

## 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		5596	
GEF Agency project ID		G0002	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	
Project name		Sustainable Land Management in Churia Range, Nepal	
Country/Countries		Nepal	
Region		Asia	
Focal area		Land Degradation	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		LD-1: Maintaining or improving flow of agro-ecosystem goods and services to sustain food production and livelihoods LD-3: Reducing pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape	
Executing agencies involved		WWF Nepal and Government of Nepal	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		As IA/EA	
Private sector involvement		None	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		December 19, 2013	
Effectiveness date / project start		January 1, 2014	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 31, 2016	
Actual date of project completion		May 31, 2017	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0	0
	Co-financing	0	0
GEF Project Grant		0.9	0.9
Co-financing	IA own	0.39	0
	Government	3.55	4.37
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0	0
	Private sector	0	0
	NGOs/CSOs	0.45	0.38

<b>Total GEF funding</b>	0.9	0.9
<b>Total Co-financing</b>	4.3	4.75
<b>Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)</b>	5.3	5.65
<b>Terminal evaluation/review information</b>		
<b>TE completion date</b>	July 2017	
<b>Author of TE</b>	Madhavi Karki, Mohan Wagely and Sarba Raj Khadka	
<b>TER completion date</b>	February 1, 2018	
<b>TER prepared by</b>	Spandana Battula	
<b>TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)</b>	Cody Parker	

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective of the project was “to substantially reduce degradation and maintain or improve conditions of agro-pastoral lands and Churia Sal and mixed forest areas in strategic project locations throughout the four pilot Churia Range districts” (TE pg 9).

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The development objectives of the project were a) promoting sustainable agricultural and management practices; b) engaging local communities in forest conservation; and c) creating the conditions for inter-sectoral collaboration for sustainable land use and management. The project aimed to achieve its objective through three main components, and they were:

Component 1: Sustainable land management of agro-pastoral land;

Component 2: Integrated landscape management in forested areas; and

Component 3: Cross-sectoral coordination and local community engagement.

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

The project did not undergo changes to objectives or activities.

## 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.

<b>4.1 Relevance</b>	Rating: Satisfactory
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The project was relevant to GEF's Land Degradation focal area and its strategic objectives. The project's outcomes were closely aligned to Land Degradation Objective 1 to maintain or improve flows of agro-ecosystem services to sustain livelihoods of local communities, and Objective 3 to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape.

The project was also consistent with Government of Nepal's priority to address land degradation and deforestation within the Churia Range. Furthermore, the project's objectives are aligned to Nepal's conservation plans and policies such as the National Action Programme for Land Degradation and Desertification, National Churia Conservation Strategy and National Biodiversity Strategy. Therefore, the TER gives a Satisfactory rating to relevance of the project to GEF's objectives and Government of Nepal's priorities.

<b>4.2 Effectiveness</b>	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE gave a Satisfactory rating to project effectiveness and stated that "most of the outputs have been attained and they are being packaged toward attaining planned outcomes in some components such as agro-pastoral land management" (TE pg 53). However, the TER finds that the first two components had satisfactory results, but the third component had very limited delivery of outputs resulting in moderate success. Thus, the TER gives a Moderately Satisfactory rating to project effectiveness.

#### **Component 1: Sustainable land management of agro-pastoral land:**

Under this component, the project intended to significantly reduce soil erosion in 1,000 ha of agro-pastoral land as well as improve land management across 1,500 ha within the agricultural sector. As per the TE, the achievement of reducing soil erosion was weak because activities such as Sloping Land Agriculture Technology to decrease climate vulnerability and zero tillage practices "lacked strong evidence of financial attraction although others such as tunnel farming showed

success. Lack of institutional fit and trained human resources are attributed to poor performance” (TE pg 38). However, to create an enabling environment for improved land management, the project raised awareness, mobilized community, and provided alternate livelihood options for traditional pastoralists to wean away from open grazing culture. “The achievement of this outcome is near successful as the river damaged lands have been restored to agriculture use and more than 8900 ha of community managed forests are ready for declaring open grazing free zone (OGFZ)” (TE pg 38).

### **Component 2: Integrated landscape management and forested areas:**

The aim of this component was to put 5,000 ha of land under integrated landscape management practice, As per the TE, the project empowered 12 Community Forest User Groups to sustainably manage 3,500 ha of forest land. To empower the communities, the project launched integrated livelihood improvement and forest conservation programs such as the forest regeneration, livestock development, clean energy options, and non-timber forest products-based enterprises. The TE noted that “the dairy and livestock development activities are successful income generating activities (IGAs) since these start giving income to the communities in a short term and are also replicated easily showing high potential for scaling up and scaling out” (TE pg 40).

### **Component 3: Cross-sectoral coordination and local community engagement:**

This component was moderately unsatisfactory in achieving an enabling environment that can enhance cross-sector coordination and community engagement for integrated landscape management. To implement the National Land Use Policy, the project collaborated with various land-based ministries in piloting the policy in all the project districts which triggered scaling out, however, the outputs of conducting workshops and meetings were not enough to achieve the outcome.

<b>4.3 Efficiency</b>	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE gave a highly satisfactory rating and mentioned that “overall implementation is cost effective, in some cases inputs are shared with local communities. Most of the outputs and outcomes were attained with joint funding and implementation with concerned district line agencies” (TE pg 12). The project also had governance and management systems in place which helped in efficiency of implementation, however, the institutional framework was not designed well which adversely affected the transparent flow in fund management and limited coordination and integration. Although the TE did not mention any delays, there was a five month delay in

project completion. Considering both the overall efficient implementation of the project and minor issues in institutional framework design, the TER gives a Moderately Satisfactory rating to project efficiency.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Likely
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The TE stated that “activities on the ground are indicating medium to good potential to sustainability although at local level, not all financial, institutional and ecological sustainability indicators are well established yet” (TE pg 13). The TER finds that the financial risks are low, while the political instability is high and institutional support is moderate. Below is a detailed analysis of the sustainability criteria:

**Financial:** The financing aspect of the project was operated and managed efficiently and the project received co-financing amount higher than expected. Additionally, the project received financing from communities, but this amount was not well quantified by the project. Importantly, the project helped in generating income based activities such as agro-silvi-horticulture and livestock, which could result in sustainable financing option for the communities. Thus, financial sustainability seems likely for the project.

**Socio-political:** The TE stated that the project lacks political will and local leadership due to conflicting policies and complex tenure issues. During implementation, the project districts faced politically volatile situations such as a number of political strikes, political rallies, earthquake, and frequent transfer of government staff. Political unrest in some districts severely restricted the mobility of both the staff and the project beneficiaries. Therefore, political stability seems unlikely, posing a risk to the sustainability of project benefits.

**Institutional and governance framework:** The TE stated the “institutional framework designed might not have taken the full views of some of key national stakeholders in Churia such as the President’s Chure Conservation Program (PCCP), concerned district line agencies, key national land related federations such as Federation of Community Forest Users of Nepal and others” and as such there is a likelihood of them not fully facilitating the project (TE pg 29). However, the newly created local government institutions (LGI) can provide an alternative for sustaining the project activities as these institutions are more empowered compared and therefore can take up sustainable land management related projects and also support successful community development facilities such as milk chilling vats, micro irrigation facilities and water storage ponds (TE pg 44).

**Environmental:** There are no apparent environmental risks threatening the sustainability of project benefits.

## **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?

The materialized co-financing amount of \$4,748,615 was higher than the expected amount of \$4,300,000, which helped in site level project interventions, monitoring and management.

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?

Although the TE did not mention any delays, there was a five-month delay in project completion.

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 country ownership was strong as the project had participation from central level stakeholders like line ministries as well as local support from district government. "There were regular project steering committee meetings, other informal and formal meetings at center and districts. District government line agencies were actively involved and participated in these meetings and gave their project related feedback to the management and decision makers" (TE pg 37).

## **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.

<b>6.1 M&amp;E Design at entry</b>	Rating: Unsatisfactory
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The project document had provision for M&E plan with results framework with indicators, collection of baseline data, annual implementation reports, monitoring reports, and terminal evaluation report. However, the project had too many output indicators and most of them were inadequate. The TE noted that indicators were not sufficiently SMART and that the results framework “was not reviewed and reflected regularly by the all executing partners at the district level and revised incorporating the required changes” (TE pg 30). It also noted that the project had too many physical or quantitative indicators and too few socio-economic and qualitative indicators. The TE also critiqued that the results framework sequence was clear only up to the output level but not to the activity level resulting in duplication. Therefore, the TER gives an Unsatisfactory rating to M&E design at entry.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE stated that the M&E implementation was carried out satisfactorily, however, the TER gives a Moderately Satisfactory rating due to key flaws in the M&E system. The project had a dedicated M&E officer who planned the monitoring schedule and submitted the monitoring reports on time. The project team tracked all activities, and collected data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. However, the TE mentioned that the work plan tracking “included too many activities and therefore is output focused and burdensome; future projects should be outcome focused” (TE pg 45). Overall, the M&E system focused too heavily on outputs and less on monitoring for outcomes and impacts.

## **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: Unsatisfactory
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The implementing agency was the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and this was its first project as GEF agency. WWF helped in preparing the overall draft project document in consultation with the relevant ministries. However, the TE noted some important issues with implementation such as the lack of clarity between the implementing and executing agency's roles and responsibilities which created unmet expectations. It also said that "the WWF GEF Agency's environmental and social safeguard policies and procedures were not discussed during the design phase itself. This created unnecessary confusion and extra costs on the part of the WWF Nepal and WWF US to develop necessary mitigation measures. In future this needs to be defined and made part of the project design document" (TE pg 47). Following the mid-term review feedback, activities were changed to ensure greater community participation during project implementation. Therefore the TER gives an Unsatisfactory rating quality of implementation.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The WWF-Nepal was the responsible agency for project execution. As per the TE, the agency provided staff who were well-qualified, and despite challenges, the executing team always tracked project activities and submitted reports on time. Although there was high turnover of the staff, the transition in handing over the process was carried out smoothly. The team mobilized focal points and Community Forest User Groups to engage with the project. The TE said that the team's "use of Smart sheet to keep all the activity related information well organized and work plan tracking documents were innovative tools" (TE pg 46). Given the professional execution of the project, the TER gives a Satisfactory rating.

## 8. Assessment of Project Impacts

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

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes

documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The TE does not mention any environmental changes.

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.

The project helped in generating income based activities for the farmers such as the dairy and livestock development, and introduction of commercial vegetable farming, milk production and marketing. Livestock shed improvement activities had helped in reducing incidence of animal diseases and raise the farmers' income substantially.

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: The project carried out awareness raising workshops and parcel based mapping of the land in the project districts.

b) Governance: The TE does not mention changes to governance.

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.

The TE does not mention unintended impacts.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and

large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

The GEF initiatives had good community response and potential for replication, but at the time of the TE they were not adopted at scale.

## **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 key lessons mentioned in the TE are (TE pgs 55-59):

- a) design and implementation of the project should be done in a consultative, diagnostic and inclusive manner;
- b) projects with up-scaling objective should invest more time to do a strategic situation analysis;
- c) there should be better coordination, communication and coherence between various agencies in delivering project outputs;
- d) more integrated and coordinated sites could have resulted in better outcomes and shown impact potential;
- e) there should be more emphasis on regeneration, rather than plantation, as it yields faster, cheaper and better results in forest conservation work.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE provided the following recommendations (TE pgs 60-63):

- a) Integration of upstream-downstream perspectives and cross-sectoral project design should be a requirement for sustainable land management projects;
- b) The Government of Nepal should make sustainable land management a national priority to address accelerated rate of land degradation in the country. It should also increase investments in the focal area, tap into climate change financing flowing from multilateral agencies, and mobilize private sector where infrastructure building activities are involved;
- c) Project design should be based on critical reality of the operating environment and country needs;

- d) During implementation, develop cross-sector and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms as well as widely disseminate the learnings from sustainable land management;
- e) For project management, improve adaptive and flexible project management capacity, introduce appropriate technology, and build in climate resilience and sustainability approach in projects;
- f) For policy reform, it is necessary to address land rights and encroachment issues in a holistic manner, and find a solution to encroachment, proper land use classification, zoning and other land related issues; and
- g) Future GEF projects should focus on outcomes and impacts, and should plan for projects to be at least five years or have two phases of three-year projects to achieve impacts at scale. It should also strive to have catalytic changes rather than focusing on piloting.

## 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 project provided substantial analysis of relevant outcomes with appropriate ratings, however it did not assess impact as the 3 year project period was too short to assess impact	<b>S</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE has provide consistent rating with well-substantiated evidence	<b>S</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Although the TE did not provide an exit strategy, it gave a detailed assessment of the sustainability criteria	<b>S</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned and recommendations are well presented in the report.	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE provides co-financing information but does provide project costs per component	<b>MS</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE gave good critique of M&E system and provided recommendations to improve	<b>S</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>S</b>

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

The TE did not use any additional sources.