

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2020

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		3963	
GEF Agency project ID		N/A	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-4	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		IFAD	
Project name		Social Integral Development and its Interrelation with Climate Change in Watersheds in Lara and Falcon States (Venezuela) (PDELAFA)	
Country/Countries		Venezuela	
Region		LAC	
Focal area		Climate Change	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		CC SP-6	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of People's Power for Ecosocialism and Water (MINEA) ¹	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		None	
Private sector involvement		None	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		8/20/2012	
Effectiveness date / project start		6/14/2013	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		6/30/2017	
Actual date of project completion		6/30/2017	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.10	0.10
	Co-financing	0.12	0.12
GEF Project Grant		3.64	0.50
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	10.31	1.59
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		3.74	0.60
Total Co-financing		10.43	1.71
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		14.17	2.31
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		6/6/2018	
Author of TE		Not given	
TER completion date		6/17/2019	
TER prepared by		Cody Parker	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)			

¹ Known as "Ministry of People's Power for the Environment" (MPPA) during project design; the ministry was restructured and its name changed after project start.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

No global environmental objective is presented in the project document. The project's "general objective" is "to promote sustainable and climate-friendly rural development in the States of Lara and Falcon, increasing the potential of carbon stocks in the region and reducing emissions, while encouraging sustainable production alternatives that are better adapted to climate change and can help reduce poverty" (PD, vii).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The project's objective is "to promote sustainable and climate-friendly rural development in the States of Lara and Falcon, increasing the potential of carbon stocks in the region and reducing emissions, while encouraging sustainable production alternatives that are better adapted to climate change and can help reduce poverty" (PD, vii). This was to be achieved through three project components:

1. Mitigation measures to fix or increase carbon sequestration and avoid greenhouse gas emissions;
2. Fostering capacities for carbon monitoring; and
3. Awareness, training and capacity-building to assume management of forests, soils, and water.

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

There were no changes to the objective. Due to a 3-year delay in startup, the project was significantly scaled down for partial implementation in its final year, dropping all activities from Components 2 and 3 and most from Component 1.

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 TE rates relevance as Satisfactory. This TER also rates relevance as Satisfactory.

The project was relevant to the Government of Venezuela's stated goals of measuring the effects of climate change and using this data to produce public policies, including a National Law for Climate Change (TE, 27). The project was also in line with GEF-4 Climate Change Strategic Priority 6, "Promoting the reduction of GHG emissions from land use, land use change and forestry" through its activities focused on carbon sequestration through reforestation and development of sustainable land and water management plans. The project's strategy of improving local governance and introducing more sustainable agro-forestry systems while improving local awareness and capacity was a reasonable approach to address the two main environmental threats identified in project design (illegal logging and goat overgrazing). Relevance is therefore rated as Satisfactory.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Highly Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates effectiveness as Unsatisfactory. This TER revises the rating to Highly Unsatisfactory, due to non-achievement of nearly all the project's planned outcomes.

Due to the long delay in project start-up caused by disagreements between IFAD and the government regarding the management of finances (cf. section 5.2), the project was significantly scaled down for partial implementation in its final year. Components 2 and 3, which aimed at building capacities for carbon monitoring and training and community projects on water issues, were not implemented at all, while Component 1 was only partially implemented.

The outputs ultimately achieved by the project consisted of five forestry subprojects, which resulted in a total of 21,580 plants produced in nurseries, 80% of which were then planted in yards and public spaces across communities in 2 of 7 originally targeted micro-watersheds. The TE reports this as fulfilling 13% of a targeted 165,000 plants, but this target does not appear in the project document and so it is unclear what it refers to. In terms of the project's originally planned outputs, the results may be considered as partially fulfilling the 318 forest management subprojects targeted under Component 1. The project document includes area of afforestation/reforestation as a key indicator, with a target of 3,200 ha; the actual reforestation effected by the project does not seem to have been measured by area. The project also included a specific target for CO2 mitigation after 20 years, but as no carbon monitoring systems or training were achieved, monitoring did not and will not occur and therefore CO2 results are not available. Component 1 as originally planned also included the development of 30 ecological small

businesses, 100 community greenhouses, and the development of 7 municipal natural resource management plans, none of which were achieved.

Apart from the plants produced, the positive impacts reported were advances in plant nursery management (land selection, substrate preparation, bag filling, irrigation, pest and disease control), increased awareness of climate change and natural resource management (though this was not measured), and an improvement in the financial management capacities of communities through the Communal Councils, which demonstrated adequate management of finances for subprojects (TE, 21). It is unclear whether Councils were established in all 33 targeted municipalities as planned, or only in the 5 communities with subprojects, but despite their adequate financial management, their involvement in sub-project development was reportedly low and they are overall not functioning as planned (TE, 21). Finally, the project reportedly generated “synergies and significant contributions” with a related project in the area (PROSALAF II), assisting in that’s project’s development of an Adaptation and Mitigation Plan for Climate Change, although it does not detail the nature or level of these synergies and contributions (TE, 3).

Given the overall extremely low level of implementation resulting in non-achievement of the project’s objectives, effectiveness is rated as Highly Unsatisfactory.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates efficiency as Unsatisfactory. This TER also rates efficiency as Unsatisfactory due primarily to the long delay in start-up which prevented the achievement of most project outputs.

The three-year delay in project start, mainly caused by disagreements between IFAD and the government over the loan rate in the financing agreement, led to non-execution of most project activities. This is reflected in the fact that of a projected budget of \$14 million, only \$2.1 million was spent (\$500,000 of GEF grant and the remainder cofinancing.) Yet with only 5 small subprojects implemented at an average cost of \$418,000 each, even the project’s modest results were not achieved efficiently, as project personnel and management costs had to be covered even while no project activities were being executed. High turnover in executing agency leadership, with four changes of Minister over four years, also delayed the taking of decisions and made it more difficult to resolve the disagreements between IFAD and the government over management of the loan. Another factor affecting implementation was the deteriorating economic situation in Venezuela over the course of the project: the rate of inflation, which stood at 68.5% in 2014, had risen to 1,600% by 2017 (TE, 19). Along with a worsening exchange rate, this made procurement of goods for the sub-projects more expensive, reducing efficiency. On the other hand, the TE reports that execution of the scaled-down work plan in the final year was mostly satisfactory, with efficient financial management from the project coordination unit (TE, 28). Nonetheless, given the small fraction of activities executed at relatively high cost at the very end of a 4-year project, overall efficiency is rated as Unsatisfactory.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Unlikely
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The TE rates sustainability overall as Unlikely. This TER also rates sustainability as Unlikely, mostly due to the lack of available financing in a deteriorating economic situation and continuing extreme weather events threatening agricultural output.

Financial: Financial risk is high. No mechanism for continued financial support to the subprojects was developed during project design or implementation, and with inflation continuing to rise and considering the remoteness of the project areas, the desire of communities to keep on with the subprojects will likely not be enough to sustain them (TE, 14).

Sociopolitical: Project beneficiaries demonstrated ownership of the plant nursery subprojects through careful record-keeping and creative solutions to obstacles (for example, using recycled plastic bags to repair a nursery that was damaged in a flood). Interviews with beneficiaries revealed strong appreciation for the subprojects, and active participation of young people in nursery management was especially noted as a positive indication of community ownership (TE, 6). Sociopolitical sustainability is moderately likely.

Institutional: Sustained benefits from the nursery subprojects will require continued follow-up from the Ministry of People's Power for Ecosocialism and Water. While the Ministry maintains a presence in the project areas, its local units lack the logistical capacity to continue monitoring and supporting the beneficiary communities. Furthermore, a more comprehensive monitoring system with effective indicators would need to be developed by the Ministry, which seems unlikely given that even with GEF-IFAD support the Ministry's monitoring of this project was unsatisfactory. Institutional sustainability is moderately unlikely.

Environmental: Environmental risks to project sustainability are high. Deforestation and erosion in the project area due to various factors including charcoal production, goat ranching, and cultivation of non-native crops continue to jeopardize the environment and well-being of residents. This negatively affected the project even during implementation, as a mudslide in 2016 caused the loss of half of the plants in one nursery subproject (TE, 13). With no significant progress achieved on reforestation or climate risk management, such incidents will continue to threaten agricultural production in the area as well as the safety of residents.

Overall, while communities are committed to the subprojects, the capacity of the government for continued support is low and unlikely to improve given the current political and economic situation of the country. Sustainability of project outcomes is therefore rated Unlikely.

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?

There were no issues with materialization of planned co-financing. The project ultimately spent only \$2.1 million of its \$14 million budget, comprising \$0.5 million of GEF grant and \$1.6 million in government co-financing. Due to the severely delayed startup of the project, the full budget, including co-financing, could not be executed, but the delay was not due to a lack of co-financing.

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 not extended, but its startup was delayed by about 3 years. Despite an official start date of June 2013, the first (and only) GEF grant disbursement of \$500,000 was not made until August 2014, and the funds were not executed until September 2016 (TE, 18). The main reasons for this delay were disagreements between IFAD and the Government over the nature of the loan and its management. The disagreement is not explained in detail, but it is at least clear that the Government took issue with the loan rate established in the Financing Agreement it had signed with IFAD (TE, 18). Structural changes and associated leadership turnover in various ministries, including the executing agency (the Ministry of People's Power for the Environment, which was reorganized as the Ministry of People's Power for Ecosocialism and Water) exacerbated this situation. Project activities were only actually implemented in 2016-17, when the first annual work plan was finally approved.

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 main issue affecting country ownership was the rapid turnover in the leadership of the Ministry accompanying its restructuring, which made resolution of the misunderstandings over the Financing Agreement more difficult to resolve and was a major factor in the project's delay. On the other hand, the government provided co-financing to cover project personnel and other administrative costs in a timely manner.

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: Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates M&E design as Moderately Unsatisfactory. This TER rates M&E design as Unsatisfactory, mostly due to an inadequate logical framework.

The M&E plan in the project document provides for the output of standard reports such as PIRs as well as a midterm review and final evaluation. Responsible parties are identified, and a budget is provided in the Endorsement Request. The project document provides a results framework, but it is not adequate to effectively measure project progress or achievements. It includes vague indicators such as “area planted” and “number of mitigation activities”, but no quantified targets for any of them. The means of verification are also vague (“project reports”, “participative monitoring system”), providing no meaningful guidance on how progress on the indicators would be measured even if there were clear targets. The only quantified targets in the framework are for avoided and sequestered tons of CO₂, but without adequate intermediate indicators or provisions for measurement, there would be no way to assess whether and how the project contributed to these. M&E design is therefore rated as Unsatisfactory.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE rates M&E implementation as Moderately Unsatisfactory. This TER rates M&E implementation as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

The project’s monitoring and evaluation unit carried out supervisory missions as planned in the last year of the project, but these were of limited value as they focused primarily on the administrative-financial closure of the subprojects rather than the implementation process itself (TE, 16). Reporting was unsatisfactory; key findings and lessons learned were not reflected in the reports and files created for the subprojects (TE, 16). Project implementation reports in particular do not fulfil the requirements set forth in the M&E plan, as they are lacking detail and do not track results according to the logical framework; PIR 2016 contains no information at all apart from total expenditures and unexplained ratings for implementation progress and sustainability. A registry of beneficiaries was not created as planned, leading to a lack of data on who participated in project activities and how they were affected (TE, 16). The project coordination unit did establish baseline data at the community and family level using information provided by the Communal Councils, but due to the rushed implementation in 2016-17, no follow-up data was collected for comparison (TE, 16). These problems resulted in an overall lack of systemization of the achievements of the project and lessons learned from implementation. M&E implementation is therefore rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The project's implementing agency was IFAD. The TE rates IFAD's performance as Moderately Unsatisfactory. This TER also rates quality of project implementation as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Support provided by IFAD during project implementation took the form of seven supervisory missions, which mainly focused on working out the disagreements with the government which prevented the operational start of the project. However, this support was insufficient to resolve the issue, which resulted in a 3-year delay. Overall, follow-up to ensure government compliance with the commitments established in project design was not given adequate attention; for example, in August 2015 it was agreed that MINEA (the executing agency) would share a Scenario Analysis which was developed to resolve the delay, but by September 2016 this was still not done and no action had been taken by IFAD to follow up. On the other hand, the TE credits IFAD's supervision with making possible a "financially appropriate" operational closure which left open the possibility for Venezuela to access and manage GEF grants in the future (TE, 22). Nonetheless, given the insufficient support and follow-up from IFAD which allowed the project to run for 3 years without any activities implemented, quality of project implementation is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The executing agency was the Ministry of People's Power for the Environment (MPPA) which was later restructured and renamed the Ministry of People's Power for Ecosocialism and Water (MINEA). The TE rates the government's performance as Moderately Unsatisfactory. This TER also rates quality of project execution as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Disagreement over the administration of project funds was the primary cause of the 3-year delay in project start-up. The exact nature of the disagreement is not explained in the TE, but one aspect was the government's objection to the loan rate established in the Financing Agreement. High turnover in MPPA/MINEA was a major and related cause of delay, as responsibility for decision-making was passed on to new Ministers unfamiliar with the project; although not explicitly stated in the TE, it seems likely that this turnover itself caused the disagreement over the loan, with a new Minister taking objecting to the stipulations in the already-signed document. Therefore, although the TE blames the disagreement primarily on IFAD for not adequately following up to ensure compliance, the government also bears responsibility. On the other hand, government co-financing was made available in a timely manner, and the Scenario Analysis undertaken with local resources to provide options for implementation when the project was stalled demonstrates effort on the part of MPPA/MINEA to resolve the problems; however, the Scenario Analysis was not delivered to IFAD as planned, indicating poor coordination/follow up on the part of MPPA/MINEA. Due to the delay in project start-up, only one Annual Work Plan was developed, for 2016-17. The TE reports that for this period, the performance of the project coordination unit was satisfactory and compliant with the loan agreement, and its management of disbursements and accountability, avoiding bureaucratic delays, contributed to successful implementation of the 2016-17 work plan (TE, 28). Considering the overall low level of ownership and coordination on the part of

MPPA/MINEA despite effective management in the final year, project execution is rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

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.

No impacts on environmental stress or status are reported. The project resulted in the raising of 21,580 plants in nurseries, 80% of which were subsequently planted for reforestation in the project area, but the effect of these plants on the environmental status could not be evaluated due to the TE mission taking place only a few months after these subprojects were implemented, as well as a lack of continued monitoring by the executing agency (TE, 19).

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. Due to the project's limited implementation, socioeconomic outcomes could not be achieved, and the TE assesses the project's contribution to food security, income and household goods, agricultural productivity, market access, adaptation to climate change and gender equality as "not valuable" (TE, 20).

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

Although capacity-building activities were not implemented as planned, the TE reports that improvements were achieved in nursery management (land selection, substrate preparation, bag filling, irrigation, pest and disease control) and in raising awareness of environmental issues such as natural resource management, climate change, and human and natural threats, and that this learning was demonstrated by beneficiaries' actions (TE, 21).

b) Governance

The project established Communal Councils which served as the platform for execution of the subprojects. Despite this role, members of the Councils showed a lack of involvement in the actual development of subprojects, and the overall performance of the Councils was found to be unsatisfactory. On the other hand, 83% of them demonstrated an improvement in their capacity to adequately monitor and manage the financial resources involved, indicating some improvement in local governance and capability to execute similar actions for future projects (TE, 21).

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.

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.

No adoption at scale is reported; the main project outputs intended for long-term adoption, such as the carbon monitoring capacity development, were not implemented due to the long delay. The nursery subprojects were well-received by beneficiaries but are unlikely to be replicated due to financial constraints.

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 highlights the following good practices observed in the project (TE, 6):

- The project coordination unit's technical-managerial team approach to communities established trusting relationships which could facilitate information-gathering in the future.

- Effective coordination between the Ministry's Soil department and Watershed department was crucial to implementation.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE provides the following recommendations (TE, 7-8):

- IFAD should study the factors that affected project implementation and take steps in future to ensure clarity on project aims and responsibilities with relevant actors;
- Given that the project's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will take part in the implementation of the National Watersheds Reforestation Plan 2018, the project's experiences should be systematized to better elicit lessons learned;
- MINEA should strengthen its Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, maintain presence in the field to give technical assistance to communities, and establish indicators and sustainability criteria for each of the subprojects to continue;
- For future MINEA activities in the project area, an environmental risk analysis should be undertaken and a Community Environmental Plan formulated by beneficiaries for rapid response to extreme weather events.

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 adequately assesses outcomes and impacts.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is consistent and complete overall.	S
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Sustainability is addressed adequately.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The "good practices" section mostly highlights positive outcomes of the project rather than actual good practices developed/lessons learned.	MU
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?		S
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	Discussion of M&E system is mostly adequate but could use more detail.	MS
Overall TE Rating		S

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

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