1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		566	
GEF Agency project ID		P008376	
GEF Replenishment Phase		Pilot Phase	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank, IBRD	
Project name		Biodiversity Protection	
Country/Countries		Czech Republic	
Region		ECA	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		STRM- Short Term Response Measures	
Executing agencies involved		Dept. of Nature Protection (Min. of Environment); Dept. of Forestry (Min. of Agriculture); Ministry of Finance; UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program.	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Czech Nature Protection Unit (TE pg. 5), NGO European Trust for Natural and Cultural Wealth (TE pg. 7), NGO Small Grants Program (TE pg. 7)	
Private sector involvement		N/A	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		October 1993	
Effectiveness date / project start		January 6, 1994	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 31, 1996	
Actual date of project completion		June 30, 1998	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US $M)	**At Completion (US $M)**
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		2	2.45
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	0.25	0.06
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.5	0
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		2	2.45
Total Co-financing		0.75	0.06
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		2.75	2.51 (TE pg. 17)
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		1998 (Implementation Completion Report)	
TE submission date		1998	
Author of TE		Andrew Bond, Kerstin Canby, Bonnie Nevel, Stephen Berwick.	
TER completion date		October 15, 2014	
TER prepared by		Dania M Trespalacios	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Joshua Schneck	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	N/A	**HS**	**MS**	**MS**
Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	**L**	**Uncertain**	**ML**
M&E Design	N/A	**N/R**	**N/R**	**MU**
M&E Implementation	N/A	**N/R**	**N/R**	**NR**
Quality of Implementation	N/A	**S**	**S**	**S**
Quality of Execution	N/A	**S**	**S**	**S**
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	-	-	**S**	**MS**

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective is to protect and strengthen forest and ecosystem biodiversity in the Czech Republic by protecting three representative ecosystems of alpine meadows, lowland forests and wetlands, and mountain forests. (Project Document pg. 2) The Palava zone was selected for its unique floodplain forest remnants, including internationally significant Ramsar designated wetlands in Morava and Dyje, which are under increasing pressure from agriculture and visitors. The Krkonose zone was selected for its stressed alpine meadows and forests, impacted by transboundary air pollution and overuse by concentrated recreation. The Sumava mountain forests were selected because it is a highly restricted area just recently opened to general recreation, thus offering a unique window of opportunity for conservation. (Project Document pg. 1)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Development Objective of this project is to protect and strengthen biodiversity in the Czech Republic by supporting the activity of three transnational biodiversity protection networks (Sumava National Park, Krkonose Reserves, and Morava Floodplain Forests and Wetlands), and developing systems of financially sustainable biodiversity protection. (Project Document pg. 2) The immediate objectives of the project include improved management of ecosystems, improved institutional infrastructure, development of community support, and development of sustainable revenue generating mechanisms.

Specific project components are described in the Project Document and listed below:

1- **Biodiversity Protection Program**
- Management of key ecosystems, including an ecological management team for each National Park, a scientific advisory group, a joint cooperative strategic plan
- Development of Community Support, including a research and education center at Palava, interpretation facilities at Sumava, and a visitor center at Krkonose
- Wildlife Research and Management, including a Capercaillie Breeding Program and conservation of non-tree plant species

2- **Conservation Program**:
- Preparation of sustainable development strategies, including research of carrying capacity and revenue mechanisms, identification of habitat carrying capacity levels, places where these are exceeded, and implementation of measures to maintain carrying capacity

- Demonstration projects, including sustainable viticulture, and model agriculture programs.

3- **Institutional Infrastructure Improvement Program**:
- NGO Small Grants Program for support of transboundary biodiversity protection
- Computerization, Monitoring, Data Management, including GIS capability
- Infrastructure Improvement, including studies on waste water treatment and reduction, basic infrastructure at Sumava and Palava, and monitoring equipment at Krkonose
- Project Management and Coordination. The PMCU would be established inside the Department of Nature at the Czech Ministry of Environment, and there would be Regional Scientific Committees for each park
- Training activities, including a needs analysis

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

There were **no changes** in the Global Environmental and Development Objectives of this project.

However, the TE mentions two significant changes in the allocation of funds and in the organization of project subcomponents. The project reallocated $14,000 USD to the Krkonose alpine meadow management component when it was found that the bids for the equipment used in meadow restoration came in at 70% higher than the estimated at appraisal, and the project reallocated $28,000 USD towards the Ecosystem Research component at Sumava to improve knowledge of peatlands in the project. (TE pg. 7) Under the Conservation program, the project merged the originally separate subcomponents of Sustainable Development Strategy and identifying carrying capacity into a single component. (TE pg. 5)

4. GEF EO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 **Relevance**	Rating: **Satisfactory**

The project objectives are consistent with those of the GEF's Biodiversity focal area. The three areas targeted for conservation are considered important centers of species evolution, and are theoretically protected by national park or reserve status, but need increased support and improved management. The Palava floodplain includes internationally significant RAMSAR wetlands which are under increasing visitor and agricultural pressure since the removal of military border restrictions. Both the Sumava forests and the Krkonose ecosystem face rising

pressure from increased recreational use. (Project Document pg. 1) All three areas provide an opportunity to conserve a large number of important wild animal and plant species, and many endemic, rare, endangered or historic varieties of commercial plants. (Project Document pg. 1)

The project is in line with country priorities. The conservation of these areas is a high priority to the Czech government, but at the time the government did not have funds to carry out the project's objectives, and did not want to borrow external resources at market rates of interest. (Project Document pg. 1) The three targeted sites are all in transboundary areas, providing the opportunity to explore cooperative relationships with neighboring park administrations of Bavaria, Poland, Austria, the Slovak Republic and Hungary. (Project Document pg. 1)

4.2 **Effectiveness**	Rating: **Moderately Satisfactory**

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen forest and ecosystem biodiversity in the Czech Republic by protecting three representative and transnational ecosystem networks in Krkonose Reserves, Sumava National Park, and the Morava Floodplain Forest and Wetlands. (Project Document pg. 2)

The TE reports that nearly all the work planned was achieved, with particularly high satisfactory results in the public awareness and environmental education programs and investments, the Palava wetlands restoration and viticulture demonstrations, the establishment of the endangered species nursery in Krkonose, and in wildlife research and management. (TE pg. iv) After initial adjustments, most activities were carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the Project Technical Document. (TE pg. 3)

The Biodiversity Protection Program achieved the restoration of forest and wetland ecosystems, the development and implementation of management alternatives for mountain meadows, a wildlife management program, public education and awareness activities, applied research and the ex-situ conservation of native non-tree plant species. (TE pg. 4) Project-wide, international cooperation and coordination for trans-boundary conservation were initiated under the auspices of the Project, including a regional workshop in Mikulov, which transferred the lessons learned and experience of the GEF projects in the Region. (TE pg. 3) The transboundary management of wildlife between Bavaria and Sumava is underway, with the adoption by German biologists of the methods and tools developed under this project. (TE pg. 4) The project funded significant amounts of environmental education and public awareness activities in the three protected areas – including the construction of a research/education center in Palava, and ecological exhibits and interpretive materials in all three target areas. (TE pg. 5)

The Conservation Program was highly successful in the early demonstration viticulture sub-component near Palava. 60% of the farmers and vineyard owners have adopted the idea, and the demonstration project has raised community support for the Palava Landscape Protected Area. (TE pg. 5) As a result of the sustainable development strategy process, local planning efforts now include stakeholder participation. A successful example of this advance is found in Sumava, where park authorities now sit on municipality planning committees and local authorities are represented on the PLA Committee. (TE pg. 11)

The TE reports that all of the components of the Institutional and Infrastructure Improvement Program were completed successfully, most within the original timeframe of the project and with no implementation difficulties. (TE pg. 7) The technology and computerization sub-component was particularly successful, as it installed communication technology, computers, software and internet connections in regional offices that previously had only phones and no computers. The result has been huge for the daily operations of the entire Czech protected area system. (TE pg. 7) The NGO Small Grants Program was also very successful: 33 grants were awarded to 26 NGOs. Although a minor portion of the small grants were criticized for issues with their technical integrity, the lessons learned from this program will inform the Russia GEF Project now under implementation, and the GEF Central Asia Transboundary Biodiversity Protection Project. (TE pg. 7) Many protected area staff participated in national and international professional development programs, and benefited from professional networking. (TE pg. 7)

However, there were minor shortcomings in the achievement of expected results. The assessment of carrying capacity and the assessment and piloting of revenue generating mechanisms for sustainable development did not meet expectations, due to existing disincentives to long-term sustainable development, and to the challenge of implementing new approaches in public participation and local planning. (TE pg. 3) The restoration of Krkonose Forests and the implementation of wildlife management recommendations was difficult, due to the lack of understanding of conservation principles of forest management, and the prevailing influence of traditional forestry. (TE pg. 3)

The capercaillie breeding program, under the Biodiversity Protection Program, was canceled due to the withdrawal of the Austrian Eco-Fund. (TE pg. 4)

The Sustainable Development Strategy component of the Conservation Program did not meet expectations. (TE pg. 5) Sustainable agricultural practices within the protected area are supported by government subsidies and are unlikely to be replicated outside the protected area. (TE pg. 5) Although the project activities yielded increased understanding and communication between the national park administrations and local authorities and communities, they focused on ecological aspects and were not able to initiate actions to promote potential new revenue-generating mechanisms to benefit either the national park or local communities. Follow-up activities appear to be stymied by political, tax law or legislative barriers. (TE pg. 5-6)

Under the Institutional and Infrastructure Improvement Program, the sub-component on wastewater treatment/reduction pre-feasibility studies in Sumava was canceled because of the budget constraints imposed by the loss of the Austrian Eco-Fund co-financing. (TE pg. 7)

Overall, the project's results are satisfactory, and in many cases, excellent. (TE pg. 30) The project successfully confirmed all three protected areas' biological value and furthered their protection in numerous ways. It introduced new paradigms of ecosystem management, which may have positive long-term impact on all the biodiversity contained in Czech state-owned areas. (TE pg. 8) The long-term biological integrity of the three national park/reserve areas selected is undeniably better protected than prior to the project. (TE pg. 9)

There are highly satisfactory results in the public awareness and environmental education programs, the Palava wetlands restoration and viticulture demonstrations, the endangered species nursery in Krkonose, wildlife research and management. Unsuccessful activities, such as

the inter-relationship with traditional forest managers and the development of revenue generation mechanisms, did not meet expectations but represent valuable exercises with lessons learned. (TE pg. 10) The project exposed local communities to the value of the Czech natural heritage through public education and awareness programs, demonstration sites, and through the sustainable developments strategy process. Although the sustainable developments strategy were not fully realized, they contributed to the National Conservation Strategy adopted this year (TE pg. 24)

The TE states that the project's successes are noteworthy particularly given the challenges posed by rapid change, as the newly created republic needed to develop institutional capacities, new legal frameworks and an independent civil society while at the same time continuing the transition to a market economy. (TE pg. 3)

Thus, due to moderate shortcomings, the project's effectiveness is rated moderately satisfactory.

4.3 **Efficiency**	Rating: **Moderately Satisfactory**

The TE reports that most project objectives were successfully completed, and that the loss of co-financing during implementation was responsible for the cancellation of the few project subcomponents that were not completed. A misunderstanding of WB requirements for procurement and work program development caused significant implementation delays for the first 18 months of the project. (TE pg. v) There were implementation delays at the start of the project, due to lack of clarity of agency roles, unsuccessful administrative arrangements, and low cooperation. The executing agency successfully resolved these issues. However, project implementation was plagued throughout the life of the project by weak institutions in an emerging new government, indifferent government attitudes towards the environment, an ineffective legal framework, poor management practices and inadequate regulatory implementation, insufficient public involvement, and other environmental challenges.

Perhaps because of these multiple implementation challenges, the project's closing date was postponed twice, causing a final project delay of 18 months. (TE pg. iv)

The TE does not provide any information regarding the cost-effectiveness of this project. It seems project implementation was delayed mostly due to administrative and political problems. Due to these moderate shortcomings, and a lack of sufficient information, project efficiency is rated moderately satisfactory.

4.4 **Sustainability**	Rating: **Moderately Likely**

The TE reports that the project achieved biological, technical, institutional, social and to some extent financial sustainability. (TE pg. 31) However, the TE provides evidence that there are moderate risks that may affect the sustainability or project results. Financial security is not assured, and there are a few sociopolitical challenges. But in general, the Czech government is supportive of this project, the results have been successful and well received, the country has

increased its capacity to sustainably manage these three protected areas, and thus the sustainability of this project is moderately likely.

Socio-political Sustainability is Moderately Likely At the national level, support for environmental education programs is endangered due to a misunderstanding between the Ministries of Education and Environment: each believes environmental education is the jurisdiction of the other and neither takes on a meaningful budgetary responsibility. (TE pg. 5) However, the TE reports that the Minister of Environment indicated that all the initiatives undertaken under this project will continue under an expanded program beginning in 2000, with an expected increase in budget and a regionalization of administrative structures. (TE pg. 11)

Financial Sustainability is Moderately Likely The TE states that the project did not create the financial means to continue project activities, nor provide concrete proposals for revenue generation and retention mechanisms that would assist with the financial sustainability of the national park system. (TE pg. 9) However, there is financial security for some of the project's achievements. The three Biosphere Reserves will be maintained and will have access to Czech grant funds to maintain their software programs and internet access. The TE mentions that the "beneficiary areas" are raising money to continue those activities that require "further financial assistance". (TE pg. 11) The maintenance of montane meadows and sustainable agriculture within protected areas will remain dependent on state budgets, and will be given priority in the overall agency budget envelope.

Institutional Sustainability is Likely The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will include many outputs, experiences and recommendations from this project, including the Sustainable Development Strategies. The project strengthened the capacity of institutions, and enabled further collaboration between the Ministries of Agriculture and Environment. There has been good continuity of staff and consultants at the local and central level, and staff now have proven skills in fund-raising. (TE pg. 9)

Environmental Sustainability is Likely The TE does not discuss any environmental risks that would endanger the project's activities. It does report that there is reduced environmental stress and improved environmental status as a direct result of project activities, and that the protection of the three targeted areas is expected to continue. (TE pg. 3, 4 9)

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?

In this project, co-financing was essential to the achievement of GEF objectives. The loss of the Austrian Eco-Fund co-financing of US$ 0.5 million resulted in the cancellation of the capercaillie breeding program. (TE pg. 4) Due to the loss of promised government funds, the sub-component on wastewater treatment/reduction pre-feasibility studies in Sumava was canceled. (TE pg. 7) The loss of co-financing probably explains the increase of direct GEF funding towards the project end, from an expected $2 million USD to $2.45 million USD.

Two other examples of the importance of co-financing are found in the TE. Plans for a Krkonose National Park administration building were changed mid-project when other donor funding appeared, and the project instead supported the development of information centers in local towns. (TE pg. 7) The project benefited from UNESCO assistance with internet and telephone connectivity. (TE pg. iv)

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project's closing date was postponed twice, causing a final project delay of 18 months. The TE states that some innovative sub-components required additional time to be successfully implemented. (TE pg. iv)

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 TE states that the project did not clarify the role of the three national park administrations, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Department of Forestry at the beginning of the project. This led to a lack of ownership and responsibility for any project component that did not involve infrastructure investments. The Project Management Coordination Unit embarked on a program to clarify roles and decentralize project implementation, and successfully changed its role to one of a coordinator supporting the agencies in project implementation. The TE reports that increasing ownership on the part of locals and implementing agencies has contributed to the long-term sustainability of the project activities. (TE pg. 8) Thus, it seems that country ownership had a strong positive relationship with project outcomes and sustainability.

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 **M&E Design at entry**	Rating: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**

The Project Document describes the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan in Annex 2. (Project Document pg. 63-64) The M&E plan prescribes three supervision missions for each of the two years of expected project duration. The first supervision mission is proposed for October 1993, the second for April/May 1994. Specific expected milestones are listed for each of these two missions, including the functioning of administrative mechanisms, plans for professional development and training programs, and Regional Scientific Coordinating Committee meetings scheduled. The Project Document also states that the expected research resulting from the project that would be published in international peer-reviewed journals would provide further scrutiny for this project. (Project Document pg. 2)

The Project Document does not include specific indicators with which to measure the progress towards the achievement of project objectives. The TE notes this, and comments that the absence of indicators for measuring progress is a short coming of project design. (TE pg. vi) Measureable and verifiable indicators of achievements would have assisted with devising mid-project adjustments and management responses to changing conditions. (TE pg. 2)

Although the Project Document does allocate staff and budget to monitoring and evaluation activities, there are noticeable shortcomings in the M&E design. The M&E plan does not include baselines, SMART indicators, or a data analysis system. It does prescribe supervision missions, but does not call for specific evaluation studies. In retrospect, the M&E plan was not sufficient, therefore, M&E Design is rated moderately unsatisfactory.

6.2 **M&E Implementation**	Rating: **Unable to Assess**

The TE does not explicitly discuss the project's monitoring and evaluation system, but does discuss the supervising missions prescribed by the Project Document. Five supervision missions are listed in Table 12 on page 20, thus it may be concluded that the supervision missions planned in the Project Document were carried out, and that the cost of these missions was $209,000 USD, significantly more than the projected $88,000 USD. (TE pg. 20)

The TE directly mentions M&E once in the document, in a very confusing statement:

"In addition, the project was a challenge for the implementation of activities being important for global environmental benefits, innovation, demonstration value, applicability and replicability, sustainability, benefit and cost sharing, **monitoring and evaluating mechanisms** and creating a human knowledge network based on the experience and knowledge exchange acquired and developed during the project implementation." (TE pg. 28)

The TE does not mention annual project reports, or any other evaluations that rated the project during implementation. It seems that project implementation was not informed of lessons from M&E activities throughout the project. It is uncertain whether M&E activities beyond the five supervising missions occurred, or whether the TE failed to evaluate these activities.
The TE does not mention annual project reports, or any other evaluations that rated the project during implementation With a lack of information, M&E Implementation is not rated.

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: **Satisfactory**

The TE rates the performance of the World Bank (WB), the implementing agency, as satisfactory, in both project preparation and implementation. (TE pg. 10, 13, 31) The TE reports that there was intensive technical and operational communication between the WB and the Recipient. (TE pg. v) The WB and its consultants provided "satisfactory" project supervision, and assistance with procurement, contract preparation, and technical advice. (TE pg. 10) The WB provided additional training in financial, disbursement and project accounting, although perhaps too late into project implementation. (TE pg. 10)

The TE reports a few problematic issues with the WB's performance that indicate room for improvement, although it seems that these issues did not significantly affect the achievement of project objectives. The TE reports that there were occasional delays in response times by the WB, which were particularly problematic when approvals were required. (TE pg. v) The personnel tasked with management responsibilities changed four times during the project, and that at one point the designated person lasted 3 months. The TE provides inconsistent information regarding the effect of these changes on project implementation. On page 10, TE notes that the WB's core team remained the same, and that the Recipient did not view the changes in task management personnel as detrimental to the project. (TE pg. 10) On page iv, the TE reports that the marked on-going changes in legislative, administrative and institutional arrangements impacted project implementation. (TE pg. iv)

The TE notes that the WB's performance with respect to formal management reporting was "less satisfactory". Although the Implementation Completion Report mission confirmed that aide-memoires were completed for most of the WB's missions, these memoires did not result in the requisite Back to Office Reports and Form 590 completions. (TE pg. 10)

The WB seems to have delivered a mostly successful project implementation, with minor shortcomings in its performance, and therefore it is rated satisfactory.

7.2 **Quality of Project Execution**	Rating: **Satisfactory**

The executing agency for this project is the Project Management Coordination Unit (PMCU), which worked with various government agencies and NGOs during project implementation. These included the Dept. of Nature Protection in the Ministry of Environment, the Dept. of Forestry in the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Finance, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program, the NGO Czech Nature Protection Unit, and the NGO European Trust for Natural and Cultural Wealth.

The TE reports that the PMCU faced various implementation challenges, particularly at the start of the project. At the beginning of the project, the role of the three national park administrations and the Ministry of Agriculture and Department of Forestry were not clearly defined, which led to a lack of ownership and responsibility for any project component, except for those involving infrastructure investments. (TE pg. v, 8) In response, the PMCU embarked on a program to clarify roles and decentralize project implementation, and was ultimately successful in increasing the collaboration between executing agencies and local groups. The TE reports that

increasing ownership on the part of locals and implementing agencies has contributed to the long-term sustainability of the project activities. (TE pg. 8)

During the first six months of the project, the administrative arrangements for the NGO small grants program fell through. In response, the PMCU took on the administration of the NGO Small Grants Program. (TE pg. 7, 8) The historical practice of centralized planning and the suppression of information concerning environmental degradation led to difficulties during the Sustainable Development Strategy process. Locally-based, participatory planning for sustainable development was new approach for the planning authorities, and thus the process took longer than expected to be understood and initiated. (TE pp. iv, 8-9)

There were insufficient arrangements made for the administration of the NGO Small Grants Program, which caused delays at the start of the project. Once the World Bank transferred the administrative responsibility from the Prague Office of the European Trust for Ecological Bricks to the Project Management Coordination Unit, implementation was satisfactory. (TE pg. 30)

The TE reports that relatively frequent changes of high officials in the Ministry of the Environment (including the posts of Minister, Deputy Minister, Director of Department of Nature Conservation) presented complications to the work of Project Management Coordination Unit, necessitating for various rounds of project briefings. However, project implementation and completion was not affected, thanks to the support of officials in the Ministry of the Environment, great cooperation with beneficiaries, cooperation with UNESCO experts, and the efforts of the Project Management Coordination Unit to implement the project in accordance with its rules, goals and challenges. (TE pg. 30)

Other factors that affected project implementation include:

- relatively frequent changes of high officials in the Ministry of the Environment, which "distracted" the PMCU staff and necessitated frequent briefings to new officials (TE pg. iv, 9)
- budget reductions caused by the loss of the Austrian Eco-Fund co-financing (TE pg. iv)
- a lack of understanding of the conservation biology and participatory planning principles of forest management, and the influence of traditional forestry practices, stymied the process of the restoration of Krkonose forests, the expansion of the Palava protected area, and the implementation of wildlife management (TE pg. 9)
- institutional weaknesses associated with the emergence of the new Czech Republic administration and the lack of experience with international donor assistance. (TE pg. 10)

The TE rates the PMCU's performance as satisfactory, since it responded quickly to project delays, and "grew into exemplary management and leadership roles, and ensured the timely implementation of project activities." (TE pg. v, 7, 10) The TE reports that the PMCU appointed "qualified, committed professionals" with "high levels of skills, creativity and commitment", and that this "ensured the smooth implementation of the project", and "provided a fertile ground for many project activities to be rapidly picked up and taken much further than… envisioned". (TE pg. iv, 8) The TE also states that the PMCU contributed significantly not only to the achievement of the project's objectives, but also to the long-term sustainability of all activities by working to increase local and implementing agency ownership. (TE pg. 8)

Thus, despite a challenging environment with indifferent government attitudes towards the environment, an ineffective legal framework, poor management practices and inadequate regulatory implementation, insufficient public involvement, and unsustainable development, the PMCU was successful in executing most of the project's expected objectives.

The project established an effective network of agencies with a good information exchange mechanism and product delivery, and contributed to the sustainability of project results. (TE pg. 8, 29) Thus, the quality of the project execution by the PMCU is rated satisfactory.

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.

There was reduced environmental stress and improved environmental status as a direct result of project activities. The TE reports positive signs of improved ecosystem health. (TE pg. 3) The long-term biological integrity of the three national park areas targeted by this project is undeniably better protected than prior to the project. (TE pg. 9) Project activities that contribute to this improvement include wetlands restoration, and wild predator conservation, some of which have been replicated in areas outside of project implementation. (TE pg. 3) The project activities have had a positive effect in the project's three protected areas, but have also had spill-over effects on the management of the whole Czech Republic protected areas program. (TE pg. 3) Monitoring efforts show that populations of plants and insects are reappearing. (TE pg. 5) The number of plant/ animal species and individuals in the Palava wetland ecosystem has increased, and the first breeding of the Imperial Eagle in the Czech Republic occurred in the locale, possibly due to increased food availability. (TE pg. 4)
The TE lists other project activities that have reduced environmental stress and improved environmental status:

- Outputs from the GEF project are proving instrumental in efforts to expand the Palava Protected Landscape Area. (TE pg. 3)
- For the ex-situ conservation of endangered plants, locally-sourced seeds of some 40 species of endangered native plants were studied and germinated at a park facility, and then re-introduced into their original natural environments with high survival rates. (TE pg. 4)
- Telemetry studies of lynx lynx have led to cross-border management as well as providing a predator management plan for the entire Czech Republic (TE pg. 5)
- The maintenance of an integral part of an international waterfowl flyway in the Sumava wetlands is a significant global benefit produced by the project. (TE pg. 8)

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 TE does not record any change in human well-being that occurred by the end of the project.

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 TE reports the following changes in capacities:

- Project-wide, international cooperation and coordination for trans-boundary conservation were initiated under the auspices of the Project, including a regional workshop in Mikulov, which transferred the lessons learned and experience of the GEF projects in the Region. (TE pg. 3)
- In the Krkonose Biosphere, Polish and Czech administrations coordinated GIS software to jointly produce the first ecosystem maps, which pave the way for enhanced collaborative management of shared alpine ecosystems. (TE pg. 3-4)
- Public awareness programs have increased the awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation in targeted local communities. (TE pg. 4)
- The success of the sustainable viticulture activities improved community relations with the Palava PLA administration, initiating changes in prevailing perceptions that PLA zoning only brings restrictions to development and limits benefits to local communities. (TE pg. 4)
- The project introduced, among other things, (i) support to NGOs via competitive small grants; (ii) expanded demonstrations in ecologically sound and sustainable land uses; (iii) international models for grant administration and management; (iv) the need for active community involvement and participation. (TE pg. 8)
- The initiation of local planning efforts with stakeholder participation represents an important advance in the civil society, and is best exemplified in Sumava. (TE pg. iv)

b) Governance – The TE reports the following changes in governance:

- The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan will include many outputs or experiences of the GEF Project, including the Sustainable Development Strategies. The beneficiary areas have included most recommendations into their respective management plans and are working on proposals to continue activities that require further financial assistance. (TE pg. 11).
- The wildlife research and management activities in Sumava have led to national management plans. (TE pg. 10)

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 report any unintended impacts that occurred by the end of the project.

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 TE reports the following evidence of adoption of GEF initiatives at scale:

- The viticulture, wetland restoration, and large predator management demonstration projects were judged very successful. (TE pg. 8) The results of the project's early demonstration viticulture sub-component near Palava were developed for experience transfer to other countries, with the assistance of a $70,000 Czech Government grant. (TE pg. 5) A number of similar activities were carried out in areas of high biodiversity outside the selected PLAs in parallel to the GEF activities and based in part on project outputs. (TE pg. 9) **Replication, Adopted**
- The transboundary management of wildlife between Bavaria and Sumava is underway, with the adoption by German biologists of the methods and tools developed under this project. Many of the lessons learned on the Transboundary management of wildlife will be officially disseminated to other countries in transition, funded by a Czech government program for foreign assistance. (TE pg. 4) **Replication, Adopted.**
- National park, Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and Biosphere Reserve (BR) administrations are now sharing their experiences - including the state-of-the-art such as in the GIS program at Krkonose National Park (KRNAP) - with others, notably in other transition economy countries. (TE pg. iv) The sophisticated analysis stemming from the GIS program in Krkonose is recognized as state-of- the-art. Information sharing networks have been set up between research institutions and individuals, and GIS data layers are available on the World Wide Web. (TE pg. 5) **Replication, Established.**
- The in-country enthusiasm for the Sustainable Development Strategy approach has led to a program for disseminating lessons learned to other transition economy countries, funded by a Czech Government Multilateral Assistance Program (approximately US$130,000). (TE pg. 6) **Replication, Established.**
- Lessons learned from these small grants programs in Slovakia and Czech Republic have been further developed in the Russia GEF Project now under implementation, and the GEF Central Asia Transboundary Biodiversity Protection Project. Particularly important were the insights related to governance, transparency, NGO abilities and the necessary incorporation of capacity building into grants for the NGOs. (TE pg. 7) **Mainstreaming, Adopted.**
- A Southern Appalachian study tour led to a regional sustainable development cooperative for 4 cities and 30 villages in Bohemia, a major departure from the existing planning approach. (TE pg. 7) **Replication, Adopted.**
- The cooperation between the Czech and Slovak governments contributed to higher NGO involvement and improved overall implementation. Both governments initiated a model of regional cooperation focused on the needs of Central and Eastern European Countries. (TE pg. 29) The TE asserts that regional and international cooperation was established and developed in many fields. (TE pg. 30) **Mainstreaming, Adopted.**

9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The TE lists the following lessons learned, based on discussions held during the completion mission and regional workshops:

- The role of Project Management Coordination Unit is to coordinate and support the implementing agencies that are ultimately responsible for the project activities not only during the project lifetime but also once the project is completed. (TE pg. v)
- Professional development is a vital step in building human and institutional capacity. (TE pg. v)
- Involving NGOs during implementation is complementary and a substantive contribution to the success of the project. (TE pg. v)
- The initial timescale (3 years) was overly ambitious, due to a combination of slower than envisaged progress in implementation and an over optimistic implementation schedule. An over optimistic implementation schedule is a design flaw and a critical lesson learned and should be taken into account in preparing subsequent operations. Slower than envisaged progress in implementation was due to the steep learning curves for new and often advanced concepts (sustainable development), technical tools (GIS) and approaches, and the PCMU's accession of capability, working style and real understanding of agreed project activities. (TE pg. vi)
- Efforts to engage foresters and foresters/game managers needed more focus. The genetic research and wildlife management in areas under forestry control requires long-term educational inputs, more consistent consultation and a new rewards system recognizing benefits beyond commercial fiber production. (TE pg. vi)
- Explicit targets and indicators for measuring progress need to be established at the outset. The absence of indicators can at best be characterized as a short coming of project design. (TE pg. vi)

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE lists the following recommendations:

- A needs assessment should occur early in the project or at project design to ensure new skills/knowledge are better integrated during implementation. Issues such as budget constraints and understaffing may limit the full application or transfer of knowledge obtained in the training process. (TE pg. v)
- An over optimistic implementation schedule is a design flaw and should be taken into account in preparing subsequent operations. (TE pg. vi)
- Explicit targets and indicators for measuring progress need to be established at the outset. (TE pg. vi)

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 EO 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 TE assesses the relevant outcomes of the project, their impacts, and in general, the achievements of the project in relation to the project's global objectives.	**S**
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE is at times not internally consistent. There are conflicting statements regarding the effect of the project's delay on the implementation of objectives. The ratings seem to be well substantiated. The TE does not present complete evidence, particularly on the components of monitoring and evaluation, and on the efficiency of the project.	**MS**
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE discusses project sustainability thoroughly, and provides much evidence and examples. But the TE seems to arrive at a rating inconsistent with the evidence it provides.	**S**
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are supported by the evidence and are comprehensive.	**HS**
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE includes a summary of project costs, including expected and actual co-financing amounts. The quantities are not assigned to specific project components, and would benefit from more detail.	**MS**
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE only directly mentions M&E systems in a very confusing sentence, and lists five supervising missions but does not discuss them in the text. No mention of the Project Document's prescribed M&E system is discussed in the text. It is unclear whether the project did not participate in M&E activities, or whether the TE fails to report it.	**HU**
Overall TE Rating		**MS**

$0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f) = 0.3(9) + 0.1\ (16) = 2.7 + 1.6 = 4.3 \sim 4$

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

The only documents available to the TER writer were the Project Document and the Terminal Evaluation.