

GEFM&E Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
			Review date:	10/19/05
GEF ID:	407		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
Project Name:	Inventory, Evaluation and Monitoring of Botanical Diversity in Southern Africa: A Regional Capacity and Institution Building Network	GEF financing:	\$4.725	?
Country:	Regional (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe)	Co-financing:	\$4.686	?
Operational Program:	STRM	Total Project Cost:	\$9.411	\$0,00
IA	UNDP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	National Botanical Institute (South Africa)	Work Program date		May 1996
		CEO Endorsement		August 1997
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		April 1998
		Closing Date	Proposed: April 2002	Actual: May 2005
Prepared by: Josh Brann	Reviewed by: Claudio Volonte	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 4 years	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 7 years	Difference between original and actual closing: 3 years
Author of TE: Stell Simiyu and Jonathan Timberlake		TE completion date: April 5 th , 2005	TE submission date to GEF OME: June 21, 2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 11 weeks

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS

GEFME Ratings for project impacts (if applicable), outcomes, project monitoring and evaluation, and quality of the terminal evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), not applicable (N/A) and unable to assess (U/A). GEFME Ratings for the project sustainability: Highly likely (HL), likely (L), moderately likely (ML), moderately unlikely (MU), unlikely (U), highly unlikely (HU), not applicable (N/A), and unable to assess (U/A). Please refer to document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. OED)	GEFME
2.1 Project impacts	N/A	Not given		U/A
2.2 Project outcomes	S	"Attainment of objectives" given a HS rating		S
2.3 Project sustainability	N/A	Discussion given, no rating		MU

		given.	
2.4 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	HS	MS
2.5 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	S (4.5)

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? NO Why? Poor discussion of M&E, no specific discussion of impacts.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

- **What are the Global Environmental Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**

To develop a strong core of professional botanists, taxonomists, horticulturists and plant diversity specialists within the ten countries of southern Africa, competent to inventory, monitor, evaluate and conserve the botanical diversity of the region in the face of specific development challenges, and to respond to the technical and scientific needs of the Convention on Biodiversity.

- **What are the Development Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**

To contribute to sustainable human development in the southern African region through the effective conservation and utilization of natural resources.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

- **What were the major project outcomes and impacts as described in the TE?**

According to the TE, the project has “enabled the ten southern African countries to accelerate progress in the implementation of the CBD, particularly within the framework of the Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC).” Also, “Of the 45 project activities identified in the logframe, only three were later cancelled and two not fully achieved. The SABONET project has largely achieved its broad objective of building the regional human, infrastructural and institutional capacity.” The project carried out a large number of in-depth trainings on various issues related to the project objectives. According to the TE, “The project has provided an excellent model for networking at a regional level.” On the whole this was a very large and complex project, and there were wide-ranging outcomes and impacts at the international, regional and national levels. There is no specific discussion of the project’s environmental impacts. This may be due to the fact that the project is heavily focused on capacity building. There is no focused discussion of project impacts in this regard either however.

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes and impacts

Rating: S

A Relevance

- **In retrospect, were the project’s outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain**

This project was developed and approved during the first phase of the GEF (after the restructuring of the GEF), and the focal areas operational program strategies were not well-developed at this time. However, the consistency of the project outcomes with the GEF operational programs is somewhat dubious, which is noted by the fact that the project is categorized as an OP STRM project, although it does not appear to have responded to any particular highly urgent environmental need, and ultimately took 7 years. The overall objective of building capacity in this particular area is worthwhile in its own right, but the rationale for GEF funding vis-à-vis its STRM classification, is unclear; there is however some CBD guidance to the GEF on capacity development and the Global Taxonomy Initiative. The primary rationale would appear to be the unstated assumption that increased capacity in the region in the field of botanical diversity will ultimately help conserve the globally significant plant biodiversity found in South Africa and other countries in the region. In the section on Sustainability and Future

Activities the TE asks the questions that need to be asked, such as “Is Southern Africa in a better state as regards plant conservation? How has plant conservation benefited from SABONET?” but the TE does not go so far as to attempt to answer these questions.
B Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the project outcomes as described in the TE commensurable with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (i.e. original or modified project objectives)?
This is an area of particular achievement for this project. According to the TE the project objectives (and subsequent outcomes) remained remarkably consistent throughout the project. The project achieved what it set out to do. Another question however is whether or not what it set out to do was effective address the problems the project was intended to address. There is no real discussion of the threats the project was intended to address. The project seems to have been predicated simply on the assumption that more capacity will be better for the environment, which is a valid assumption (although it would be difficult to measure and is a very long-term development), except there is no specific linkage made between increased capacity and the threats to environmental resources on the ground. This is an issue of project design however.
C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost – effective? How does the cost-time Vs. outcomes compare to other similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative or political problems?
The project appears to have been highly cost-effective for what it accomplished, although it was admittedly aided significantly by changes in the exchange rate between the dollar and the South African rand, which allowed the project to undertake some additional activities and follow-up on the originally planned activities. The TE states that “The proportion spent on administration is commendably low for such a complex regional project, showing that effective administration and coordination does not have to be financially onerous.” The TE doesn’t give any other examples for comparison, but there is no reason to doubt the TE’s assertion, which is made by authors who have presumably reviewed a number of other projects and have some basis for comparison. In terms of the rate of spending, the project was initially intended to disburse approximately \$1.15 million/year, but then the project was extended another 3 years at no cost (although the specifics of this extension are not discussed in detail) thanks to financial gains from exchange rate fluctuations. This then puts the project disbursement rate at well below the GEF biodiversity average of \$1 million/year in dollar terms. It is impossible to say what the rate of disbursement in terms of South African rands actually was. There is no mention of any delays due to bureaucratic or other problems.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of project sustainability based on the information presented in the TE.

A Financial resources	Rating: 3
Financial sustainability seems to be one of the major future stumbling blocks for the project outcomes. Some sustainability has been built through the relevant institutions such as SANBI.	
B Socio political	Rating: 5
Socio-political sustainability is one of the project’s stronger points, given the wide audience involved and the apparent degree of participation by individuals throughout the targeted project area. However, without the other aspects of sustainability this aspect will not be sustained either.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: 2
According to the TE, “In most of the participating institutions, not much thought has been given to the next steps.” This applies collectively as well as to the individual institutions, and it is not clear how the SABONET collective resources, such as the databases, will be maintained.	
D Ecological (for example, for coffee production projects, reforestation for carbon sequestration under OP12, etc.)	Rating: N/A
E Examples of replication and catalytic outcomes suggesting increased likelihood of sustainability	Rating: 5

The project is being approximately replicated in East Africa as the BOZONET project. The project trained a large number of people and supported a number of individuals to pursue higher education on the topic which is expected to result in some catalytic outcomes in the future but the TE points out that the retention of staff trained by the project is going to be a challenge in many countries.

4.3 Assessment of the project's monitoring and evaluation system based on the information in the TE

A. Effective M&E systems in place: What were the accomplishments and shortcomings of the project's M&E system in terms of the tools used such as: indicators, baselines, benchmarks, data collection and analysis systems, special studies and reports, etc.? **Rating: 2**

This is a difficult type of project under which to consider an appropriate M&E system since it is primarily focused on capacity building. On the one hand, the TE has two short paragraphs describing the M&E system used to monitor project activities, as well as the fact that the project had a mid-term evaluation. On the other hand, this of course does not address the issue of monitoring and evaluating project impacts. The TE touches on some unspoken output indicators during its discussion of the project's results. For example, the 2nd expected output of the project is the formal establishment of a collaborating Southern African Botanical Diversity Network, and explains that an electronic newsletter was established with 905 persons worldwide. There are other various examples throughout the TE. Thus it appears that the project was able to report on some process and output indicators, but there was no real monitoring and evaluation of environmental impacts since the project was not targeted at this level.

B. Information used for adaptive management: What is the experience of the project with adaptive management? **Rating: 5**

According to the TE, "The logframe was revised annually by the SABONET steering committee and necessary modifications made in response to emerging needs in the context of the project. The annual work plan was based on the logframe that was used as a tool for monitoring, evaluation, and financial planning." However, also according to the TE, despite this annual review there were few changes to the project logframe, which raises the question of whether adaptive management was really being practiced.

Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? NO

4.4 Quality of lessons

Weaknesses and strengths of the project lessons as described in the TE (i.e. lessons follow from the evidence presented, or lessons are general in nature and of limited applicability, lessons are comprehensive, etc.)

What lessons mentioned in the TE that can be considered a good practice or approaches to avoid and could have application for other GEF projects?

There is also a need to have a clearer vision of where botanical institutes fit within the broader conservation / education / economic development framework. The institutional positioning needs to be adequately clarified in order to develop a clear delivery chain of project outputs as well as address real needs in the local context.

In planning regional projects, it is important to take into account the national/institutional mandates and recognize differences in institutional capacities and capabilities, as well as dynamics.

To have a project with a number of products predicated on a large more-or-less sophisticated database, with cleaned-up data, was rather ambitious.

There is a lot of strength and momentum to be gained from regional projects. A strong

central vision and a diverse range of institutions with similar aspirations, even though with differing abilities and capacities, created different roles for each player. The strengths and weaknesses of each institution were internalized by the large network. **However**, large regional projects with different institutional mandates, capacities and priorities are best implemented under the leadership of a champion who has a passion for the subject area.

Regionalism was beneficial but may need to build in adaptive management to ensure that true needs are met at a national level. Flexibility in implementation is important, as long as there remains a clear vision of where the project and activities are going.

4.5 Quality of the evaluation report Provide a number rating 1-6 to each criteria based on: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, and Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. Please refer to the "Criteria for the assessment of the quality of terminal evaluation reports" in the document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

4.5.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings
 In some cases the GEF Office of M&E may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office of M&E. If substantial independent information has been collected, then complete this section with any comments about the project.

4.5.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	4
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?	5
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? The TE has an extensive section on project sustainability, and realistically identifies the challenges for the initiative moving forward. There is an explicit discussion of a project exit strategy under the Recommendations section. This section also includes a discussion on follow-up and reinforcement of initial benefits, as well as a section on the project's legacy.	6
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	4
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	5
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems?	3

4.6 Is a technical assessment of the project impacts described in the TE recommended? Please place an "X" in the appropriate box and explain below.

Yes:	No: X
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Explain: A technical assessment would not likely reveal anything more than what is described in the TE, even though the TE does not specifically dedicate a discussion to reviewing project impacts.

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.? NO

4.7 Sources of information for the preparation of the TE review in addition to the TE (if any)
Project document; GEF online database; Biodiversity Program Study review sheet.