Indicator 5, “Models for sustainable use and protection of natural resources documented and disseminated”, was achieved although some of the final brochures were not distributed until after end of project.

Component 1: Community engagement models. Of a targeted 15 Natural Resource Agreements signed with villages, 8 were completed with 4 more awaiting final approval from the district council. These agreements represent a plan for local sustainable resource extraction and income improvement developed by the project team and beneficiaries. The target of 35 village ecotourism contracts was missed, with only 26 being signed and no explanation provided for the underperformance. All four targeted feasibility studies for non-timber forest products were completed, although it is noted that an opportunity was missed by not supporting livestock-rearing projects which local communities are more engaged and interested in (ICM, p. 6). Agroforestry activities under the project have made progress in identifying potential crops for sustainable extraction in 5 villages, especially coffee, that can lead to livelihood improvement, and ecotourism activities have provided increased tourism and income for beneficiaries.

Component 2: Protected area administration model. A three-province National Protected Area management model was successfully developed as targeted, and beyond this, there are ongoing discussions with the government to make the project area into a National Park, granting it additional protections. 250 days of training were provided to non-executing agency staff against a target of 240.

Component 3: Resource management and protection model. The target of 3 *kumbans* [admin. level between village and district] with Community-Led Enforcement Action Networks is reported as having been met, although more through better community involvement in patrolling and enforcement rather than the creation of a parallel enforcement apparatus as initially envisioned, as this was determined by outside consultation to be more effective (TE, p. 19). 1,419 sq. km are being patrolled in the core zone, against a targeted 1,400. Community-led patrolling and enforcement of conservation has been strengthened by the project, and the introduction of consistent wildlife and protected area regulations across districts is expected to form a foundation for outreach campaigns and increased effectiveness of the wildlife crime hotline (TE, p. 22).

Component 4: Planning, research and development model. The targeted areas with updated wildlife surveys was exceeded. The proposal to redefine the boundaries of the overall Protected Area to protect

gibbon habitat from agricultural encroachment was not developed, although it is ongoing at the village level.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE does not address efficiency; the Implementation Completion Memorandum describes it as “moderately unsatisfactory” (ICM, p. 10). This TER rates efficiency as Moderately Unsatisfactory as well, mostly due to high project management costs.

The ICM notes that project management costs were very high, at 18% of the total budget, similar to the amount spent for all of Component 2, ending up at a total of \$568,000 compared to the originally allocated \$156,000 in the Approval Request. The high project management costs are attributed to the large degree of hands-on support required, especially in the early stages of the project when government capacity was low (ICM, p. 8). It is also noted that certain expenses, for example wildlife patrols, were almost double that of comparable projects, although being on the order of \$18 vs \$10 per day, this would not seem to be a major financial issue.

On the other hand, the ICM identifies synergies which improved project efficiency. For example, wildlife monitoring was supported by tourism and patrolling activities, and construction for a trekking tourism product was procured largely through the community force account.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Unable to Assess
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The TE does not address project sustainability. The Implementation Completion Memorandum briefly assesses Risks to Project Outcomes and rates these risks as “Low”, primarily based on the assumption that the project’s successes will be sustained and shortcomings remedied under further World Bank financing in this area (Lao Environment and Social Project, 2nd Phase) and the assumption of a “country context shift to green growth” (ICM, p. 11). Without a more detailed outline of potential risks and mitigation factors, though, this TER is Unable to Assess the likelihood of project outcome sustainability.

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?

Per the Approval Request, co-financing of \$1.73M was to be leveraged from the Wildlife Conservation Society (executing agency, 15%), KfW’s Climate Protection Through Avoided Deforestation Project (40%), the Lao Government (8%), and the World Bank, through a related project working in some of the same districts (implementing agency, 37%). The finance table in the TE tells a different story, with co-financing reported from the Climate Protection Through Avoided Deforestation Project (\$490,000), Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative (\$596,000), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (\$124,000), the French Development Agency (\$309,000), and the EU (\$390,000), with no mention made of the expected \$640,000 from the Bank nor the \$258,000 in cash and in-kind contributions expected

from the Wildlife Conservation Society. This reported actual co-financing totals to \$1.93M, against the originally expected \$1.73M. With no discussion or further details of the co-financing situation provided, this TER is unable to determine what effect, if any, this extra financing had on project outcomes or sustainability.

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project was extended from August 2016 until March 2017. While delays in various project activities are noted (e.g. in the signing of Village Natural Resource Agreements, hiring of consultants, and procurement), it is unclear if one specific delay is responsible for the extension request. The extension is not noted as having affected project outcomes or sustainability.

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 Lao government's commitment is reported as having been low initially, which made effective testing of new management approaches difficult; however, it is also noted that the government's commitment improved greatly over the project's lifespan (ICM, p. 6).

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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Neither the TE nor the Implementation Completion Memorandum assess M&E design. This TER rates M&E design at entry as Moderately Unsatisfactory, mostly due to the lack of a budgeted M&E plan and deficiencies in the logframe.

The Approval Request lays out a relatively robust M&E plan specifying quarterly reports, World Bank support missions, a Midterm Review and Implementation Completion Report, etc. However, it includes no budget and is therefore incomplete. The logframe appears largely adequate, but some indicators were found during the Midterm Review to be overoptimistic, too difficult to measure, and/or insufficient indicators to appropriately capture progress (ICM, p. 2). As a result, the logframe needed to be heavily reworked following the Midterm Review.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Unable to Assess
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No discussion of the project's M&E implementation is provided in either the TE or the Implementation Completion Memorandum. Therefore, this TER is Unable to Assess the quality of project M&E implementation.

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 TE does not rate project implementation; the Implementation Completion Memorandum rates Bank support to the project as Satisfactory. This TER rates quality of project implementation as Moderately Satisfactory.

The ICM notes the Bank's support to the project through its restructuring and extension, facilitation of dialogue with stakeholders at the central level, and the continuation of activities and coordination through further financing under the Lao Environment and Social Project 2nd Phase. However, it is also noted that closer support on community engagement would have been welcomed, as well as a more effective handling of earlier issues around one project activity, the Pathi Road mitigation plan (ICM, p. 11). Project design appears to have been robust and risk analysis adequate. Despite the issues noted, it seems clear that the Bank provided a considerable level of support overall and its commitment to the project and to addressing its shortcomings is further demonstrated through the continued financing, justifying a rating of Moderately Satisfactory.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE and Implementation Completion Memorandum do not rate project execution specifically, but the ICM rates "Recipient [i.e., Executing Agency] Performance" as Moderately Satisfactory. This TER rates quality of project execution as Moderately Satisfactory, due to the overall adequate performance reported in the TE.

The project's executing agency was the Wildlife Conservation Society. The Completion Memorandum does not assess Wildlife Conservation Society's performance in detail, but notes "satisfactory" performance in terms of "financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, and co-financing" (ICM, p. 11). There were delays in the submission of regular reports and in keeping project

disbursement rate current, although these are reported as having been “partially remedied”. Although Wildlife Conservation Society management changed twice during the project, no specific issues are attributed to this and it is noted that the national project team maintained constancy. Strategic planning for community engagement and attention to cooperation with key stakeholders are noted as areas for improvement although no details are provided on these shortcomings (ICM, p. 12).

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The project’s focus on protected area management structures means its effects on biodiversity conservation are more long-term oriented, and no direct impacts on environmental stress or status are noted as a result of project activities.

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.

Ecotourism activities are reported to have already brought larger numbers of ecotourists and provided extra income for beneficiaries in 12 villages (TE, pp. 23-25).

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

Over 250 days of training were provided in law enforcement, mapping, monitoring, first aid, and ecotourism to Protected Area Management Unit staff and beneficiaries; direct impacts of this training are not reported (ICM, p. 7).

b) Governance

Wildlife Conservation Society has embedded lead technical staff members to work closely with the section heads of the government structure overseeing the protected area, with a view towards providing ongoing capacity development and to allow a transition from Wildlife Conservation Society-led to government-led implementation of the protected area program (TE, p. 27).

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 of the project are reported in the ICM or 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.

The models tested by the project, including protected area macro-zoning and community land-use planning, are expected to be replicable in other protected areas of Lao PDR. However, it is noted that the strategy for dissemination and standard setting “does not seem to have kept in pace” (ICM, p. 10). There is a vision of upgrading the project’s protected area into a National Park under a centralized National Park System, but this has not been established yet. Therefore, the extent to which project initiatives will be scaled up or replicated is yet to be seen.

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.

- Delegating protected area resource management and monitoring to an assorted body of staff that may also include community members is a valid, efficient and potentially successful alternative to staffing from a single government agency. This is especially applicable to projects addressing nascent protected area systems.

- Decentralized administrative management of large protected areas containing biodiversity assets of global significance is impossible without leadership and political support from the central government.

- In situations where ecotourism products are attractive but located far from existing markets, it is reasonable for an NGO to act as a substitute for the private sector for product development, training, and market linkages until the market and access grows sufficiently to replace the NGO with a responsible investor.

- A national infrastructure development practice cannot be challenged without carrying out full due diligence with local community and public stakeholders. Macro and micro land use planning must be central to the dialogue.

- For species like tigers whose illegal market demand is high enough to attract organized crime, regular approaches to patrolling are unsuccessful -- a very high and unequivocal political commitment mandating effective multiagency collaboration is needed (ICM, pp. 12-16).

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

Beyond the lessons summarized above, no recommendations are provided by the ICM or TE.

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 contains a detailed assessment of project outcomes and impacts.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	Both documents are internally consistent, but the ratings and assessments in the ICM are explained too briefly.	MS
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE does not address sustainability; the ICM discusses risks, but so briefly as to preclude full assessment.	U
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The TE provides no lessons or recommendations, but those in the ICM are highly relevant and well-explained.	S
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Both contain financing tables, which are slightly inconsistent with one another. No discussion of cofinancing is provided in either document, which is especially notable as the TE's table introduces a number of co-financiers not mentioned in the Approval Request.	U
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	No meaningful discussion of M&E systems is included in either the ICM or TE.	HU
Overall TE Rating	The ICM (by World Bank) and "Final Report" (by Wildlife Conservation Society, and referred to in this TER as "TE") were used and are evaluated here jointly. The ICM presents a broader evaluation of the project, but in little detail; the TE focuses solely on project outcomes, with no ratings but greater detail.	MS

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

Aside from the Implementation Completion Memorandum and the TE, no sources of information were used in the preparation of this TER.