GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA

			Review date:	
GEF Project ID:	409		at endorsement (Million US$)	at completion (Million US$)
IA/EA Project ID:	P048314	**GEF financing:**	10.5	8.87
Project Name:	Morocco Protected Areas Management Project (PGAP)	IA/EA own:		
Country:	Morocco	Government:	4.1	4.46
		Other*:	1.1	1.10
		Total Cofinancing	5.2	5.56
Operational Program:	1-Aris and semi-arid zone ecosystems 4-Mountain ecosystems	**Total Project Cost:**	15.7	14.43*
IA	World Bank	Dates		
Partners involved:	Haut Commissariat aux Eaux y Forets	Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		11/14/2000
		Closing Date	Proposed: 06/30/2006	Actual: 06/30/2008 (12/31//2008 for disbursement)
Prepared by: Tommaso Balbo di Vinadio	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing (in months): 67	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing (in months): 81	Difference between original and actual closing (in months): 24
Author of TE: Steven P. Maber		TE completion date: December March 2008	TE submission date to GEF EO: March 2009	Difference between TE completion and submission date (in months): 0 months

* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS AND KEY FINDINGS

Please refer to document GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for terminal evaluation reviews for further definitions of the ratings.

Performance Dimension	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office evaluations or reviews	GEF EO
2.1a Project outcomes	MS	MS	MS	MS
2.1b Sustainability of Outcomes	**N/A**	Moderate risks	Moderate risks	Moderately Likely
2.1c Monitoring and evaluation	MS	UA	Modest	MU
2.1d Quality of implementation and Execution	**NA**	**NA**	**NA**	MS
2.1e Quality of the evaluation report	**N/A**	**N/A**	S	S

2.2 Should the terminal evaluation report for this project be considered a good practice? Why?
Yes. The TE is well structured and internally consistent. The conclusions presented in the report are evidence-based. It should, however, be noted that the report did not provide detailed information on project costs and finances.

2.3 Are there any evaluation findings that require follow-up, such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, mismanagement, etc.?

None of the terminal evaluation findings require follow up.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project Objectives

a. What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?

According to the project appraisal document, the global environmental objective of the project was *"to contribute to sustainable development in Morocco by conserving its natural resources and biodiversity"*.

The global environmental objective was not changed during the course of the project.

b. What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation? (describe and insert tick in appropriate box below, if yes at what level was the change approved (GEFSEC, IA or EA)?)

According to the project appraisal document the development objectives of the project are:
 "(a) to improve conservation of globally significant ecosystems and species in Morocco;
(b) to contribute to the establishment of a system of protected areas in Morocco; and
(c) to strengthen institutional capacity for sustainable conservation management in Morocco".

According to the TE, over the long term, it was expected that sustainable resource management would improve the livelihood of the local communities and create the basis for developing an eco-tourism industry.
The original PDOs have not been revised during the period of project execution. However, the wording of the second objective was clarified by inserting the word "sustainable" before "system of Protected Areas" during the Mid-Term Review mission in 2006.

Overall Environmental Objectives	Project Development Objectives	Project Components	Any other (specify)
	X		

c. If yes, tick applicable reasons for the change (in global environmental objectives and/or development objectives)

Original objectives not sufficiently articulated	Exogenous conditions changed, due to which a change in objectives was needed	Project was restructured because original objectives were over ambitious	Project was restructured because of lack of progress	Any other (specify)
X				

4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1.1 Outcomes (Relevance can receive either a satisfactory rating or a unsatisfactory rating. For effectiveness and cost efficiency a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU will be used)

a. Relevance	Rating: S

The project responds to Morocco's need to improve sustainable natural resource and environmental management while involving local populations dependent on these resources. The project complies with GEF operational objectives in the area of biodiversity conservation (1-Arid and Semi-Arid Zone Ecosystems and 4-Mountain Ecosystems) and is designed to support specific articles of the Biological Diversity Convention. According to the TE, political decisions taken during the life of the project demonstrate the increasing importance that the government attaches to the biodiversity conservation. The Ministry of Water and Forests would directly benefit from the institutional component through targeted training and the establishment of a geographic information system.

b. Effectiveness	Rating: MS

Project's design was too ambitious and, as stated in the IEG review, compared to the original expectations it was possible to support only a half of the Protected Areas. The financial management mechanism used by the project proved to be a major impediment to the smooth flow of funds to the project areas, resulting in considerable delays. However, this review agrees with the TE and rates effectiveness as moderately satisfactory as the project, despite all of the difficulties, was able to achieve many of its original goals and it was largely responsible for developing the strong network of protected areas that exists today in Morocco. It is also noted that its influence on the government of

Morocco, the communities in the protected areas and the general public has been significant, very positive and enduring. A stronger ministry with the newly acquired legal instruments was established to manage the protected areas and to launch a follow-up operation all bode well for the future of the sector and the continued environmental health of Morocco's national parks. It should be noted that the government appears to be strongly committed to completing all of the outstanding work under its own funding.

Even though in 2006 QAG's overall rating for this project was HU based on Bank's unsatisfactory performance in dealing with the financial problem, QAG argues that the project was finally showing some positive signs of progress with the appointment of a new TTL. In fact, in the final few months of the project, the PCU team, the regional counterparts and the High Commission finally developed the coordination and momentum to accelerate the pace of implementation.

Specifically, the following are the project achievements by outcome:
1) Protected vegetative cover regenerated and ungulate reserve areas exceeded the target values of 460 Ha (475 Ha of vegetative cover regenerated; 1650 Ha of ungulate reserve)
2) All 3 National Parks had their 3- year Action Plans adopted and commensurate funding was assigned. However, the TE states that the finalized management plans (PAGs) were officially approved too late (in 2007/08) to be of much use as a planning tool under the PGAP project.
3) Capacity building for Protected Areas professionals has been successfully installed and operated (100% achieved)

c. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: MU

Delays caused by the complex financial management arrangements for the project resulted in the inability to use all of the GEF grant funds despite the two-year extension. The TE mentions several times that the Bank could and should have dealt with those problems during the course of the project.

4.1.2 Impacts: summarize the achieved intended or unintended impacts of the project.

According to the TE, the delays and shortcomings in establishing the M&E systems resulted in limited hard data on the project's impact, particularly on biodiversity conservation. Although, substantial conservation activities were carried out on the ecosystems and local species, their long-term impacts are not fully known at this stage.
It is also noted that, Small Grants Programme resulted in demonstrable indirect impacts on poverty - especially for the income-generating activities that supported the sustainable growth of the eco-tourism business in the various protected areas. The long-term impact on poverty is likely to be even greater, since eco-tourism.
As noted in the TE, an unintended outcome of the project the PGAP was to directly influence the creation of a new Protected Areas division in the restructured Water and Forests ministry and has also influenced the text and the passing of the very important Protected Areas Law.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of **risks** to sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE. Use a four point scale (4= Likely (no or negligible risk); 3= Moderately Likely (low risk); 2= Moderately Unlikely (substantial risks) to 1= Unlikely (High risk)). The ratings should be given taking into account both the probability of a risk materializing and the anticipated magnitude of its effect on the continuance of project benefits.

a. Financial resources	Rating: 3

According to the TE, the High Commission for Water and Forests is fully committed to completing all of the outstanding PGAP activities, but it will now finance these activities under its own internal financing. Its Director also requested the Bank's assistance in preparing follow-up project. Moreover, the new legislation approved by the Council of Ministers ("Protected Areas Law") will finally provide the High Commission with the continuous stream of resources and the authority that it needs to manage all of the parks and reserves in Morocco. On the other hand, the rigidity of the national treasury system might jeopardize any future park-based operations unless it is substantially streamlined and decentralized as it might create a problem for resources to flow on time.

b. Socio political	Rating: 4

According to IEG review, the project succeeded in strengthening the national institution responsible for management of the Protected Area system, facilitated promulgation of the new Protected Areas Law, and raised public awareness regarding the importance of biodiversity conservation. According to the ICR, "key political decisions" taken while the project was under implementation testify to the "increasing importance" that the Moroccan Government gives to biodiversity conservation. Government decided to close it and cancel the unused portion of the grant. Instead it has now formally requested Bank support for a follow-on PA operation

c. Institutional framework and governance	Rating: 3

During this project, the Ministry was restructured into a High Commission for Water and Forests, including a division specifically organized to support and maintain the country's protected areas, which means that the initiative has now been institutionalized into the organizational structure of the restructured Ministry. This shows that it now has the backing of the political and legal systems.

There is, however, a need for new project to apply the lessons learned from the PGAP experience by seeking more efficient administration procedures and by decentralizing much of the operational responsibility to the regional level.

d. Environmental	Rating: 3

The TE mentions the risk that tourist facilities will be built in the PAs.

4.3 Catalytic role

a. Production of a public good

Under this project several scientific studies were conducted (**i.e.** monitoring of threatened species and studies on   on the recycling of wastes and the invasion of sand dunes, Diagnostic Studies) that will contribute to the knowledge base required to effectively conserve biodiversity in the project area and beyond.

b. Demonstration

c. Replication

According to the TE, the results would contribute to developing models of conservation not only in Morocco but also in regional initiatives.

d. Scaling up

The project influenced the government of Morocco to develop a new legislation on protecting natural resources. A follow-up project will be dealing with that.

4.4 Assessment of processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

a. Co-financing. To what extent was the reported cofinancing (or proposed cofinancing) essential to achievement of GEF objectives? Were components supported by cofinancing well integrated into the project? 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 it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The terminal evaluation does not address cofinancing in adequate detail. However, it does provide aggregate figures on materialization of cofinancing. The overall co-financing is $ 5.56 M, where government contributed with an initial $4.1 M which then reached $4.6M during the course of the project. There is no mention in the project documents as to what led to increase in the contributions by the government.

b. 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 it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?

There have been several delays during the course of this project. As stated in the TE, due to the delay of over two years in initiating the project, the resulting low commitment and disbursement rates and the consequent large backlog of project activities, the Moroccan authorities requested in 2005 to extend the closing date by two years (from June 2006 to June 2008). These financial difficulties and constraints caused numerous and long delays in disbursements as well as substantial backlogs in project activities.

It is interesting to note that the delays damaged the project's reputation with the beneficiary populations as well as with private contractors.

There was also another additional extension of 5 months until December 2008.

c. 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 Executing Agency for this project was a Commission within the government of Morocco.

As mentioned above, political decisions taken during the life of the project demonstrate the importance that the government attaches to the biodiversity conservation. In fact, several pro-environment international conventions and agreements have been signed which, four national parks have been created a High Commission for Water and Forests was established in 2005 which includes a division dedicated specifically to the administration of National Parks and Natural Reserves.

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

a. M&E design at Entry	Rating (six point scale): 3

As noted in the IEG review, M&E mechanisms were designed for two distinct purposes: firstly to review the status of the development of the various protected areas and secondly to track the evolution of the project itself.

Even though IEG review rates M&E design as substantial surprising major deficiency was that risks and problems related to M&E system (i.e. local unfamiliarity with data collection, or lack of baseline information) had not been factored.

b. M&E plan Implementation	Rating (six point scale): 3

According to the TE, the PMU kept track of physical progress and financial controls for years with an Excel spreadsheet. But in 2007, at the insistence of World Bank supervision missions, the sporadic reporting was replaced by a comprehensive Access-based database system linked to fact-sheets to be submitted regularly by the regional and local authorities. However the information was only partially provided due to local unfamiliarity with the data collection process or inadequate monitoring of the quality and frequency of the data collection. Furthermore, the limited availability of reliable baseline data made it difficult to conduct an accurate assessment of project impacts.

As a consequence of the shortcomings in the M&E system, the picture of the project's progress and impact is somewhat incomplete and tends to rely more on anecdotal evidence instead of more reliable data.

b.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&E in the budget included in the project document? Unable to assess

b.2a Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&E during project implementation? Unable to assess

b.2b To what extent did the project monitoring system provided real time feed back? Was the information that was provided used effectively? What factors affected the use of information provided by the project monitoring system?

As mentioned above, the M&E system did not provide useful information and feedback during project implementation.

b.3 Can the project M&E system (or an aspect of the project M&E system) be considered a good practice? If so, explain why.

No., The monitoring reporting was unsatisfactory. Lack of baseline information and lack of capacity for data collection contributed to a dysfunctional M&E system

4.6 Assessment of Quality of Implementation and Execution

a. Overall Quality of Implementation and Execution (on a six point scale): 4

b. Overall Quality of Implementation – for IA (on a six point scale): 3

Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as quality of the project design, focus on results, adequacy of supervision inputs and processes, quality of risk management, candor and realism in supervision reporting, and suitability of the chosen executing agencies for project execution.

The project had several design problems that are acknowledged in the TE.

First of all, the project was too ambitious, particularly in terms of the number of sites to be covered (i.e. three national parks and ten reserves covering a very large area). Moreover, GEF financing available was too little for achieving all project objectives. According to the TE the main project shortcoming that led to several problems during implementation was the adoption of an existing (but ultimately inappropriate) financial mechanism and a weak institutional framework.

Regarding implementation specifically, the World Bank do not seem to have been able to flag problems related to financial disbursement on time. Moreover, as pointed out in the TE, there was poor consistency in the Bank supervision missions.

c. Quality of Execution – for Executing Agencies[1] (rating on a 6 point scale) 4

Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as focus on results, adequacy of management inputs and processes, quality of risk management, and candor and realism in reporting by the executive agency.

During the implementation of the project, the SEGMA system presented various constraints:

· A change in the regulations caused a delay of two years to the launch of operations (2000 – 2002). The Bank had not adequately anticipated the effect of the new SEGMA procedures. An early amendment to the grant agreement abandoning the SEGMA solution could have avoided continuing problems.

· The framework of the SEGMA procedures often left the project without funds (with access only to the

---

[1] Executing Agencies for this section would mean those agencies that are executing the project in the field. For any given project this will exclude Executing Agencies that are implementing the project under expanded opportunities – for projects approved under the expanded opportunities procedure the respective executing agency will be treated as an implementing agency.

government counterpart contribution), which caused significant delays in the payment of suppliers. When the threshold for the advance to the Special Account was increased in early-2007, the Bank could have considered making direct payments to suppliers.

· Delays in the establishment of credits – generally the detailed budget request is not made available until March of the following year.

Even though the Bank team insisted on using the SEGMA instrument, the TE states that the government did not manage to fix the financial mechanism (SEGMA). Moreover, soon after project approval the Moroccan Treasury decided to add even more layers to the internal budget process, which made it even more unsuitable for supporting a decentralized project.

It should be noted that the the institutional infrastructure within the Government of Morocco may not have been in place for implementing such an innovative approach.

On the other hand, the TE emphasizes that Morocco was persisted with the project and was able to see it (almost) through to completion. And as a result, the new High Commission is stronger, the protected areas law has been passed and some important lessons have been learned about the need for flexibility in the national financial systems.

5. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assess the project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

a. Briefly describe the key lessons, good practice or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects
Several lessons are highlighted in the TE: 1. the critical importance of formulating early on a fully functional financial system to ensure the efficient flow of funds for implementation of project activities; 2. the necessity to formulate a realistic project design grounded in practical and achievable activities with solid and measurable outputs; 3. decentralized, multipurpose projects require close, constant, and efficient supervision, so that adequate staffing and budgets must be allocated to achieve this level of oversight and support. 4. the importance of maintaining continuity of task team leaders to the extent possible, especially when borrower institutions are themselves in considerable flux 5. the importance of proactive management oversight and support to the task team for projects facing significant implementation problems for the very beginning.
b. Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation
The TE does not explicitly provide any recommendations other than emphasizing the need to incorporate the lessons from the project in the follow-up phase.

6. QUALITY OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings based on other information sources such as GEF EO field visits, other evaluations, etc.

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 document GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for terminal evaluations review for further definitions of the ratings. Please briefly explain each rating.

6.2 Quality of the terminal evaluation report	Ratings
a. To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	5
The TE contains a good assessment of the achievements of the project	
b. To what extent the report is internally consistent, the evidence is complete/convincing and the IA ratings have been substantiated? Are there any major evidence gaps?	4
The TE is internally consistent and its ratings even though the IEG review notes that There were also some errors in the aggregation of ratings for Bank and Borrower performance.	
c. To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?	5
The project makes a good assessment of project sustainability	

d. To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? The lessons learned are supported by evidence.	4
e. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? No. The project was unable to provide final (i.e., definitive) project cost and disbursement data because of a formal 2 month extension by the Bank of the standard 4 month grace period for completing all outstanding disbursements. Even though that cannot be attributed to TE (as the latter has specific requirements in terms of timing), the TE could have provided more specific information on the 155 subprojects financed under the small grants component.	4
e. Assess the quality of the reports evaluation of project M&E systems? The assessment of the quality of M&E is satisfactory	5

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE PRERATATION OF THE TERMINAL EVALUTION REVIEW REPORT EXCLUDING PIRs, TERMINAL EVALUATIONS, PAD.
IEG review