

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID:	410		Review date: at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	828	GEF financing:	13.43	NA
Project Name:	MEDWETCOAST: Conservation of wetland and coastal ecosystem in the Mediterranean region	IA/EA own:		
Country:	Regional	Government:		
		Other*:		
		Total Cofinancing	26.32	NA
Operational Program:		Total Project Cost:	39.75	NA
IA	UNDP	Dates: Different dates for different countries¹		
Partners involved:		Work Program date		05/01/97
		CEO Endorsement		05/18/99
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		08/31/99
		Closing Date	Proposed: Nov 2004	Actual: December 2006
Prepared by: Soledad	Reviewed by: Anna	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 63	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 88 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 25 months
Author of TE: Dennis Fenton, Team Leader		TE completion date: January 2007	TE submission date to GEF EO: July 2007	Difference between TE completion and submission date: Six 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

Please refer to document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project outcomes	S	MS	N/A	MU
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	MU	N/A	MU
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	MU	N/A	MU
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	N/A	S

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why?

Yes. It is detailed and comprehensive. In addition, it provides a sound analysis on all of the issues that are expected to be addressed by the terminal evaluation as per the GEF Evaluation Office guidelines.

¹ The Project started operations in September 1999 for an initial period of 5 years. With the exception of Lebanon (which initiated activities in mid/late 2001), all national components started in late 1999 or early 2000. The Palestine component completed activities in late 2003. Lebanon completed its activities in early 2006. The national components for Albania, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia were extended until the end of 2006. Accordingly, the regional support component was extended until end-2006, albeit with a downscaling of activities.

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.?
 Yes. The evaluation faced some difficulties in gathering data and analysis, notably:

- The time available for the international experts in each country was too limited to provide a detailed evaluation in each country;
- It was not possible to collect structured data on project expenditures in line with the project outcomes;
- The fact that the project activities were continuing during and after the evaluation. For example, following the evaluation, there may have been some progress with regards to sustainable financing in Albania and with regards to the NWS in Tunisia;
- It was not possible to meet all stakeholders, notably the Team was unable to meet most national level stakeholders outside the implementing ministry in every country visited.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

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

According to the project document, the main objective of this project is to protect wetland and coastal zone biodiversity losses in the Mediterranean by undertaking key demonstration activities which will directly address root causes and threats to globally significant biodiversity.
 According to the TE, there were no changes during implementation.

What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?

According to the project document, the development objectives of the project were:

1. Promotion and capacity building for the development of national policies and tools to address the policy related root causes of loss of wetland and coastal biodiversity
2. Protection and removal of root causes in key demonstration sites selected in view of their global significance and of the variety which they present in terms of threats and accompanying actions
3. Contribute to the closing of the Mediterranean circle in terms of biodiversity protection and sustainable management of wetlands and coastal zones through cost effective regional networking for transfer of lessons, interchange and training.

According to the TE, there were no changes during implementation.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

What major project outcomes and impacts are described in the TE?

As described in the TE the major outcomes were:

1. The project contributed to legislative development and policy development within the participating countries. At the project end, 12 sites had an established legal basis as areas for wetlands and coastal zone management.
2. At the site level, the project's activities were focused on two strategies: developing site management capacity and infrastructure, and demonstrating how to change the decisions and behavior of local institutions and resource users in order to be more biodiversity friendly.

- In total, the project implemented approximately thirty three (33) biodiversity-development actions. On average, this is considerably less than the 'eight for each country' that was reasonably expected.
- In addition, it is noted that the project implemented many pure development actions.

4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT

4.1.1 Outcomes (use a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU)

A Relevance **Rating: HS**

The project responds to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and is well aligned with the GEF Operational Strategy and the GEF OP 2 on coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystem. According to the TE, the Mediterranean coastline is an area of high biodiversity and high endemism, with over half of the region's 25,000 plant species being endemic to the region. In addition, the wetlands in the region provide an essential flyway and stepping stone for migratory birds on the Africa-Palaeartic flyway. The globally significant biodiversity of these wetland and coastal ecosystems is seriously threatened by the growing scale and intensity of complex human activities.

B Effectiveness **Rating: MU**

The achieved results were significantly lower than expectations. Not much was achieved in terms of policy; but significant results were achieved in institutional strengthening. In addition, significant capacity was built through on-the-job training. As for policy development all the countries (except Lebanon) were expected to prepare a National Wetland Strategy.

However, in practice, all countries started developing the NWS rather late in the project, and none have been approved as of yet.

With respect to institutional strengthening, in many countries, the project contributed to significant strengthening of the implementing agency, notably in Tunisia and Albania and to a lesser extent Lebanon. With respect to capacity building, in Egypt, a large number of national scientists were involved in the project, and they benefited from this on-the-job training.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: MU
According to the TE, cost-effectiveness was acceptable on the whole. However, the TE evaluators commented that the availability of data in an accessible and useful format, and the systematic storage of available data by the project teams and UNDP COs, leaves a lot to be desired. The evaluators noted that the budgetary information available was neither precise nor complete, and this did not facilitate a rigorous analysis.	

4.1.2 Impacts

According to the TE, the overall project impact was limited by several factors, in particular by the approach to project implementation. Specifically, the project design documents were too ambitious in parts and insufficiently detailed in others. Also, the multi layered project structure was too complex, and the roles and responsibilities were not sufficiently clear. The regional and national mechanisms for managerial and technical guidance were ineffective. They provided inadequate support and oversight to the national project teams.

In addition, the evaluators found significant differences in impact across countries. Lebanon and Tunisia succeeded in protecting several sites and have a reasonable chance of being institutionally sustainable. In Albania, rapid impacts on lagoons were achieved, but sustainability is less assured. Egypt did a good job of linking biodiversity and local development. Morocco managed some small scale site protection and pilot work on eco-tourism. On the whole, sustainability is least assured in Egypt and Morocco, where it proved difficult to overcome major institutional constraints.

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= no or negligible risk to 1= High risk)

A Financial resources	Rating: MU
According to the TE, with respect to outcome #2.2 [<i>Under this Outcome, the project was expected to change the behaviour of resource users and integrate biodiversity into socio-economic and political decision-making in order to remove the root causes of biodiversity loss</i>] the technical and financial sustainability of actions supported by the project is rather weak (e.g., there are no mechanisms for equitable and sustainable cost sharing between beneficiaries of the future maintenance of lagoon inlets in Albania. In Egypt, no clear effective mechanism is in place for assuring the long-term operation and financial sustainability of the revolving funds. Likewise, as there is not yet a sustainable market for female handicraft products, sustainability of support to this sector is not assured.	
B Socio political	Rating: ML
Overall, the evaluation finds that the large number of biodiversity-focused actions supported by the project have contributed to change in attitudes and to modified approaches to resource management in coastal and wetland areas in the participating countries, particularly at the project sites. Through this, the project has contributed to a momentum towards improved natural resource management in the region. In addition, the evaluation determined that, at the <i>national</i> level in the participating countries, the project contributed to legislative development and policy development. It also helped to advance the process to preparing national wetland's strategies. It should be noted, however, that some difficulties found by the evaluation team were restricted missions to Lebanon and Palestine.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: MU
According to the TE, the institutional impacts of the project, although limited, are most likely to be sustainable, as the concerned agencies will continue to be active in similar projects, and address similar issues. Also, with regards to the individual capacity, the achievements can be considered sustainable. The project contributed to developing the capacity of large numbers of people, notably with regards to management planning, undertaking diagnosis, negotiation and participation, and developing socio-economic actions. According to the TE, it is reasonable to expect that the majority of these people will remain in the country in a related sector. At the same time, the TE remarks that there was not a lot of progress in the field of legal and legislative framework strengthening. In this sense, if the law or strategy is not approved, there is danger that it will not be approved in the future without the project.	
D Environmental	Rating: L
No risk to environmental sustainability.	

4.3 Catalytic role

a. Production of a public good
The project succeeded in supporting a range of activities that integrated wetland and biodiversity conservation into local decision –making.
b. Demonstration
c. Replication
d. Scaling up

4.4 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):	U
<p>According to the TE, there were several major constraints to undertaking this evaluation. These were the lack of a clear logical framework, the variance across the countries, the lack of clear targets at each level, the lack of a clear baseline and the complicated, multi-level implementation arrangements, without clear allocation of roles and responsibilities. These posed a challenge to providing a quantity-based evaluation form, and no attempt had been made to develop an indicator framework for monitoring.</p> <p>The project does not include activities- components related to monitoring and evaluation. According to the TE, the project documents were prepared more than 10 years ago. The Terminal Evaluation team felt that the project documents did not clearly define the baseline, nor the targets to be achieved by the project. Nor did they provide effective indicators of success.</p> <p>At the time of project approval the logical framework was not set out in the standardized matrix.</p>		
B. M&E plan Implementation	Rating (six point scale):	MU
<p>After 1-2 years of implementation, a first attempt was made to revise the project logical framework and develop indicators. Although technically useful, according to the TE, this was considered to be a top-down exercise. It seems to have been aimed at 'fitting' the project actions with expected GEF approaches rather than based on a full problem analysis. The resulting log frame, in the opinion of the Evaluation Team, was not significantly better in terms of logic or useful indicators.</p> <p>According to the TE, the project's monitoring and reporting was weak. Despite the major efforts the national teams put into monitoring, it was not sufficiently structured or systematic. Throughout the project, monitoring was confused with reporting, and monitoring did not feed adequately into planning or decision-making – hence there was little <i>adaptive management</i>. This combined with the poor indicators and weak management mechanisms to cause difficulties in identifying challenges, in forging solutions and in taking difficult decisions. More importantly, monitoring and reporting was not adequately linked to project decision making processes, nor was it a tool for adaptive management. There is little evidence that project decisions were taken based on the results of the formal monitoring or reporting activities.</p> <p>In each country, the Evaluation Team (i.e. the concerned national expert and the three international experts) prepared a concise draft evaluation report, which was presented and introduced to the key national stakeholders. In two countries (Albania and Tunisia), it was possible for the Team to have a detailed discussion with the key national stakeholders of all the major issues in the draft report. This helped clarify certain points. In Egypt and Morocco the discussion on the draft report was constrained by time, but was still helpful in terms of (i) clarifying points (ii) providing initial reaction and feedback.</p>		
<p>C.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&E in the budget included in the project document? UA. No indication of funding for M&E is provided in the TE or project document.</p>		
<p>C.2 Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&E during project implementation? UA. Apparently there was, for the evaluation team could travel to each country to do a country evaluation report of the project.</p>		
<p>C.3 Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? No.</p>		

4.5 Lessons and Recommendations

Project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

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?
<p><u>Institutional</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement is needed at senior decision-making, technical and administrative levels. The institutional anchoring in Tunisia (and to a lesser extent Albania) contributed to project impact and sustainability in those countries. This was a best practice, but there was a need to continually ensure the biodiversity focus. Sustainable financing and business planning (except Lebanon) were not addressed, except in the very final stages. This undermines financial sustainability and therefore all sustainability. Amongst other impacts, this led to the national agency not being able to recruit the local teams working on the project. In some countries, the only form of financing considered was future GEF (or development) projects - this limited sustainability. <p><u>Project implementation</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There were costs and benefits associated with the inter-country nature of the project. It was necessary, but difficult to balance cross-country coherence and flexibility (e.g. to ensure that the actions, timelines and toolkits/guidelines were coherent across the countries, but that countries were not limited or restrained by this). The roles of the regional partners and managers were not clear and were not backed up with authority; this was probably one of the reasons that they were not fully effective. At a strategic level, the project recognized the need to combine <i>protected area approaches</i> with <i>biodiversity mainstreaming approaches</i>. This seemed relevant at <i>each</i> site. Although not successfully implemented, this is a best practice. The strength of the national project team (in terms of effective management and planning skills) made a difference

to project impact.

Site implementation

7. At least two countries included a strong focus on establishing presence, visibility and regulating access at their demonstration sites. This is clearly part of a successful approach.

8. The diagnosis and management planning was well done in several countries (although with weaknesses). This is a best practice, to be documented and disseminated.

9. Many of the areas that the project worked in have either a large tourism sector or a high potential for tourism. However, the project teams did not make sufficient links with the actors in these sectors. This was a missed opportunity.

Partnerships and participation

10. The participatory approach yielded benefits in all countries in the region. Whenever the project team worked with local people, the results were better. This was equally true for private sector operators.

11. When supporting socio-economic actions, the links with biodiversity were not always substantively established nor formalized. This was true to a differing extent at every site. This meant that many actions had no positive biodiversity impact – they were pure development actions.

16. Translation of main websites is necessary for knowledge sharing.

List (or if detailed summarize) the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation

The recommendations below pertain mostly to future projects of this nature, and so focus mostly on the project donors and high-level managers. The recommendations are based on the findings of the Evaluation Team:

GEF

- Ensure the justification for a regional approach is clear and agreed by all. Ensure the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined before the project commences.
- Ensure that future projects are realistic, whilst still ambitious.

UNDP and regionally-based technical agencies.

- The project had diverse experiences with the participatory approach in diverse circumstances, and many lessons were learnt. Document these lessons into a knowledge management tool.
- In order to ensure that future projects are 'bottom-up', local stakeholders should lead the identification, design and planning of the strategy and actions, firmly within the overall objectives.

UNDP and National Agencies responsible for wetlands, biodiversity and coastal areas

- Ensure that for future projects there is a system in place to check that the projects are accessing the appropriate and up-to-date international and regional knowledge and expertise.
- Ensure future project documents clearly establish the implementation arrangements from the outset, and that these include clear, realistic, operational mechanisms for decision-taking, problem solving and providing strategic guidance. Ensure that future projects include a supervisory mechanism (e.g. PSC) that is adequately resourced and capable of supervising. This may include an active and substantive role for UNDP in ongoing project supervision.
- Pay stronger attention to the selection of national project teams.
- Develop strong incentives to ensure future projects do not face long initial delays.

4.6 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 document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings from other sources such as GEF EO field visits, etc.
None

4.6.2 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?	6
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?	6
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	6
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The report does not present complete information on project costs and actual co financing used. The TE contains a table with the budget at project outset , but not the actual project costs and actual co financing used. Another table presents a comparison of estimated actual and planned distribution of	3

expenditures at the national levels, expressed in percentages. Separately, Annex 7 presents a table on cofinancing classified by type (grant, in kind, etc) and source (IA, government, other). This table does not include information on countries or activities included in the project.	
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems?	4

4.6.3 Assessment of processes affected attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

Co-financing and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. 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, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?

UA

Delays and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons responsible for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?

This was an ambitious project, particularly if one considers the challenging institutional, socio-economic and ecological context.

According to the TE, main obstacles to the success of the project were found in:

- Long delays in the initial project phases. In some cases this led to a lack of time for field work;
- Institutional conflicts;
- Poor problem analysis at each level and at each stage;
- Weak strategic and action planning – although, where it existed, a stronger and more appropriate national management did make some difference;
- An inability to efficiently deal with the interactions between local development and conservation.

The project documents, which were prepared almost a decade ago, did not provide a clear logical framework or adequate indicators and targets. The various project planning and design documents provide an array of possible objectives, targets and indicators – yet taken collectively these did not provide a clear path for project implementation. This lack of agreed, clear targets was also a major constraint to evaluating project impact. Accordingly, the evaluation team carefully considered the project starting point and established, retrospectively, a series of *reasonable* targets which it felt that the project should have reached.

4.7 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

Explain:

4.8 Sources of information for the preparation of the TE review in addition to the TE (if any)

Annual PIR (2005)